



**Newsletter - July 2008**  
**An Adventure in India**

Changing children's lives in Southern India

## WHO'S WHO ON THE COMMITTEE

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### Can you contribute anything?

We would welcome comments and suggestions about anything to do with what we do, the projects, management, future Newsletters, etc. Contact Geoff Allen at the address above.

## ••• NOTICE OF THE 10th AGM •••

**The Executive Committee has appointed the Tenth Annual General Meeting of the members of *Lincs with India* to take place on Friday, 15th August 2008 at 7.30p.m. at the Alford Cricket Club's Pavilion in Well Lane, Alford.**

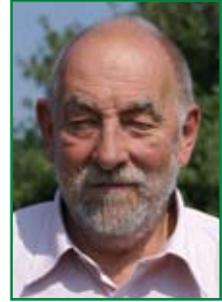
Proceedings of the meeting:

1. To appoint a Chairman of the meeting;
2. To confirm the Minutes of the last General Meeting and to deal with any matters arising;
3. To receive the Reports of the Executive Committee including the Financial Statements for the previous year;
4. To consider and, if approved, adopt the following resolution to adopt a new Constitution of the Association  
"RESOLVED that pursuant to para. T of the existing Constitution dated 23rd April 1998

- and in anticipation of registration of the Association with the Charity Commission the revised form approved by the Executive Committee at their meeting on the 26th June 2008 is hereby adopted as the Constitution of the Association;  
*Copies of the Constitution are online from the Association's website [www.lincswithindia.org.uk](http://www.lincswithindia.org.uk) or on request from the Hon. Secretary*
5. To appoint the Honorary Officers and Executive Committee for the ensuing year;
  6. Any other business appropriate to an AGM.

# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

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Welcome to the Summer 2008 newsletter. We've got lots of exciting news from the group and for those who have not visited Southern India, or for those who like to reminisce there's a very good account of the January 2008 visit by John Rowland on page 6.

## Accounts and financial

In so many ways we continue to go from strength to strength. At the forthcoming Annual General Meeting members will receive the latest Accounts and will hear that *Lincs with India* had an income in the financial year to 31st March 2008 in excess of £25,000. and we spent upwards of £30,000 on the projects.

This, following the resolution of the members at last year's AGM, added fresh impetus to the need for us obtain registered charity status and, thanks due to Jim Needley's efforts, it looks as if the path has now been cleared and agreed by the Charity Commission.

## The Treasurer Roger

While on the subject of the Accounts, many of you will know that Roger Woodrup has been quite poorly for a little while and he has now announced his intention to stand down from his post as our Treasurer at the next AGM. Roger is a founder member and has had the office of our Treasurer since the very beginning, 10 years ago. He has overseen us grow from a small group raising a few hundred pounds a year to the latest Accounts showing income of more than £25,000. We are indebted to Roger for his expertise

in keeping our Accounts and financial affairs in good order and for his time and attention to the day to day work of the Treasurer and we wish him well.

Roger has completed his tenth set of Accounts, these for the year to 31st March 2008 to be produced for approval at the forthcoming AGM and member Robert Haynes of Louth has kindly stepped forward into the role of acting Treasurer until a new Treasurer is appointed at the AGM (it might be him although he says he is looking forward to a contested election!)

## Fundraising

There has been some super fundraising since we last reported to you. John and Irene Roddam hosted another spectacularly successful 'lunch on the lawn' at Bassingham in May to raise upwards of £1,400. A lovely afternoon enjoyed by everyone disguising much hard work by John, Irene and their team.

In contrast, no real work at all was involved in the organisation, in Alford, of a very long lunch for 30 or so local members and friends at the Neshia Indian Restaurant in the Alford High Street (which, in a short time there, has developed a very good reputation).

Due entirely to the generosity of the proprietors, £250 was raised for our funds.

Special thanks must go however to Fiona and Owen Trotter, married in the New Year who, in lieu of traditional wedding presents, invited their guests to make donations to *Lincs with India*. This has produced upwards of £2,000. which we will make sure is well spent. See *the back page*.

