

Award winning ethical, responsible, sustainable volunteer travel



Summer newsletter 2015

Editorial



This is a quote I saw recently, seems rather appropriate for those of us who travel and volunteer . . .

“Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry but by demonstrating that all people cry, laugh, eat, worry and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try to understand each other, we may even become friends” Mayo Angelou

Just a reminder that *people and places* have a social at Kate`s (head office!) on the 7th of November and we would like to see you if you haven`t attended a social before please come along, it`s a great chance to meet new and seasoned volunteers and maybe talk to a volunteer who has worked on a project you are thinking of joining, [more information here](#).

And finally I would like to send my congratulations to Kate and Harold, news at the bottom of the page, it brought joy to the heart of an old cynic!

thank you, Yvonne and all our other volunteers, for your fantastic support

We're so proud of what is achieved by our volunteers – and if you'll pardon a bit of 'blowing our own trumpet', we're also proud of the way we work together towards their individual and collective achievements!



We're obviously doing something right ... once volunteers have worked in their very first placement with us, they trust '[people and places](#)' and [our local partners](#) to match them with appropriate and rewarding placements again.

Our relationship with each and every volunteer is based on mutual trust and careful matching – and over the years, we've been rewarded by literally scores of volunteers returning to '[people and places](#)' for another placement, either in the [same project or in a different project](#) where their particular skills and experience are needed and welcomed.

Not everyone is able to volunteer repeatedly, of course – yet many returned volunteers continue to support their projects in one way or another – some with donations, but many more through communicating with future volunteers, sharing their insights and experiences.

This network of volunteers is a very important part of helping us to brief future volunteers



... we refer to it as 'passing the baton' -continuity is an all-important part of what we do and how we do it.

So – just to give you one example: volunteer Yvonne has worked with us since the very beginning and this year we're making plans for her 8th placement in a total of 5 education development projects !

We say a big THANK YOU to ALL returned volunteers, and look forward to welcoming you again!

Special mention should go to Larry and Eileen Kugler too! This year will see their 7th trip to AV Bukani



Yvonne working at Gede School Kenya

news from our local partners and volunteer projects

The Gambia

Many of our volunteers in The Gambia work in some capacity with [ASSET, the Association for Small-Scale Enterprises in Tourism](#), which aims to help small local businesses make best use of their opportunities to thrive in a tourism-based economy. However, as we all know, tourism in West Africa has been badly hit by the Ebola outbreak.

This from Adama, our local partner in The Gambia and the driving force behind ASSET:

The Flames of Ebola Smouldering

The spread of Ebola in Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry and Liberia has caused a public health panic resulting in large-scale cancellations in holiday and travel arrangements throughout West Africa. This, subsequently has had serious impact on tourism in many parts of Africa even in destinations as far away as South Africa, despite being located thousands of kilometres away from the Ebola epicentre. The situation inevitably brought much suffering to communities across Africa especially those countries that are heavily dependent on international arrivals like the Gambia, even though there is no occurrence in the country. One year into the Ebola crisis things are changing for the better. There are no recorded cases for some time now in Liberia whilst cases in both Guinea and Sierra Leone are fluctuating at a much lower scale than it was.

The Ebola crisis showed how ignorant most people are of Africa. The negative fear-mongering image of an Africa rife with war, disease, poverty, famine and so on still forms the opinion of many in the west.

Africa is a continent not a country! It is a continent full of opportunities with economies growing faster than most anticipated. It is a continent with a soul where even though many live in poverty there is a spirit of living together as a family. The Gambia is no exception, it is seen by many visitors as the destination to visit first as a soft landing spot, where the people are open and friendly.

The Lessons

Worldwide, tourism is an important and growing sector for many economies. In The Gambia, it is a main source of income and employment, and its connections to the local economy makes many small and community enterprises dependent on it. However, it is often compared to fire: it can cook your meal, but can also burn your house down.

The Ebola crisis did bring the flames of overdependence on tourism to these businesses. At the ASSET Bantaba, situated at the Tourism area in Kololi and which houses a restaurant and craft shop, there was hardly any business.

Way forward

We would need to take a fresh look at developing a target market that is not totally dependent on tourism, a market that will use the income from tourism as a supplement to an existing local clientele. This means we need to change our business approach.

