



Updating past pupils with news from Westminster

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Trust in Children

Guests were encouraged to Pick Up a Piece of Trust in Children, as Old Westminsters Leonora (GG 1996-98), Helen (AHH 1998-2000) and Alan Borg (BB 1955-60) relaunched the international children's charity in the Camden Room on Wednesday 11 April 2007.

Trust in Children's Pick Up a Piece scheme enables supporters to get actively involved in the development and spending of the UK registered charity, which gives grants to smaller causes that other charities overlook.

The successful champagne reception, fundraising video and newly designed website, www.trustinchildren.org, sparked lots of interest in the charity's work enabling deprived children access to academic education in the UK, Malawi and Peru. The event also ensured the success of future member events, including a Christmas party in December 2007. Over £4,000 was raised from the reception which was attended by many Old Westminster pupils.

Chair Leonora Borg first became interested in children's charities in 1997 thanks to PHAB – a week long event for mobility impaired children run over the summer holidays at Westminster School. Participating children stay at the school and take part in a range of activities with

Westminster students, who benefit from using their skills to help others.

In 2004, Leonora took over the 40-year-old charity Trust in Children, and decided to consolidate and grow its remaining assets, boost the donor base, and appoint an energetic new board of trustees.

These include Treasurer Helen Borg and Trustee Alan Borg CBE, whose varied ages and experiences in the voluntary and international development sectors have in a few short years reinvigorated the charity.

Leonora explained Trust in Children's appeal to guests. "Whereas donors to most charities have little or no say in how money is spent, Trust in Children encourages donors to get actively involved, by spending just £25 a year on membership and through Pick up a Piece," she said.

"This initiative invites any Trust in Children member to Pick up a Piece of work or a project and bring it to the charity's attention. It may be anything from getting funds for an inner city kids group, to a UK camping trip, to supporting the building of a secondary school in a developing country. Trust in Children will assess whether it fits into the jigsaw of our work.

While there's no guarantee that every Piece will be funded, it does mean that Trust in Children is more likely to meet its aims of reaching those projects that would otherwise struggle to get funding. Moreover, thanks to the close community relationships that



Leo Borg speaking at the Trust in Children Party

Forthcoming events

- 6th September**
Ashburnham
125th Anniversary Dinner
- 11th September**
Old Grantite Club Drinks
- 19th September**
College Society Dinner
- 27th September**
Abbey Tour
- 4th October**
Elizabethan Club AGM
- 11th October**
Old Grantite Club Women's Drinks
- 25th October**
Old Westminster's Lodge Meeting
- 1st November**
Young Gaudy
- 21st November**
Elizabethan Club Dinner
Speaker: Louis Theroux

There will be other events this autumn which will include a meeting of the OW Wine Society, a regional Drinks Party at a UK university and the next in the series of OW Lectures. Dates to be confirmed. Events are publicised first on the Old Westminster website www.oldwestminster.org.uk





The Trust in Children Trustees

we have forged, we are ideally placed to identify needs that no other organisation is attending and instigate and manage our own projects.”

Guests heard how Leonora and Helen had worked with a family of 11 children, who lived in a two bedroom shack in the centre of the city of Piura in northern Peru. They had been selling chewing gum on the streets to earn a few pence each day. Thanks to Pick up a Piece, Trust in Children had been able to pay for school uniforms, classroom materials and school fees. “I have never known kids to love school so much!” laughed Leonora. “Every penny spent on their education enhances life opportunities that they simply would not have, were it not for Trust in Children.”

Support has come from many quarters. In Malawi, Trust in Children works with partner charity Ripple Africa, which is building a primary school so that children do not have to walk up to nine hours a day to access education. In the UK, Trustees have built relationships with groups such as the Lambeth Scouts and manage their own summer workshop scheme for underprivileged children, using Trustees’ experience as fundraisers, youth mentors and project managers to develop new and engaging opportunities meeting a variety of overlooked needs.

Star of TV hit ‘Absolutely Fabulous’ Joanna Lumley is also a member. Joanna said, “Education is priceless and a small donation to Trust in Children can make a huge difference to a child’s start in life.

Going back to school is a reminder of the importance of education and Pick Up a Piece is a great way to find out what’s stopping children from going to school and doing something about it.”

The event was generously catered for by Fresh and Wild Whole Foods and Cusqueña Beer, and website designers Bluefig Creative supported through the development of www.trustinchildren.org.

Dr Alan Borg said, “Trust in Children connects children with chances. The Pick Up a Piece scheme enables donors to make a direct improvement to a child’s education and fill in the gaps often overlooked by other charities.