### **A new hostel for the girls?**

It's not all plain sailing. Following in the wake of the January 2008 visiting group who celebrated the opening of the new boys hostel at Stedland has come news that SDET has had to give up the rented accommodation in Chokklampatti used for some time to house the sponsored girls.

Apparently, with no other choice, Ignatius has had to bring the girls into Sdetland to live in the multipurpose building (erected as a storeroom, kitchen and staff room three years ago). This is disastrous. Of course, the

building is not as bad as the premises used until last year as the hostel for the boys (poorly constructed of brick with mud mortar with an asbestos sheet roof). But it is still inappropriate and far too small for the 25 girls and their supervisors. Ignatius is also concerned about security and needs funding for substantial fencing at Stedland.

So, to my mind, there is nothing else for it – we built a hostel for the boys and now we shall have to build another one! That will be the next major project and your Committee has started work on it.

### **Website**

Our newly launched website is now in place to keep you up to date and to provide an easy way for you to communicate with us. Thank you to Claire and Judy for making this happen. See *the back page*

See you all at the AGM on the 15th August.

*Grant Allan*

## **THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BOYS NEW HOSTEL**

The official opening ceremony had been very carefully planned and orchestrated by Ignatius. As we walked between the rows of children and staff lined up to greet us, we were welcomed with garlands of flowers.

There was much symbolism contained within the ceremony: lamps were lit in each room by the women of our group to symbolise bringing of new life, light and hope into the new building; and, we each poured a cup of milk into a cooking pot to symbolise everyone contributing to the communal life of the building. We later drank the milk as part of the meal prepared for us and all the children and staff.

The new building is very good and during the speeches it was clear that all the staff and children were thrilled to have, in their terms, such luxurious accommodation. *John Rowland*



*The completed 'Lincs House'*

## PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

Much has been written (by John Rowland page 6) about the sights and sounds of the India experience and our adventure there in the New Year which have left such an impression on Audrey and I. To this, I would just like to add something about the successful partnerships underpinning *Lincs with India's* work in supporting the underprivileged children in the area of India we visited.

*Lincs with India* has formed a very successful partnership with the Social & Democratic Education Trust in Tamil Nadu. As funding partners, *Lincs* is empowering SDET's support of the exceptionally deprived children we met on our visit.

I know that many of the founder members of *Lincs with India* are Rotarians. Rotary is all about service through partnership as exemplified by the founding of *Lincs*.

The object of Rotary is to promote the ideal of service as a basis of worthy activity and this is often seen in the form of joint venture or partnership between Rotary Clubs and community organisations and between Rotary Clubs internationally. Moreover, through Rotary's own charity, the Rotary Foundation, matching grant funding could be available for one or more of the projects and activities carried out by Ignatius' charitable organisation. It might be, for example, that a partnership formed between one of the local Rotary Clubs in our District, with the Rotary Foundation and a Rotary Club in SDET's region of Tamil Nadu could further help Ignatius with his work.

Audrey and I are pleased to be members of *Lincs with India* and wish the organisation continuing success.

*Peter Manton*

*[Ed. Peter has been elected to the leadership of the Rotary organisation in this area of the country in 2009/10. Peter was part of the visiting team in January this year]*

## The ICT home sponsorship children

Members will recall that of the many original children we agreed to sponsor through ICT's programme, we still have four: Banupriya, Ponmalar, Velankanni and Pandiaraj. Our last edition of the Newsletter contained information and photographs – which you can now access via our website at [www.lincswithindia.org.uk](http://www.lincswithindia.org.uk). We are committed to continue our support until they leave full time education.

Extracts from the childrens' latest letters are included below.

*Brian*

### Samathuvapuram

Dear Uncle,

I am your P. Ponmalar. I am very fine here with my parents brother and sister. I pray the god for your healthy life.

