

MANGO NEWS March 2014

The newsletter of the parish of the Sacred Heart, East Anglia, twinned with the parish of St Francis Xavier, Svay Sisophon, Cambodia.

Also available on the parish website: http://sacredheartnorthwalsham.com/?page_id=11

SUPPORT CAMBODIA promotes mutual friendship, spiritual support and practical assistance for the people of Svay Sisophon, Cambodia

"You are our friends—you always come back!"

... well, we certainly did, six of us: Father David, Jan, Bob & Katie, Carol & David for 17 exhausting but very enjoyable days, starting at the fast-developing border town of Pailin. Lack of water, of any kind, is a major problem in the isolated rural communities that surround the town, some of them up to 35 miles down roads of the 'dirt-and-pothole' variety. Through **Support Cambodia**, help may be available here. Watch this space ... Next, to Battambang, Diocesan Centre, sharing supper with Tep Im students, visiting an orphanage, church kindergarten and the newly opened garment factory employing disabled workers (look out for 'Made in Cambodia' at M&S!). We joined the



Poringland/Yarmouth group for Sunday Mass, always a highlight, (thanks Mr Vuthy) and it was wonderful to meet up with old friends (Bishop Kike, Fathers Totet, Pedro and Manoj) and meet new ones (Ros Moug, Rakesh Kerketta and Sister Cecile). We also experienced a chilling reminder of the country's recent history at the Killing Caves of Sampeau where, less than 40 years ago, 15,000 Cambodians were thrown

alive into the cave by Khmer Rouge soldiers. Every family in this country still has a story to tell about those terrible times but what a joy to see Cambodian youth so enthusiastic about rebuilding a fairer country, and the great work being done by the Church in making this happen.

Then, to Kompong Chhang where Fathers Franco and Viney minister to a mixed Vietnamese/Khmer community spread over a wide area, many of them living in floating villages on the Tonle Sap River. Kompong Luong is one such village, with an excellent floating school run by New Humanity, an Italian NGO (non-governmental organisation) and a lovely church (floating, of course!). New Humanity also specialise in provision for the mentally disabled and we were privileged to be the first foreign group to be

invited to attend the monthly 'Activity Fun Day' for the disabled of the area. A full account appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Finally, 200 miles north to our twin parish of Svay Sisophon and a wonderful welcome from many old friends, Father Rajat, Brother Amalan, Sister Amor, Om Cecile (outrageous as ever!), Teacher Saory, Kim Yee and many more - we had indeed 'come back' ... again!

In three manic days we managed to fit in visits to families living on the railway track, two farms, Svay Prison, schools at Kbal Spean and Pongro; see the Rice Soup & Baby Milk Programmes in operation; deliver medical supplies to the Regional Hospital; give two talks on Girls' Health at Svay and Poipet; buy and distribute toys to the children of Pongro Village; and name a new well in Deilo Village in honour of the (North Walsham) donor.

After a wonderful party and entertainment on the last night (thanks to the students and Brothers Amalan and Touen!) we had the pleasure of finishing our journey at the newly-opened church kindergarten at Deilo (partly funded this year by **Support Cambodia**) and of viewing the proposed site for the first Catholic School in Cambodia, to be built over the next 10 years by the Jesuit Service (*see below!*).

Wow! your correspondent is exhausted just reading it! The pace was indeed relentless, but a memorable and highly successful journey reaffirming that that our twinning link remains strong and its basis is: **mutual friendship, spiritual support and practical assistance ... in that order!**

To all our friends in Cambodia, *yeung jee meut pee-up nung dtra lop moak..... chanam krauwie!* We really are your friends and we will come back ... again ... next year!



The "must-see" video clip of 2014!

Fr Rajat talks about the exciting new 12-year education project in Svay: the Xavier Jesuit School.

Open the link below and look for the video!

<http://jesuitschoolcam.org/blog/2014/03/04/jesuit-education-project-in-cambodia/>

SUPPORT CAMBODIA

Practical Assistance for Communities in North-West Cambodia

The main role of Support Cambodia, a parish charity of Sacred Heart Parish, is to co-ordinate the practical response from anyone who wishes a tangible way to show care and concern for the poor of North-West Cambodia.