If you have ideas and want to take up this challenge with us you are very welcome to volunteer with us.

warm regards

Adama



Saint Lucia

In Saint Lucia one of the key focuses for projects where we place volunteers is working with [disadvantaged young people](#), and our local partners, Sacred Sports Foundation (SSF), are always looking for opportunities to expand this very important work. Nova, from SSF, has sent us the following update on their work:

"The focus of SSF has shifted in recent years to providing more comprehensive, holistic sustainable solutions as it looks to help tackle critical social issues in the Caribbean, offering youth greater employment opportunities, improved child welfare, environmental sustainability, health and youth development. The Foundation's development programmes have reached more than 2,000 participants in the past 24 months and it has successfully worked closely with Governments/agencies, mentors, youth leaders, unemployed youth, associations, industry stakeholders, schools, universities and vulnerable communities across Saint Lucia and the Caribbean. SSF has received financial support from a wide range of contributors, including the European Union, UNESCO, UNDP and Australian Government.

"We are always looking at ways to bring in more consistent funds to sustain our programmes", says Nova Alexander – founding partner . "In December we received confirmation of our UNDP/GEF grant application for the development of an environmentally friendly organic farm and public education programme. It will tackle a range of nutritional and environmental challenges through the introduction and optimization of organic production. It will focus on farming methods that engender Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care and has the specific purpose of engaging unemployed youth".

The foundation's key aims in 2015 and beyond are to provide greater employment opportunities through their programmes by extending training initiatives, certification programmes and helping establish a non-profit organic co-op, a youth-led response to sustainable unemployment and environmentally sound food production and processing designed to help solve the nation's food security issues.

Primary goals are the promotion of a better and more sustainable healthy lifestyle, the promotion of life skills, and greater employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth in local communities. These programmes are designed to foster increased community participation in socially inclusive public education projects, alongside promoting positive gender awareness and enhancing global environmental sustainability efforts.

Cambodia

Those of you who have volunteered in Cambodia will know Bridget, project manager at [Grace House Community Centre](#). Bridget has recently featured in The Guardian newspaper; the article is reproduced below:

Disability in Cambodia:

'Children can make progress and have rights'

Bridget Cordory shares her experiences of working as a project manager in Cambodia, a country with three social workers per 25,000 people

"I work as a project manager for Grace House Community Centre (GHCC) an NGO near Siem Reap, Cambodia. In my previous life, I was a care needs assessor for social services, establishing care packages for young disabled people. In 2008, Alan, my husband, took early retirement from the civil service and we travelled around Europe in a motorhome. Nine months and numerous cathedrals later we decided to "give something back" and volunteered in Cambodia. Seven years later we are still at GHCC.

I wake at about 4.30am to the sound of monks chanting at the local pagoda, if lucky I fall back to sleep until 7am. A cup of tea and toast is followed by a short ride on my scooter to GHCC where I am known as "Teacher Madam" (Bridget is difficult to pronounce). My journey takes me past rice fields with water buffalo wallowing in the river, women stooped over planting rice and children in their blue and white school uniforms who wave as they cycle to school. All very idealistic except for the potholes, lorries and dust!

Our work is with the poorest families in the community, keeping families together and preventing them placing children in orphanages. It is estimated that 74% of children in Cambodian orphanages have one or more living parent. Poverty and access to education are the main reasons given by parents for placing their children in orphanages. Children often fail to attend school as they are working to help support the family.

There are extremely limited state-run social services and benefit systems in Cambodia. With approximately three social workers per 25,000 people, NGOs are left to fill the gaps. As a consequence, services are very patchy and the rural poor are the most disadvantaged.

Physical abuse is still common in the home and at school, and children with disabilities are more likely to be abused. There are no official figures on the number of children with disabilities in Siem Reap province, however a Handicap International study found 16% of children assessed had a disability.

We started a special needs day centre and take referrals from the whole province. Last year, I visited a nine-year-old girl with cerebral palsy who was kept in a playpen in a darkened, locked room. My heart ruled my head and we raised funds to build a small group home as no specialist facilities existed outside Phnom Penh. We try to help parents understand their child can make progress and have rights. I need to respect local belief that a child with disabilities has done something wrong in their previous life, but balance that with safeguarding the child. My current task is to explain the benefits of respite care to local social workers working for other NGOs.

As a team we decide where our budget is spent and have developed assessment and review procedures. All families are assessed and given help in the form of rice and support for children to attend school, and access to healthcare. If the money is not in the bank, we are unable to buy rice, run services or pay wages and rent. I strongly believe in working with the community but over the years there have been times when I have tried to implement projects that have failed; I call it having my "western" head on, not my Khmer one.

