



Sharing the same values and vision

Rebecca Sewell, our new chair of trustees, explains how Batemans and Satkaarya work together to change children's lives

I first heard about the Batemans Trust in 2002, when I found myself in the same tutor group as Alex Thompson (now Jacob), the charity's founder, as we both studied for our PGCEs.

Alex had felt she needed a professional teaching qualification in order to understand how she could better support the children at St George's School and Orphanage, which the Trust was then supporting, and I was setting out on my teaching career.

Fast forward nearly 20 years and here I am, taking over from Anne Desir, as chair of trustees.

I sometimes wonder what has kept me involved for so long. There are complex issues around being a UK charity supporting children so far away: surely there is plenty of

need on my own doorstep; why should people in the UK be providing for children in a country as wealthy as India; what can Batemans presume to offer; why is the bureaucracy so frustrating?

But any doubts are banished when I reflect on what Batemans-Satkaarya does on the ground and when people who visit the project report back on the very special place that has been created.

Many of our children are at risk of neglect and exploitation. They do not have safe homes to live in and Satkaarya provides them with a loving environment in which they can thrive.

Our children and young people access good-quality primary, secondary, further and higher education. They enjoy a rich programme of arts and sporting activities. They read

“We learn so much from our colleagues and the children in Chennai”



Future focus... project director Monica Augustine (right) leads an outreach session for pre-school children.

books. They gain vocational qualifications and, as you can read inside this issue, they go on to secure good jobs.

Two of our more recent initiatives demonstrate how we are finding important new ways to support vulnerable children:

first, our wraparound care programme, which provides a haven for children to attend after school; second, an outreach project for pre-school children (see picture above).

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Remembering Amanda Morris-Drake

Batemans trustee Amanda Morris-Drake died suddenly in early October, after a short illness.

Amanda responded to the shock and disbelief of her terminal diagnosis with the words, “But I’ve got so much more to give.” And that says it all. Amanda was one of life’s givers.

Her professional life was committed to helping children, culminating in her appointment as headteacher at the Pilgrim PRU, the school attached to Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge. She also threw herself into volunteer roles, including working with refugee children in Calais and on creative projects with primary-age children, and by becoming an independent visitor for a looked-after child. On her retirement, it didn’t take much to persuade her to become a trustee of Batemans. Her ethos and



values aligned perfectly with those of the Trust.

After all the Covid setbacks, Amanda finally got to visit Chennai in spring 2023. During this visit (which she wrote about in last year’s newsletter – <https://tinyurl.com/22fuufwn>), she had a very real and lasting impact. With her

warmth, understanding and experience she was able to offer our staff vital mental health training, helping them to give the best possible support to our children, many of whom have faced significant trauma.

She will be greatly missed by all the trustees, staff and children of Batemans-Satkaarya.



“An incredible experience”

Alexandra Jungels-Winkler looks back on her volunteering stint at Batemans-Satkaarya earlier this year

“Before arriving in Chennai, I had no idea what to expect. I had never been to India before, let alone so far away from home.

“From the second I arrived, the bustling atmosphere hit me. I couldn’t stop myself from being captivated by the culture; the new spices; new vegetables; the dress sense; and magical languages.

“When visiting the girls for the first time at the Satkaarya Trust, I was amazed by the passion and light each girl exuded. The sheer zest for life and education was so moving to me. The warmth and hospitality of Monica, the project director, filled the room; I was so happy to share the gifts brought by my friend and me.

“It was such a pleasure to help teach the guitar and draw with the girls, even benefiting from a maths lesson myself after a failed attempt at one of the girls’ homework! Not only did I pick up some maths skills, but I also learnt so much about life in Chennai, and I can proudly say I managed to pick up a little of the Tamil language.

“It was an incredible experience and organisation, which has taught me so much, and I hope to be back soon.”

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Batemans trustees and volunteers from the UK offer our Indian staff their expertise and training on issues such as special needs education, which will become a pillar of our new school. But the learning relationship is two ways. We learn so much from our colleagues and the children in Chennai about the value of education; about how to live and work collaboratively; about perseverance and resilience.

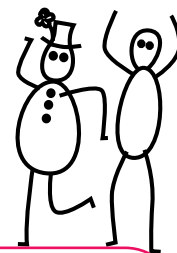
Of course, there are cultural differences

to navigate, but we share the same values and the same vision: to ensure the children in our care have the opportunity to become the best versions of themselves.

The recent sudden death of trustee Amanda Morris-Drake (see story above) has brought home how Batemans and Satkaarya are one community, as staff and trustees in east and west have been united in sadness at her loss. We can honour her memory by continuing our life-changing work.