However, there’s still plenty of opportunity to get involved with our growing and friendly charity. Our Christmas party will thank old supporters and attract new ones with the launch of a new art project and even more opportunities to get involved through Pick up a Piece. Old Westminsters of all ages and interests are invited to email info@trustinchildren.org for invitation details.”

The trustees would like to extend their warmest thanks to the Head Master, the Bursar and the Development Office for their generosity and support in hosting this event.

To become a member or attend the Christmas party in December 2007, email info@trustinchildren.org or visit www.trustinchildren.org

OW in Guatemala

When I think about my walk to work each morning - negotiating the daily hazards of speeding tuk tuks, fierce geese, falling mangos and a decidedly rickety rope bridge - it's hard to believe that most of the time I do forget that I am in Guatemala. I have only been living in the quiet town of San Agustín, Acasaguastlán for five months, but already it feels like my second home.

I'm volunteering for a grass-roots development organisation, ADIPSA, in the forgotten north east of the country. ADIPSA works with subsistence or semi-subsistence farmers in this region, providing them with opportunities that aim to improve the quality of life for the farmers and their families. The population of the town of San Agustín itself is only 4,000, but clinging to the sides of the fertile hills and river valleys that rise up to 3,000m above sea level behind the town into the Sierra de las Minas National Reserve, another 30,000 people scratch out their lives. The majority of these families live and work on their own small plots of land, hopefully producing enough of the staple foods (maize and beans) to feed themselves and, if they are lucky, to produce a little extra that can be sold in the local market.

ADIPSA runs a diverse range of projects, from offering much needed low interest micro-loans to farmers who don't even have bank accounts, to encouraging the cultivation of organic crops and the conservation of water. In contrast to many development agencies who parachute into an area wielding gifts of crops, seeds or fertilizers and then fly off to help another set of poor people, ADIPSA is a truly local organisation. Their three trained agronomists are from local farming families, growing up within the very same communities they are now trying to help. They spend their days slogging up and down the hillsides on their motorbikes, visiting the 300 or so members of ADIPSA in 22 remote communities, giving on-going agricultural advice and support.

All of the projects appear on the surface to be incredibly simple, but each one is designed to yield multiple rewards that are sustainable in the long term. For example, their current 'soil conservation' project involves sowing 'living barriers' of crops such as pineapple or lemon tea in rows across the maize and bean fields to prevent the fragile soils from being washed down the steep hillsides in the heavy winter rains. Each farmer has also been given 25 fruit tree saplings – lemons, oranges, avocados, mangos – to plant throughout the maize field. The roots of the trees will help to bind the soil, which is particularly important in the fallow season.

The ADIPSA policy is that in exchange for the 'gifts' of fruit trees, the farmers must attend a series of training courses on how to grow and cultivate their new crops. One such session involves how to make organic fertilizers and pesticides from simple things in the home. The farmers love it – growing organically is cheaper than buying chemical fertilizers and they know it is healthier for their families (to them the long-term benefits to the environment are just an added bonus).

In only 9 months this successful project has already literally borne fruit. The produce has increased the range of foods in a traditionally very restricted diet that often consists of little more than black beans and maize tortillas. In a country where chronic child malnutrition is ranked third highest in the world, this is vital. The extra crops also offer 'food security' – something to fall back on in an emergency. If the maize crop is poor one year, empty stomachs won't be inevitable. Any surplus fruits can also be sold at the local market – providing a little extra much needed cash for the family. This also has the added benefit of keeping income within the local economy and the whole community benefits from not being so dependent on external imports (also increasingly vital after the recent instigation of 'CAFTA,' the 'Free-Trade' agreement with the USA which threatens to flood Guatemala with cheap subsidised maize from the US).



From top: Looking up to the top of Las Sierra de las Minas from San Agustín; Claire Ellis (BB1995-97); Houses in the Countryside; Looking down into the Motagua Valley from Hierba Buena; An ADIPSA agrinonmist advising members.



The success of ADIPSA in 13 years is evident. Not only have they managed to execute successful projects in education, food security, organic cultivation and

rightly thrilled to have just had their office hooked up to the Internet, and yet I am constantly frustrated by the incredibly slow connection. ADIPSA are well

reverence and gratitude for providing them with the tools and knowledge to do that.



