



Friends of Udayan

Newsletter – December 2006

This has been another year of growing support and fundraising activity for James Stevens in his tireless work for the children of Udayan. It began with a series of talks given by James who had come with his wife Lallita on an extended visit which included their first Christmas for many years here in England. While staying with John and Kathryn Spink/Coo they met a number of Udayan Friends and donors at various gatherings, and visited Roshan Watkins the director of **Vandevi** in Dorking. At the invitation of the vicar, Rev. Barbara Steadman-Allen, they attended a Sunday Eucharistic Service in the beautiful church of **St Mary Magdalene, Holmwood**. Lallita read the lesson in Hindi and James based his sermon on Matthew chapter 8, verse 3: "Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him saying, 'I will. Be clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." He informed the congregation that in spite of medication there are nonetheless twelve million leprosy sufferers in the world today, a third of whom live in India. He went on to say that leprosy has lost little of its power to generate fear and so the sufferer continues to be cast out and shunned, 'principally owing to the centuries-old stigma attached to the disease deriving from the fact that the ravages of leprosy are largely external rendering the sufferer physically very ugly, for some even revolting.' Without Udayan the 220 boys and 84 girls would be condemned to the

'same fate as their parents.' His presence in the church marked the ongoing relationship which is being developed between the parish and Udayan. Last Christmas saw a large card placed at the back of the church which people signed, donating to Udayan the money they would have spent on individual cards. The home is remembered in their prayers as are specific children, notably Tumpa who successfully underwent major heart surgery in March.



15 year-old Tumpa recuperating at Udayan

At a meeting with **S.M.O.A.T.** members in Reigate James showed St Joan of Arc's promotional film about Udayan. The following day he paid his second visit to St Joan's

where he spoke to the sixth formers. Tony the headmaster again pledged his support and offered a further eight computers for use by the older children. They were dispatched later in the summer at no cost by the generosity of Bernard Lavery through his shipping company, together with a large consignment of second hand golf clubs and used balls kindly donated by members of the **RAC Golf Club**.



Light Music an' Eats 2



James and Lallita

The students in the sixth form at **St Joan of Arc** have continued with their fundraising activities for the children of Udayan and in raising awareness throughout the school and beyond of the plight of leprosy sufferers. Building on the formula of a previous highly successful evening of entertainment, a dedicated group, some of whom visited the home two years ago, put on Light Music an' Eats 2 to rave reviews. Information on this and other events together with photographs can be seen on their website: www.joa-udayan.co.uk

James indicated some months ago that he wanted to improve the sleeping conditions for some of his boys and thought bunk beds would be the answer. This was put to the new head teacher, Peter Sweeney, who is as enthusiastic as his predecessor Tony to forge links with Udayan, and it has been agreed that each class in the school is to sponsor a bed which will have their name painted on the side. The students will receive a photograph of the bed and its occupants to put on their notice board. A number of Friends have also committed themselves to being sponsors and the scheme is open to all.

Among the many generous **donors** I'd like to make particular mention of Tosh and Beryl Bhaduri because in celebrating their Ruby Wedding Anniversary they raised £700 for Udayan from friends and relatives in lieu of presents.

St Margaret's parish, West Hoathly, collected on behalf of Poor of the World and kindly allocated some of the funds to Udayan, and the Mission Giving Committee of St Mary's Church in Battersea sent £500.

Yet again the **Watermill Jazz Club** very kindly donated half of the proceeds from their charity evening to Udayan.

One of the fruits of the Friends' fundraising has been the purchase of a much needed **school bus** which apart from other purposes is used for hospital runs.



The chiropractic gowns sewn by some of the Udayan girls have proved to be very popular and Graham Allen in Dorking has kindly placed another order.

Forthcoming visit:

Eight sixth formers from St Joan's and two teachers, myself included, are going together with seven of the Friends to spend time at Udayan.



Left to right back row: Neal, Caroline, Liz and Mike; front row: Grace, Shane, Siobhan, Trish, Katherine and Chris

A **daily diary** complete with photographs will be posted on www.joa-udayan.co.uk from the 4th to the 21st February.

Christmas 2007 cards will be available for viewing on the website in the summer as well as a **2008 calendar** which will be rich in photographs and inspirational quotations.

My first year has found me talking to the little children of Dolphin primary school in Wandsworth and scheduled to speak to the Pinner Rotary Club in the hope of widening the network of Friends. It is with a great sense of privilege I take over from Kathryn and shall endeavour to serve the children of Udayan with the same level of commitment and devotion. Thank you all for your faithful support. I wish you a Merry Christmas and peace in the New Year, Caroline Weldon cweldonudayan@aol.com