Batemans-Satkaarya children come from backgrounds of poverty, abuse and dysfunctional family situations. But they go out from our care to a diverse range of jobs and vocational training. Here, three alumni reflect on their stories

Alumni success stories



Angel Dias

Angel grew up in our girls home from the age of nine and studied at the Batemans Open School before moving on to regular mainstream school. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in Commerce in May 2023 and is now working with Barclays Bank as a merchant service adviser.

Angel says: "I would like to thank the Batemans Trust deeply for the support and guidance extended to me. The generosity and help have been an inspiration to me. When I was a little kid, I remember that studies were difficult for me. But when I came to Batemans, they nurtured me by helping me in my studies and in building my character. I felt loved by all and able to learn many new things every day.

"I also took part in other extra-curricular activities, which I enjoyed and learnt new things from. I thank Batemans-Satkaarya for believing in me and for the guidance that has helped me to become who I am now. Batemans-Satkaarya has been a rock in my journey of life; I am incredibly grateful for the guidance and mentorship. Thanks to Batemans-Satkaarya for being a constant source of love and positivity in my life."



Andrea Beck

Andrea came to Satkaarya at the age of 14. She had lost her father and brother at a young age, and her mother was illiterate and could not find the means even to help herself. Now 28 years old, Andrea completed her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with support from Batemans-Satkaarya and has worked in multinational corporations since then. She is currently working at a healthcare company called Guidehouse. From a timid, shy teenager to a bold, independent woman, Andrea's transformation has been phenomenal. We are proud to have played an important part in her life.

She says: "I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the outstanding support offered to me by Batemans-Satkaarya. Its unwavering dedication to nurturing my education and wellbeing does not go unnoticed. I am forever grateful for this and for moulding me into the person I am today."



Ostina Cowen

Ostina came to St George's boarding home as a little child, coming from a poor and dysfunctional home, which meant she could not attend school. She moved to the Satkaarya Girls Home at the age of 10. She left when she finished Indian Standard 12 (the equivalent of UK A levels) and went on to complete a Bachelor's degree in Commerce. Now 25 years old, she is currently working in a multinational company and pursuing an MBA in finance.

"I write to express my sincere gratitude to Batemans-Satkaarya for your generosity in sponsoring my education and moulding me into the person I am today. I take great pleasure to thank everyone. I am currently pursuing my MBA in finance for a better position at work.

"I thank Batemans-Satkaarya for all the kindness and willingness to invest in my education that has made a significant impact on my life."



Express visit

A highlight for the Satkaarya children this year was a visit to Express Avenue, one of Chennai's grandest shopping centres, for a 'fun day' organised by the International Justice Mission.

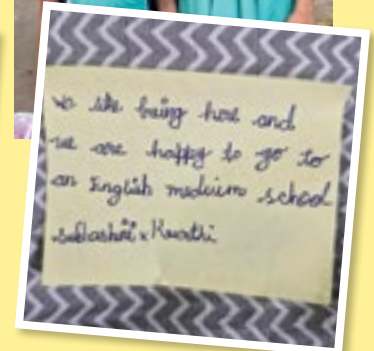
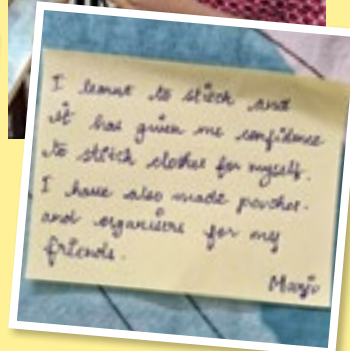
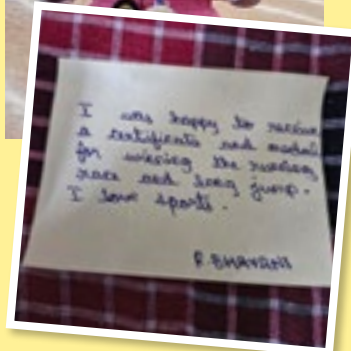
The children loved the games zone, playing various

skills games and enjoying a thrilling 3D experience – as well as going to Snow World, where they experienced icy conditions for the first time in their lives. The day ended with a delicious treat of burgers, French fries and tasty doughnuts for all.

Girl power

The girls observed the United Nations' International Day of the Girl Child by acting out a skit on girl power and creating portraits of themselves with a few lines about why they are happy to be a 'girl'.

It was a good exercise for them, as it helped them think through the privileges and challenges, and the things that they need to be grateful for.



Pictured (from right to left) are R Bhavani, Manju, and Subhashini and Keerthi.

Outreach programme gets results



The third in a series of outreach programmes for pre-school children has started successfully at our new school site in Sendrambakkam village, on the outskirts of Chennai.