I leave Grace House about 4pm but often work in the evening writing funding applications or reports. Fundraising is my biggest headache and a constant pressure.

South Africa

Paul, our local partner in Port Elizabeth, updates us on two of [the township schools](#) and on [Emmanuel](#).

What we have been up to at Charles Duna

Calabash Trust has been engaging at Charles Duna as a supporting partner offering extra mural workshops in drama and permaculture gardening with Xolisa Ngubelanga being facilitator for drama, Alhyrian Laue and Simpiwe Kaya facilitating the permaculture process. This is part of our mission to facilitate community members taking more ownership of their community's school.

In his sessions Xolisa has been working hard to foster an understanding between the role players; parents and students as to what role the parents and principal of their school are. Videos were compiled of the interpretations of parents and students on what a day as the principal entails, as well as what it takes to be a supportive parent.



Continuing from last year's permaculture design and implementation we had environmental education with the children and parents after school. Practical environmental education taking place where learning resources are being developed based on a process of integrating local knowledge-what the children and community know already- with additional knowledge of permaculture consultant, Alhyrian Laue.

We also had a showcase of the above works where other parents and community members were invited to attend. A great turnout with a lot of laughter and lessons.

We will now continue at Charles Duna with Environmental Education and Drama lessons once a week, with one of the aims turning their little garden into a potential business opportunity...we will let you know how everything progresses after the second term...



What we have been up to at W B Tshume



Our ongoing partnership with WB Tshume Primary school this year has so far included many activities thanks to the ongoing support of Grants-in-Aid and individual donors, particularly the Royal Wootton Bassett Rotary Club in the UK.

After school environmental education with the Qhamani Garden Club, where between 10-15 (sometimes more!) children attend practical garden/environmental lessons with our associate, Alhyrian Laue and our parent assistant, Linda Bartman on Wednesday afternoons. Below are some photos illustrating some of the activities... which also include singing songs about the work they are doing!

Last but not least, Linda Bartman, the parent assistant, will be opening a healthy tuckshop on the school premises, selling healthy meals (supplemented from the school garden that she manages) to the school and community. The room is still busy being prepared, so we will be able to

show nice pictures towards the end of the 2nd term, as well as progress in the garden and Grade R classrooms...

Then we still need to update you on the mural that was painted at the school by local artists, Sakhumzi and his brother. We plan to hold a showcase for the parents as well, after which we will send an update...

News from Emmanuel



We have to say goodbye to our project manager Estolene this month. Esto resigned to look after her sister who has been suffering from illness for some time. Thank you Esto for all your hard work and support over the years and we wish you all the best. The team has now elected Thembeke to become Emmanuel's project manager and we look forward to a new stage in our development.

So we are now in our second year without receiving any stipends for our work. It is hard but we renew our PLEDGE and our volunteers' contracts. The carers still go out for home visits and we still run support groups. One of the elderly client is now over the garden and we are cooking now three times a week for the creche children and volunteers. The garden is growing and we are back at food bank because the food they giving now is much better than the last. Our aim is to cook a healthy meal every day for everybody so that at least there is enough to eat. Thank you again to all our sponsors to help us achieve this.

● for updates from Morocco and Nepal, make sure you read the separate articles

Sallie visits our education volunteer project and plans a new one! - in Morocco



The road to work

This trip was all about seeing the new houses for [Education for All](#) with Latifa and working with her and Dr. Jaouad Oudrhri of [Atlas Sante](#) - a local NGO working to improve wellbeing, particularly for women and children, in the Berber Villages in the High Atlas Mountains.

I haven't seen Latifa for over 3 years (Dianne has been the last to visit her) and I was thrilled by the leaps and bounds she has taken with her English - she is so confident now and can express complex ideas in what is her 4th language. When I praised her, she was adamant that it is the **people and places** volunteers who have helped her .



We went to visit the third girls house that is being built in Asni - just a stone's throw from the school - when it is finished they will be able to house over 80 girls! I was mightily impressed with the work so far - what a wonderful home for the girls to return to when they are not at school.



The NGO I mentioned above, Atlas Sante, is keen to work with Education for All and our volunteer programme - their goal is to employ, for a small stipend, some of the girls who have graduated from Lycee and do not want to go to university or the city but rather return to their home. We have identified that these girls - sorry, young women - would be perfect to be the facilitators between the volunteers we recruit and the Berber village communities where they would work (deep in the Atlas mountains).