I completed my X Std at Government Hr. Sec. School. I got very good marks in my half yearly Examination. I hope to get very high marks in my annual examination.

We celebrated Christmas festival in our House. Tamilar festival called 'Thai pongal' was celebrated by making Rangoli\* and prepared pongal. We decorated our animals and presented many holy things to the god and felt happy.

On January 26th we celebrated our Republic day in our school. Our school head-master hoisted the national flag and he has given us sweets.

I am very thankful to you and your family for your help.

Yours lovingly, P. Ponmalar

*\*[Ed. Rangoli is one of the most popular art forms in India. It is a form of sandpainting decoration that uses finely ground white powder and colours, and is used commonly outside homes in India.]*

# AN ADVENTURE IN INDIA

by John Rowland

*[Ed. a full and very good account of the January 2008 visit by John can be found by visiting our website at [lincswithindia.org.uk](http://lincswithindia.org.uk) but here are some extracts]*



## We arrived at Trivandrum Airport and immediately India made us welcome...

Our first hotel in Kovalam (in Kerala) was perched on the edge of the Indian Ocean with wonderful views. At night as we sat in one of the many restaurants eating wonderful fish dishes, we looked out over the ocean at the myriads of little lights from the fishing boats catching our king fish, barracuda and red snapper.

Vizhinjam (the local fishing village) bustled with life. The people bartered and haggled over the catches of small fish brought in by the local fishermen in their dug out canoes and the port was packed with the brightly coloured larger fishing boats used for

deep sea fishing. This was an area where Muslims, Hindus and Christians appeared to coexist and where the respective churches could be seen close together.

Our journey to Madurai on dry dusty roads with many hairpin bends was punctuated every now and then with the site of approaching mobile haystacks.

We stopped at the Special School in Srivilliputhur where we met Ignatius and the children in the school. The children clearly have significant special needs and the dedicated staff work very hard with the limited resources to meet those needs.

*Meenakshi Temple, Madurai*



Pupil from  
the Special  
School in  
Srivilliputhur



Younger children were using simple toys and the older children in the vocational group were making a type of disinfectant from jasmine flowers and other natural materials. Parents of handicapped children in India find it hard to accept that their child is different. With the help of a worker from the Spastic Society the school has established a support programme for parents on Saturdays. We left the school feeling that these children in their cramped little classrooms were the lucky ones; but how much more could be achieved with the right resources.

Our first excursion into Madurai was to see the Meenakshi Temple. The Temple is dedicated to the Lord Shiva and is made up of a complex of magnificent gopurams or towers. These are extraordinarily beautiful, decorated with striking images and highly painted.

From our hotel base in Madurai, we met up with the supported tribal children at the Athisayam Theme Park. *Lincs with India* had paid for all the children to attend the Park as a treat and for many this would be

## Valaiyapatti

Dear Uncle,

I am your ever loving S. Banupriya. I am fine here with my mother, grandmother and brother. I wish the same from you and your family and relatives. I pray the God for your healthy life.

Now I am preparing for my VII Std annual examination. I got very good marks in my half yearly examination. I got sixth rank. I am working hard now to get very high marks in my forthcoming annual examination with your blessings.

We celebrated Kalamman Kovil festival in our village. We prepared a pongal\* on that day and celebrated the function in a grand manner.

Myself and my family members are very thankful to you for your valuable help. Thanking you.

Yours lovingly, S. Banupriya”

\* [Ed. a rice dish popular in South India. Go to [www.pongalfestival.org](http://www.pongalfestival.org). to see how to make one!]

## Srivilliputtur

Dear Uncle,

I am your A. Velankanni I am fine here with my family I wish you the same from you.

I am studying fine here. I got very good marks in my half yearly examination. I attended special tuition classes for maths and english. It was very useful to me. I am preparing for my annual examination.

Uncle, I am very happy this year because my father is living with me here. This year we celebrated New Year and Christmas festival. I took part in sports activities in my school. I got prize in kho kho game. Please have a prayer for me.