The town of San Agustín

I have been working on a 'Characterisation of the Region' document for ADIPSA, which will hopefully be useful in seeking financial support for more projects in the future. The Education Project, in which adults were able to gain a primary school education via the radio, tragically ground to a halt this year because the funding stream dried up. I will be looking for other sources of funding for Education, while at the same time investigating the possibility of expanding their organic fair-trade coffee project. There is organic brown sugar production in the region, so I will be beginning the process of looking for a market and buyers for organic fair-trade cane sugar.

women's development, they have also managed to gain funding from several international non-governmental organisations to expand the scope of their work. Intermón (Spanish Oxfam) is currently funding a project which has allowed them to mobilise, organise and support a group of local coffee farmers to gain fair-trade status for their high quality organic beans. These farmers are now benefiting from a secure high price for their coffee, and they have the added bonus of receiving the 'Fair Trade Premium', money which must be spent collectively on community projects. The coffee farmers (the majority of whom have little more than a primary school education) have decided to put the fund towards providing educational scholarships for their children.

accustomed to the challenges of working within rural communities that are still living with the memory of a 36 year civil war. The people are understandably inherently suspicious of outside help and of organisations that may have a hidden agenda. Gaining trust and respect is a painstakingly slow process.

I would be over the moon if I managed to achieve in just one year a smidgen of what ADIPSA have done to improve the lives of the people in this remarkable country.

You can find out more about ADIPSA here: www.adipsa.org (The web site is very out of date, but it should give you an idea of what the organisation is all about).

Living and working in Guatemala has definitely been an eye-opening experience. If nothing else, I have learnt the virtue of patience! This is a country where the concept of time is completely open to personal interpretation and it's virtually expected to arrive an hour or two late for a meeting. The ADIPSA staff are quite

But little by little ADIPSA have been turning things around and gaining small but immensely significant victories. Most importantly, their members are thrilled. One of the best days I have had was when I attended one of the compulsory training sessions for farmers in the community of El Baul a 90-minute motorbike ride and 30-minute hike from San Agustín (there is no access for vehicles to the village – all produce is carried out on foot or by donkey). I was blown away by the positive response and complete concentration these farmers (most of whom are completely illiterate) gave to the session. They are hungry for information and they are seizing every opportunity to improve the health, welfare and education of their families. They speak about ADIPSA with

If you would like to find out more about what I and my partner, Tom Taylor, have been up to, please have a look at our blog: www.guatemalango.wordpress.com

Claire Ellis (BB 1995-1997)



An ADIPSA training session

Human Scale Education



The annual Teddy Bears' Picnic fundraising event

Round a bend on the A25 Dorking and Guildford you pass beneath a wooden blacksmith waiting to strike the hours on his bell. Forging hammers have been ringing out here since 1557, and there is still a working forge. Behind the hammer clock (put up in memory of its 1873 founder) is one of the smallest schools in England. A trust has run it (no fees) since the County school was closed in 1982. Here, in the four rooms of a solid Victorian school building the current eight pupils, aged four to seven, are happily learning. A small school for small children. Human Scale Education. Here is an institution that (rather to its own surprise) provides everything today's politically correct thinking lauds. Parents have a choice, the community is held

together, good behaviour is the norm, sound values are instilled, no pupil can fail to achieve a secure grounding and mastery of essential skills, while retaining a child's natural curiosity. In addition the weakest are supported and encouraged and ambition aroused and fostered in all. The single teacher gets back-up and help from parents, and neighbours, among them professionals, including a retired teacher.

Abinger Hammer Village School Trust (Charity 285317, also a company) runs the School, which is

Ofsted inspected. An endowment is being built up gradually. There is strong and loyal help in local fundraising from villagers and friends, many of whom also serve on the Governing Body. The Treasurer, Daniel Lewis, is an OW (GG 1970-75), and another, Theo Zinn (Staff 1950-83), a long-standing friend of the initiating family, has always taken a benign interest in the progress of this scholastic enterprise.

Visits (by arrangement) are welcomed, as, not surprisingly, are donations.



Lunch in the School garden

Abinger Hammer School

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Abinger Hammer
Dorking RH5 6SE
www.ahvst.org

Head Teacher

Christine Townsend, BA Primary (Hons)
Tel. 01306 730 868.

Registered Address of the Charity and Secretary (Shirley Corke)

Eversheds,

Abinger Hammer, Dorking RH5 6QA.
Tel. 01306 730 868 shirley@corke.org

Advertise in the Elizabethan Newsletter 2007/2008

Due to the success of last year's advertising in the Elizabethan newsletter, we are again offering the opportunity for OldWestminsters to place advertisements in the 2007/2008 edition.

Adverts can either be half or quarter pages (£500 and £250 plus VAT).

Further details will be sent in due course, but if you are interested in advertising your business, a new book or the like, please contact the Development Office for more details.

Contact details

If you have any comments or news we'd love to hear from you.

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