Children who attended the first two programmes have now secured admission into kindergarten in regular schools and are doing very well.

One remarkable success story is that of a six-year-old special needs child whose learning experience at our outreach programme enabled him to adapt well



into regular mainstream school. The boy's parent has observed that his focus and attention have improved greatly, and he has learnt to socialise with other children.

This, and plenty of similar stories, have given us much-needed encouragement to continue with the programme, despite the challenges involved. This year, parents have been very positive and eager to send their children to the pre-school programme, and the children have been equally excited to attend.



Paul's epic motorbike ride

Trustee and architect Paul Crosby took time away from work early this year to fulfil a challenge he had first considered while in Chennai, volunteering for Batemans, in 1998.

During that year, while undertaking conservation work, he had dreamt of buying a Royal Enfield Bullet, a motorbike still being manufactured in



Chennai, and riding it all the way back to his home in Kendal, Cumbria.

After running out of excuses and reasons not to do it, Paul learnt to ride a motorbike earlier this year and the dream became a reality when he flew to Chennai to start the 18,000-mile journey.

The epic, four-month adventure took in 18 countries, including Nepal, Tibet, Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, before moving on to Turkey, the Balkans, and continental Europe.

He rode through France and crossed the channel to a hero's welcome from friends as he did a victory lap around the UK, finally parking his bike outside his house in Kendal with his family cheering him home.

Paul says: "Almost instantly it had been the people who had made the



journey into something special. The generosity and kindness of the strangers who helped me along the way is what I will keep with me – from the girls in the Batemans-Satkaarya hostel in Chennai, right through to the guy who helped me change my flat tyre on the M6 an hour from home!"

Paul has already raised more than £1,000 as a result of his trip. You can still sponsor him at www.justgiving.com/page/paul-crosby-1716371451108

Read the full account of Paul's trip on the Batemans website at www.batemans.org.uk/2024/10/23/from-chennai-to-cumbria-an-epic-ride

On the hunt for new sponsors

We are seeking new sponsors. It could be some of your friends or colleagues who have not heard of Batemans, who can't make fundraising events, or who would like to support a charity where their money goes directly to helping disadvantaged children.

Going with friends for a morning coffee and cake, or enjoying a family night out at a restaurant can make us feel happy and supported – so we wouldn't ask anyone to give up on such meet-ups. Which is why we are reaching out to everyone to draw in more sponsors who could make monthly donations of just £15, the price of a simple main course.

The impact on Batemans' supported children is huge. The money our sponsors donate each month helps us house, feed and educate children who have come from challenging backgrounds and family situations. And the outcome? Well, as this newsletter shows, they can go out into the world as confident and educated adults.

One supporter became a sponsor after attending a Batemans' fundraising event. She said: "We were so impressed with the story of Batemans and the work that was being done that we signed up straightaway [as sponsors]. I am very impressed by the way they become caring, responsible people who care for each other. We feel very privileged to be sponsors." Another sponsor told us: "I wanted to identify with a specific child and get updates on their progress."

You can set up your sponsorship by following the link below or using the QR code. And if you know someone else who might want to be a sponsor, why not cut it out and send it to them?



Spicing up our fundraising in 2024

Thanks to everyone, young and old, who has organised, attended and supported our fundraising events in 2024. With more than 95% of the money raised being used at the sharp end in Chennai, it makes a huge difference. Here's a very quick snapshot of some of the many events.

- Takings at the Batemans food stall at the Truck musical festival in Oxfordshire hit a record high, breaking the £17,000 barrier. Thanks so much to organiser Marion Mills and the dozens of volunteers who make it happen.
- John Gowen ran his third large and varied plant and cake sale in the grounds of St John's Church, Chelmsford, Essex.
- Fifteen-year-old Willa Bettridge organised a cricket match in Oxfordshire, raising £180 in the process, and then, accompanied by Libby Jacob, went on to continue her annual tradition of directing a play for Batemans.
- The ever-popular Batemans quiz in Cambridge was attended by more than 50 people – and raised £1,300.
- The annual Batemans Spice Lunch saw the two Pauls, Crosby and Gallagher, talking about their remarkable travels.
- If you're planning on holding a fete in 2025, let us know. We might want to set up a Batemans stall to encourage more sponsors and, of course, sell some delicious produce! For more information, please contact trustee Suzanne Kuyser at skuyser@tiscali.co.uk

To become a sponsor, visit www.batemans.org.uk/donating/sponsor-a-child or simply take a photo of the QR code using your mobile phone.



Three ways you can give financial support to Batemans

1

Donate via our annual Wish List

2

Sponsor a child for just £15 per month

3

Remember the Batemans Trust in your will

See more at www.batemans.org.uk/donating