[You may want to take a look at these photos](#) of the valley where the volunteer programme will work.

One essential service that Atlas Sante supports is the dispensary where a nurse visits at least once a week - the first medical care the valley has ever had .

We are also aware that we will need to train and prepare the young women for such a role - and that's the first volunteer role we will be looking to fill - I can think of a couple of volunteers who would be perfect !



Seriously - if you have strong French and believe you could work with Latifa and Atlas Sante to prepare the first girls for this opportunity, we would love to hear from you. The "new" project will go live on our site in the autumn - but we would love to recruit the first, all-important volunteers very soon!

Latifa told me that she really values the **people and places** volunteers - and that she has really benefitted from the time she has spent with them - she asked me especially to send love and gratitude to you all.

looking forward to meeting you – 7th November 2015 – please come along !

So – a date for your diaries: Saturday 7th November 1 to 5pm–
at home with *people and places* at 'head office' Faversham, Kent.



"I cannot overstate the importance of thorough preparation for a volunteer experience....I was able to attend a P & P social event where I was able to talk directly to the staff and to people who had been before. These conversations were very helpful. I also met another volunteer who would be in the school at the same time as my wife and myself, so a potential 'team' identity was established. " *volunteer Bob*

We all LOVE these occasions and can promise you a thoroughly informative and sociable afternoon: find out more about our volunteer programmes; meet some of our local partners who will be in the UK for the annual World Travel Market in London; meet other volunteers – some who have already returned from their placements and have lots of news to share; enjoy the stimulating company of like-minded people – of all ages and from all walks of life; share in some sustaining drinks and nibbles ... oh yes, and meet me (Kate) Sallie, Dianne and Nigel ...

Programme

This is an informal occasion – at about 1.45pm, we will give a short presentation and then there will be plenty of time to ask questions and socialise.

Our get togethers in Faversham are always popular, so please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to come in November and before 29th May would be really helpful!

email kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

Please let us know if you plan to come along, and if you will be alone or with friends and family!

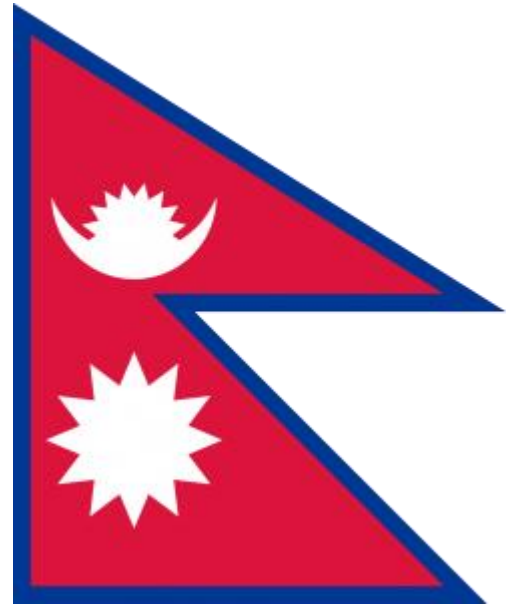
R.S.V.P. by 29th May

We'll then send out further info and directions.

Nepal - volunteer work permits and visas - and tourism

As you will appreciate we are desperate to enable our volunteers to return to Nepal as soon as they wish to. However, it is still illegal to volunteer in Nepal without a work permit and it is still a lengthy, costly and problematic process - which realistically precludes our volunteers from travelling there. Sallie is working closely with various people in Nepal to try to resolve this problem - but it's taking time!

But please do not let this stop you visiting Nepal - Nepal needs tourism much more than aid now - and the vast majority of Nepal is safe to visit.



If you are on Facebook and interested in how important tourism is to Nepal - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NepalTourismRecovery/> (created by our partner Raj) - you need to be logged in to see it!

We are optimistic we will resolve the work permit issue soon - so if you are keen to get back - or visit for the first time - please do let us know.

volunteering & 'voluntourism' - there's a difference!

It's taken a while, but gradually the media is beginning to recognise and write about the POSITIVE results of volunteering, and how to achieve such results.

At '**people and places**', we've always differentiated between volunteering and 'voluntourism' ... this understanding is beginning to be expressed in the media ... gradually !



'**people and places**' was featured in [an article in The Guardian in May](#) ... with the usual sort of headline, unfortunately ... but with a far more positive sub-heading:

"If volunteers are truly to help communities overseas, charities and NGOs must take the time to match their skills with the right projects"

No surprise there for us! Putting the right people in the right places is exactly what we do for each individual volunteer placement ... matching is the key for volunteers and projects to benefit from their time together.