I had a medical check up conducted by SDET people.

I am very thankful to you for your valuable help.

Thanking you.

Yours lovingly, A. Velankanni

\*[Ed. a form of tag played between two teams of 12. Anyone know the rules?]



the first time they had been to such place. They were clearly very excited by their experience and perhaps a little bemused by our group of blotchy pink people. We accompanied the children round the “dry” rides, some of us risking life and limb to join in. An ice cream concluded the day for the children. For some of the little ones the experience had been just too much as they fell fast asleep on the park benches.

The following day we visited the Tribal Settlement of Kurinja Nagar. The women greeted us by putting bindi, red and yellow dots on our foreheads. The children appreciated the sugar cane we had brought as a treat and quickly demolished the tough fibrous delicacy. The little girl Vasiammal, featured in previous newsletters, was there with her grandparents and she appeared to be doing very well. The resettlement of the tribal families is an on-going and difficult issue.

Visits to the borehole at Thumbaiapurum, (provided by the Alford and Mablethorpe



Rotary Club) the Valayapatti and Chokklampatti schools (where the children entertained us with well-known English nursery rhymes including a delightful rendition of Hot Cross Buns) and on then to the boys’ hostel at ‘Stedland’ and the official opening of the new hostel for the boys.

The Special School (for disabled children) housed in the complex was run on similar lines to the one at Srivilliputhur and some of the older children were engaged in making paper bags from newspaper. We left some tactile wall charts to help the teachers.

When all the ceremonies were over, the time came for the long awaited cricket match. A brief discussion on the interpretation of the rules and the condition of the pitch was quickly followed by our team batting (not a pretty sight but we managed to gather together 50 runs, a creditable target we thought). However, after ten minutes, a couple of sixes and 10 fours we lost!

We left the hostel to return to Madurai with the children running across the compound to wave their farewells. We had met the little boy we sponsor for the first time and we wondered when we might see him again. Before we left the area we visited the girls' hostel and the comparison between this and the new boys hostel made us resolve to do all we could to ensure that these lovely happy little girls also had a nice place in which to live.

Driving over the Western Ghats was fascinating. We saw wonderful scenery, drove over the edge of three sheer cliffs and had a further glimpse into the diverse culture of the Indian people. We stopped for a coffee beside a Spice Garden, which turned out to belong to Mr Abraham. The garden was featured on the recent BBC2 programme of gardens round the world introduced by Monty Don. Cochin was a huge contrast to Madurai with much more of a Western feel. Our hotel in Cochin was called the Abad Plaza but in truth it was not too bad!

The days that followed were packed with sight-seeing: St Francis' Church in Cochin; the cantilevered Chinese fishing nets on the shoreline; an Indian Habitat store!; the Dutch Palace (built by the Portuguese in 1555 and presented to the Raja of Cochin as a goodwill gesture).

The Kerala Backwaters (a vast expanse of huge lagoons and water hyacinth channels) comprises a fascinating blend of nature and human habitat. Like Ratty in *Wind in the Willows* the people on the backwaters live on the water, in the water and by the

## Srivilliputtur

Dear Uncle,

I am your A. Pandiaraj. I am very fine here with my parents, brother and sister. I wish the same from you and your family.

Uncle, I got pass marks in all subjects in my half yearly examination. I have recently completed by annual examination. I am very confident to get very good marks in my annual examination also. Please do prayer for me.

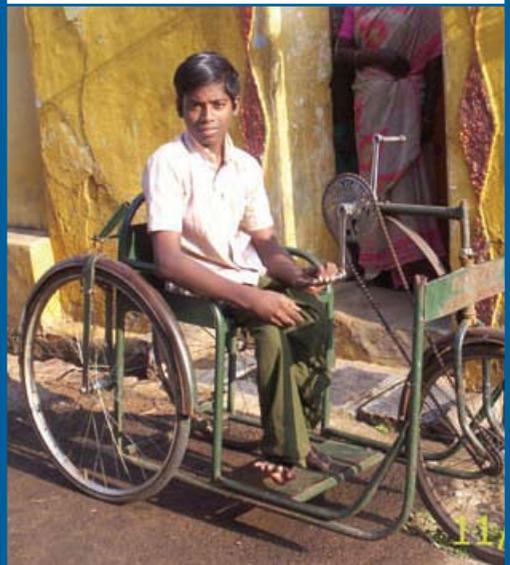
Uncle, we have very good raining for the past one week. All the ponds and tanks are filled up. Now I am in summer vocation so I am learning computer course in the evening. I am very interested in computer.