In 2014, **Support Cambodia will be:**

- providing equipment and supporting two teachers at Deilo Kindergarten
- contributing to the Rice Soup, Baby Milk and Health/Hygiene programmes
- collecting toothbrushes, reading glasses, vitamins and basic medical supplies
- financing basic necessities (e.g. children's clothes, toothpaste, stationery etc.)
- funding a water tower & tank and gas installation for the kitchen at Svay student hostel
- supporting other projects still to be decided

YOU CAN HELP BY:

- **MAKING A DONATION** cash or cheque made out to: '*Sacred Heart Parish (Support Cambodia)*'
- **COLLECTING USEFUL ITEMS** toothbrushes, reading glasses, bandages, dressings
- **PURCHASING A GIFT CARD** available in units of £5 for either Education OR Health/Hygiene
- **ATTENDING OUR EVENTS**
see www.sacredheartnorthwalsham.com OR Cambodia Notice boards at our churches also on Facebook '*Katie Maidment (Cambodia)*' and at www.streetlife.com

NEWS IN BRIEF:

- **FATHER HERI**, inspirational former Parish Priest of Siem Reap, RIP, 26 February 2014, remembered for his unstinting service of the poor and wonderful laugh which never failed to cheer.
- **DALY POL**: regular visitors to Cambodia will know Daly, the wonderful friend/guide/translator/fixer and much, much more, who has made all our trips run so smoothly over the years. Daly was married to Sarom on 28th February in Pailin! Mango News sends many congratulations and best wishes for a long and happy life together.
- **SRY YEUM**: sponsored by Support Cambodia for her 4-year university course in IT, she has now graduated and is working for a Japanese company in Phnom Penh. Congratulations to all involved in this success story!
- **VIGIALEAK** and **SRY RY**: the two other sponsored students are in their 4th year studying medicine, working very hard and in regular touch with their sponsors. Two other students are being supported privately by families in North Walsham Parish.

FOR THE LATEST NEWS AND PICTURES:

www.sacredheartnorthwalsham.com>cambodia blog
OR Facebook under '*Katie Maidment (Cambodia)*'

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 22nd March

SOUPS, SLIDES & CRAFTS in aid of **Support Cambodia**. £3 ticket includes: homemade soup/bread/fruit, pictures of the recent Cambodia visit and a new selection of crafts for sale. Please bring friends and family.

12 noon-1.30 pm at **Sacred Heart Hall, Norwich Road, North Walsham, NR28 9JP**. Details & Tickets: **Katie** on **01263 577784**.

Friday 9th May

CAMBODIA-STYLE MASS at 7pm at **St John of the Cross, White Hart Street, Aylsham, NR11 6HG**. Everyone welcome.

Saturday 17th May

PLANT SALE in aid of **Support Cambodia**.

Sunday 8th June: **Rotary Sponsored Walk** at **Aylsham**. An excellent (and easy!) opportunity to raise funds for **Support Cambodia**. Please consider taking part. Details: **Katie** or **Bob** on **01263 577784**

An activity day spent with disabled children

This was my second visit to Cambodia and it was wonderful to get such a warm welcome from our friends there. How they do value this friendship!

A particularly moving day for me was taking part in an activity day for disabled children, held once a month in one of the village homes in the countryside outside Kompong Chhnang. This project is run by New Humanity [Italian NGO] in cooperation with Home Base Care. The idea is to bring disabled children and their families together so that they can share a meal and have fun, seeing that with love and extra help their children can achieve things their parents had not realised were possible. It also helps parents with disabled children cope with the isolation they feel in their villages.

The day started with a demonstration, given by the team leader, of the importance of hand washing for the avoidance of spreading infections. He demonstrated with actions and the help of a large illustrated chart. Next we all sat together on large canvas mats to share lunch, making friends with the children and their families. The food is prepared by the host family and a group of helpers. Then everyone joined in enthusiastic dancing. The music was provided by an elderly man playing a stringed instrument and a young blind boy playing a drum. Finally, there was a moving ceremony when we were thanked for coming and the children presented us all with bead necklaces and bracelets they had made.