In May '**people and places**' was also featured - along with our wonderful local partners in Cambodia - in a piece about [how to find the right placement](#) ... and the questions that all volunteers need to ask while assessing their options.

Sallie says that one of the key questions to ask is, "*Would I be allowed to do this work in my own country?*"

"If the answer is yes then look for an organisation that is seeking to use your skills to work WITH not INSTEAD of local staff and volunteers. If the answer is no – then please ask yourself who you think will be benefitting from your volunteer efforts – and could you be doing more harm than good."

NEW Cambodia volunteer project

Do you have any of the following skills? If so, we need you now on the latest project we are working with in a village close to the tourist hub of Siem Reap

- teaching
 - building trades, DIY, gardening enthusiasts
 - artists / drama / musicians (for workshops and to help include these into the English lessons where appropriate)
 - health care professionals – for a basic health and hygiene programme
 - sport coaches
 - marketing, fundraising, proposal writing
- [take a look at the project information, here](#)



Naxal volunteer Dot was in Nepal during the earthquake - her story

Dot Coupe was visiting Naxal Orphanage when the earthquake struck - instead of dashing home she stayed - here is her story. *(please note we have not been sending volunteers to Naxal for a number of years - but we are aware that many previous volunteers still support this wonderful organisation - thankyou)*

Here is Dot's story

This has been the most eventful trip that I have made to Occeed Nepal Children's Home

I first came in 2008 under the care & guidance of Kate & Sallie at people and places and have returned often in the past 7 years. I am committed to these children, most of who have been here since before that first visit.



Dot with some of the children from Naxal

I usually stay for 6-8 weeks, this time I was visiting for only 3 weeks but the earthquakes made me change my mind. All airlines were offering free change of flights so I cancelled mine and was told I could fly home any time up to 10 December 2015 but had to make the booking by 31st May.

The first earthquake cracked the old house and that first night everyone slept out in the yard. Most of the children were indoors at the time with just me and a handful of little ones playing outside on the judo mats that had been left out on the brick yard. There had been a judo practice that morning.

There was a rumbling noise and movement, both of which got worse, the ground was shaking and the children were afraid. Realising it was an earthquake I called them to me, they could not walk straight, they clung to me as we sat on the mats. One little boy bumped his head on the basketball post as he wobbled along in his attempt to reach me. Luckily that was the only injury anyone received. The girls came running down the stairs from the 2nd floor terrified but the boys just looked out of the windows and door of their dormitory where they were watching a dvd. I shouted for them to come outside as quick as possible.

We all sat on the mats watching a pipe sticking up on the roof as it wobbled from side to side. Next to this pipe the solar unit fell of its stand but was prevented from falling down to the ground by the iron railings. One of the 1000 litre water containers on a stand in the yard toppled over hitting the next stand and burst flooding the yard and we were sitting on top of a big puddle. It was good that the judo mats had been left down because we had somewhere dry to sit, spend the afternoon and to sleep that night as no one wanted to go back indoors except to hurriedly grab blankets and pillows. We were so grateful that this happened on a Saturday and the children were not at school. We were all together in the knowledge that everyone was safe, except for the 3 oldest boys who attend a boarding school 10 miles away. It was 2 days before we heard they were safe and coming home as soon as possible. Their school was damaged, a building collapsed and one boy killed by falling bricks, another very seriously injured. Another 2 days later the 3 boys arrived home & this family of 36 children were all together again

We had spent 2 nights out in the open until we scavenged a tarp from under some brick on the building site next door and fixed up a shelter from the sun. The builder came and wanted it back but relented when he was asked if he would take it from these poor children who had nowhere to live. It did not protect us from the rain though as it was full of small holes and not big enough to cover everyone or stop the bedding getting wet.



It rained two nights running just as everyone got settled and we had to carry sleeping little ones into the two story small annex building where they could get out of quickly if there was another earthquake. We were then provided with an awning that arrived in the middle of a storm but the children insisted on putting it up there & then underneath the much smaller tarp. They made an excellent job but it meant we had 10 boys & girls soaked to the skin, which didn't bother them, they were grinning from ear to ear & so happy with the new tent. We soon discovered it was only meant for fine weather and in heavy rain it became saturated and dripped onto the bedding. A few days later we were provided with a huge plastic sheet that was put on top of the other two and they lived under this shelter for 6 weeks.

