

NEWSLETTER



December 2019

Registered Charity No. 1074935

I hope this arrives before your minds and mailboxes are overwhelmed by Christmas. I spent a very active, enjoyable and I hope useful week with PUSS and SOCH last month in Odisha. The weather was perfect and there are lots of positive things going on at PUSS and SOCH. I am pleased to report they have many exciting plans for the future, their implementation will of course depend on your generosity, so please spare a thought (and some money) for 'our' children over Christmas.

One of the many 'high spots' was the arrival and immediately productive use of the PUSS bus, a purchase made possible by a generous donation from Bryn Neil International, an international IT company based in Denver, Colorado which has recently started an outsourcing subsidiary in Bhubaneshwar.



Those of you who have been to PUSS will recognize the front entrance, maybe also the cow and perhaps also the overflowing waste bin which the children at PUSS try from time to time to clean up. I was assured that none of them ever contribute to the rubbish, or as Gilbert and Sullivan would say, 'well, hardly ever'.

Chris Evans, the CEO of Bryn International, was visiting Bhubaneshwar at the same time, and we travelled together in the bus with the older girls to visit a large local dairy plant, run by the Milk Mantra company. I don't suppose that any of the girls had ever seen a modern factory of any kind before, certainly not such a clean, bright business as this. The plant gets its milk from some 50000 farmers who own one or two cows each, 90% of the milk produced in Odisha is sold through local informal and usually unhygienic channels, often after some water has been added; the PUSS girls were duly impressed, and so was I.

I was also able to introduce Kailash Lyer, the manager of Bryn Neil's new subsidiary, to PUSS and to Manoj at SOCH, and we are looking forward to a continuing relationship with them, and we hope to the development of employment opportunities for some of the girls.

Back at PUSS we met another cow or rather a calf more directly; this is Rakhi, a new resident at PUSS, who lives in a nice new stall in the playground and is generously petted by everyone as they pass.



I also met another new arrival at PUSS, a very young girl who was rescued from very sad circumstances in the city. She has had a difficult time settling in, at one time her father, or rather a person who claimed to be her father, came to PUSS to try to take her away so that he could again use her as a begging aid, but Kuku managed to persuade him to leave the child in the loving home of which she is now so happy to be a part.



NEWS FROM SOCH (SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN)

SOCH are continuing their railway station platform rescue work on the three stations, they have also just started a new four week residential programme at the Mat and Del Page Rehabilitation Centre, for addicted, out of school and other problem girls from the slums. They hope that most of the girls will be able to return to their homes after the programme, but PUSS have agreed to take in any of them who for whatever reason cannot go home.

The Guest family of Melbourne in Australia have endowed an annual award at PUSS for good English writing, in memory of Richard Guest who died some years ago and was my Godson. His sister Thea Guest, was able to visit Bhubaneswar to make the first award, and she also took a session at the SOCH programme in which she did her best to explain to the girls what and where Australia is. I found the best approach was to show them how a kangaroo hops, or rather hobbles.



Thea Guest was also the most honoured guest (no pun intended) at the award ceremony at PUSS, she duly presented a small memento and some books to the girls who had performed best at the English writing competition, while Kuku explained in English and in Odiya what it was all about. The award also confers a small, but in Odisha, very significant cash grant which the girl can use to further her education or vocational training after she leaves PUSS.



Lots more to report, but space is limited, please do think about the children whom we support through the great work our friends at PUSS and SOCH are doing when you are thinking about your Christmas shopping. If you have children, grandchildren, friends or others who might be interested in volunteering, please do put them in touch with us, they can be assured of a warm welcome and a very rewarding experience.

Have a merry Christmas, and a peaceful, happy new year.

Malcolm Harper, Vice Chairman.

STOP PRESS: We are delighted and very proud to tell you that Manoj Kumar, founder and head of 'our' SOCH, has been selected as one of the 30 'Gratitude Fellows' (see <http://www.gratitude-network.org>) who are chosen each year from social entrepreneurs throughout the world to be part of a one year programme of coaching and training, starting with a one week residential session in California. Congratulations from all of us!