I checked up my body in a medical camp organised by the SDET.

Thank you very much for your kind help.

Yours lovingly, A. Pandiaraj

*[Ed. Pandiaraj is a polio victim and cannot stand unaided. We made it possible for him to go to School several years ago when we bought him a hand-operated tricycle and he is certainly making the best of these opportunities]*



water and all life is governed by it. Our converted rice boat provided a luxurious method of transport and as we glided along we passed people washing their clothes, their hair, themselves and their pots.

We happened upon a temple elephant being led along the road. The mahoots were amenable to bribes and allowed a number of our group to sit on the back of the animal. Sitting was the easy part.

Stopping for rest at Vakala gave us an opportunity to have a brief glance at this picturesque coastal resort and to feast for the last time in India on the wonderful fish dishes that are a part of the coastal region. As we ate our meal, we looked out over the sea at the little dugout canoes defying maritime law with water washing over their plimsoll lines and at the sea eagles being mobbed by the crows.

Back in Trivandrum, after a good night's sleep, we set off to see the Hindu temple of Sri Padmanabhaswamy where the women pilgrims visiting the temple presented a vibrant image in their richly coloured saris. We visited the nearby Palace museum, originally the home of the Rajas of Travancore which provided a



haven from the dusty bustle or the crowds outside the temple.

Across the street (walking directly with purpose to allow the traffic to flow around you!) passing a statue of Gandhi, we entered the busy market area. Here you could buy almost anything including shiny pots and pans, vegetables of all kinds and fish some of which was dried and looked like tissue paper.

Our final day in India was spent on a drive into the hills. We visited the St Thomas Mount Mission hospice run by Roman Catholic nuns. The men and women in the hospice have nothing and yet are the lucky ones. They are cared for and given clothes, food and a bed. This was a very moving experience.

We continued our drive around twenty two hair pin bends and over surfaces euphemistically called a road to a tea plantation high up in the hills and amidst spectacular scenery. On the way back we talked to a villager who was harvesting latex from the rubber trees and he showed us how this is then converted into sheets which are bundled up and sent for processing.

We left India the following day. For me there was a real sense of regret in leaving such warm and friendly people and in leaving a country with such a rich tapestry of cultures and creativity. The Indian people are a happy people who smile and nod enthusiastically. Many also have a hard life and poverty is evident everywhere. We can only do small things but what we can do makes a difference to the lives of some people and surely that is worth doing.

*John Rowland*

# CHARITIES ACT REGISTRATION (nearly there!)

*Lincs with India* was formed 10 years ago at a meeting of its founder members on the 23rd April 1998. *Lincs* been a wholly charitable organisation (in every sense of the word 'charitable') from the very beginning. We informed the Charity Commission of our formation at the time and, although we were unsure if this was strictly necessary, submitted an Application for registration.

The advice from the Charity Commission at that time was that we did not need to register *Lincs*. There were two main reasons for this. Among the founder members of *Lincs with India* were several sponsors of children maintained under a programme operated by the International Childrens Trust ([www.ict.org.uk](http://www.ict.org.uk)) and the Charity Commission took the view that we were really just a support group for ICT.

That was not entirely right. But, on another ground, the advice from the Commission could be more understood. We really did not know how things would develop and in reply to the Commissions' enquiry as to the expected amount of our gross income in our first year of operation we replied "Known to be in excess of £100"! Actually, of course, in the year to 31st March 2008 (our tenth year) our gross income was £25,337.