Jan Northway

From Bandages to Hot Water Bottles

Our trip to Cambodia this year was as rewarding as ever. The warmth and hospitality shown by our friends (who are more like family) was again second to none. This year I had two main tasks to perform: distributing the medical aid we took out with us, and secondly, initiating a 'Girls Health Programme'.

I collect the medical equipment which we take out to Cambodia. This is distributed between the clinics we visit and the local hospital in Svay Sisophon. The items which you kindly donated during the year were very gratefully received. These included numerous and varied dressings, still in their packets, bandages, dressing pads etc., although perhaps out of date, if the packaging is intact, they can still be used. Better a sealed out of date dressing than no dressing at all. Urology equipment, such as catheter bags and leg bags etc., were also a wonderful gift for the hospital. Please continue to save and acquire these items and anything else medical you think could be useful. If in doubt please ask, bearing in mind we cannot accept medication. The hospital director did provide us with a 'wish list' consisting of such things as pocket oximeters, blood pressure monitors and other such small monitoring equipment. Dr Daravuth, the director, also expressed a need for oxygen tubing, single use masks, syringes and needles amongst

other things.

The 'Girls Health Programme' was delivered in two locations. Firstly to the older students at Poipet and then to the girls at the student centre at St Francis-Xavier Church in our twin parish. I gave an informal talk to the two groups, each consisting of about thirty girls. I spoke about some of the more personal aspects of growing up in their age group. I used some simple laminated self-

explanatory diagrams which Sarah and I had designed. These had simple instructions including Khmer translation. They covered all aspects of feminine personal hygiene, hand washing instructions and the importance of these. The girls were very attentive and listened well. We left a set of the laminated posters to be displayed in the girls' toilet/shower areas at each venue. We also took with us hot water bottles. These of course are not widely used in such a hot country as Cambodia and caused great amusement when we showed them, and the girls passed them around. I explained that these could be used to help alleviate such things as period pain etc.

We were also able to provide lots of iron rich multi-vitamins particularly for women, nursing and expectant mothers, and vitamin tablets for children.

Carol Shippey.



First Timer

My wife Carol and my younger daughter Sarah have between them visited Cambodia eight times. After each visit they have enthralled me with their accounts of their experiences. I felt I knew Cambodia and our friends out there really well; having seen and spoken to them numerous times on Skype etc. I retired from teaching in school last July and this gave me the wonderful opportunity to visit Cambodia for myself. This year I was "the Rookie".

The things that impressed me the most was the warmth and friendliness of the people we met and stayed with during our time there. The enthusiasm of the students was overwhelming. It was such a pleasure to be with them and to get to know them. Learning from them and learning about their culture. We visited a number of schools including the floating school at Kompong Luang on the River Ton Le Sap - the school bus here was a boat!! Some schools had no clean water or electricity, while others had wells, water towers or water filtration/purification systems. It was very interesting to note the difference in the demeanour of children where there was clean water on site—and where there was not. The children at the schools with water were more forthcoming and confident, while the others were less so. It was gratifying to see the results of funding provided by our parish and others in our Diocese, as well as meeting students whose education is supported by a number of our parishioners. I was particularly excited to actually meet Polin, who is the student we support. He and Sarah have been friends for a number of years. It was very kind of his family to invite us all for lunch on Sunday after mass.....12 extra people...brilliant and delicious traditional country fare.



I was very touched and humbled when we spent time with children who were living with disability, some of which was the result of land mines, polio and various birth defects. The joy and happiness of the children themselves far outweighed my sorrow at their difficulties. Music and dancing was all around adding to the ambience of the day. Blindness was no barrier, but to me, made the music more poignant. There is so much more I could tell you but there is neither the time

nor the space here. But what is certain is that what is being done by so many of us on behalf of the people of Cambodia, is greatly appreciated by all concerned. I personally received so much fulfilment from my first visit that I can't wait to go back.

David Shippey