Anyway, against that background, at last year's AGM the members resolved to renew the Application for registration and some minor alterations were made to our Constitution. Now, nearly another year on and after much form filling and communications with the Charity Commission we have been told that, subject to yet some more tinkering with our Constitution, *Lincs with India* will be registered. There will be more about the legal side of things to be dealt with at the next AGM meeting elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Registration will bring with it responsibilities and compliance requirements but also significant benefits, principally a big boost to *Lincs*' income from the cheques we will receive from H.M. Revenue & Customs from the 'gift aid' Tax credits.

*Jim Needley - Email: [jim@lincswithindia.org.uk](mailto:jim@lincswithindia.org.uk)*

## India/Sri Lanka – January 2009

Now is the time for us making plans for the visit to the projects in January 2009. We already have the nucleus of a group but if you are interested please contact Grant Allan (01507 462882 / [grant@lincswithindia.org.uk](mailto:grant@lincswithindia.org.uk)) or Geoff Allen (7803 022372 / [geoff@lincswithindia.org.uk](mailto:geoff@lincswithindia.org.uk)) before or at the AGM, 15th August, by which time we will have a detailed package worked out. This year's trip, being organised through Moran

Travel of Louth, will involve the initial week divided between the delights of Kerela (the green State) and over the Ghats into Tamil Nadu to visit the projects and Stedland and the area. The second week will be in Sri Lanka, touring, sightseeing and relaxing.

*If you are interested in making a visit to the projects but cannot manage the trip this coming year please let us know and we will keep in contact with you.*

# THE LAUNCHING OF [WWW.LINCSWITHINDIA.ORG.UK](http://WWW.LINCSWITHINDIA.ORG.UK)

We now have our very own website! Complete with a google map showing satalite photographs of Srivilliputtur and surrounding areas, *Lincs with India* is now on the world wide web!

With many thanks to our members Claire (who did the initial groundwork) and Judy (who has brought things up to date) we now have our very own website. Visit [www.lincswithindia.org.uk](http://www.lincswithindia.org.uk) to have a look at it and please do use the 'contact us' page to send us your comments. The content will be under constant review, alteration and editing.

The website will be an important publicity vehicle for us. It says who we are and what we do, it provides an easy way to contact us and for prospective new members to register with us. The website will keep members up to date with information on the 'news and events' page and we will maintain an archive of Newsletters and articles. Once we have obtained registered charity status we hope to link up with fundraising sites such as [www.mycharitypage.com](http://www.mycharitypage.com), [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and ebay.



Of course, we need a stream of information for the website which needs to come to me by email at: [ga@lincswithindia.org.uk](mailto:ga@lincswithindia.org.uk) or by post to: 6 High Street, ALFORD, Lincs LN13 9DX.

So, as always, I shall be pleased to hear from you.

*Geoff Allen*

## 2,000 reasons to celebrate

***Lincs with India* had more than 2,000 reasons to celebrate the wedding of Fiona and Owen Trotter who both hail from just outside the City of Lincoln.**

This widely travelled couple, Fiona has lived and worked in India and Owen has worked in Germany and Canada, tied the knot last February in a ceremony in Cambridge.

Having moved around and already having their home they decided that they would ask their guests to donate to *Lincs* instead of buying them presents. This resulted in a magnificent total of upwards of £2,000 plus for which we are very grateful.

Most of the Executive Committee had the pleasure of meeting and saying thank you to the happy couple when they attended John and Irene's recent fund raising luncheon held in Bassingham. All the members will wish Fiona and Owen well for the future and we shall look forward to seeing them at future *Lincs with India* events.

We are indebted to **Nesha**, the Indian restaurant of High Street, Alford and to **the Yorkshire Building Society** through its Alford and Sutton on Sea agencies of solicitors, **Tinn Criddle & Co**, for the sponsorship of the costs of printing and circulation of this edition of the Newsletter