I stayed with them for 10 days only going back to my hotel every day or two to shower and change. After 4 nights back in my hotel room the second earthquake struck. Some children were in the tent, others in the boys dorm watching tv and I was with some of the board members in the office in the old building that was cracked but we had been getting confidence back and work had to be done. The building started shaking and there was the same rumbling sound. We were on the first floor and getting down the stairs was difficult as they were moving under my feet. I stumbled on outside into the yard, my body took ages to settle and stop feeling like it was moving. Like being on a boat in a rough sea. That 2nd one was far worse for me, even though it wasn't quite as big as the first , because I was indoors this time.

This second quake unnerved the people and made them very afraid. When was there going to be another, would it be bigger than the other two. It will come in 12 days. So much suspicion and fear.

The children didn't seem to be too bothered, they were afraid but not terrified and life went on. Schools had re-opened 2 days before but now they were closed again and the children soon got bored confined to the small space and it was getting hotter. After 4 days living back with the children I returned to my hotel to sleep & as the days went by the older boys were sleeping in their dorm & the girls in the store room below, only going back into the condemned building to collect clothes, books etc.

Anjali the superintendant had resumed evening tuition and now decided to extend it to 4 hours every afternoon as she was afraid they would forget everything being off school so long and fail in their next exams. It also gave routine to their days which they mostly spent watching dvd's. Hindi dvd's cost 30 rupees each [20p] and good Nepali ones £1.50. I was continually giving them money to get new ones as it was too hot to do much else but lie on their mattresses with the fan on and watch tv.



The did's were afraid to go into the kitchen and did all the prep work and cooking outside. It isn't difficult to bring the equipment outside as all food is cooked on 3 calor gas rings, which had to be hurriedly carried under shelter when it rained. Naina the head didi came up with the idea of making a shelter to cook in under the metal steps to the boys room using corrugated sheets. She was so happy with her new kitchen. Life settled into a routine dominated by boredom & heat and we were desperate to get the children into a house before the monsoon started.

A new house had been found a few months previously thanks to the sheer determination of Anne Allen, another long time supporter of the children, and along with Monica Placzek the third member of 'the team' we had been raising money to help buy it. The papers for purchasing this house should have been signed on the 26th April but the earthquake put paid to that and they were not signed until the 6th of May. The house was rented by a school, which had been given notice to vacate. We knew we could not complete the purchase until beginning of July at the earliest but as we were desperate to get the children indoors the owner was persuaded to allow Occed to move the children into the house on receipt of a large part payment.



The children slept in their DREAM HOUSE for the first time on Thursday 4th June..

They are camping out on the old mattresses on the ground & first floors while work starts on the upper two. The electrical wiring has been checked and brought up to standard and now painting has begun but already further problems have been discovered

Without the carpets we see that the concrete floors have uneven patches that need levelling before the linoleum can be laid and the edges in the stairs are broken.

The government water pipes in this area have been damaged in the earthquakes and so a borehole needs to be sunk and a pump with storage containers has to be installed. This is common in Kathmandu and there is a good supply of water about 100 to 150 feet down

It will be a long haul to refurbish this 4 storey house with 14 rooms but it will happen due to the generous support and help of former volunteers, family, friends & in some cases strangers.

I leave for home on the 23rd June [a very sad day that will be!], Monica arrives on the 17th for 5 weeks and Anne comes out for two weeks just before Monica leaves so there will be one of us here to see this project through and I'm so happy that Anne will be here for the official opening ceremony as the first thing she said when she saw this house after viewing so many was OUR DREAM HOUSE

I must also mention Anjali, superintendant of the home and special friend to us all. Her dedication to the children and sheer determination to help Anne find a suitable house has enriched the lives of our godchildren beyond belief. 'They call us their godmothers, we are honoured with this role & so proud of them all'

Dot

We intend to register as a charity and set up an online donation site to help with the education & daily expenses of caring for the children of OCCED Nepal but this will take time and we are looking into a temporary way to accept funding

If you would like to sponsor a child or help in anyway please email me

dot-nepal@hotmail.co.uk

Updates are posted on facebook https://www.facebook.com/occed.nepal?ref=br_rs

volunteer meetings without Kate or Sallie - SHOCK! - you can do it too!

By Dianne



Whenever we have [a people and places social](#), people always comment on how well we all get on with each other and what a lovely group of people our volunteers are. Last summer we held the social at my home in West Dorset, and this gave those of us who live in the south west an opportunity to get to know each other and to share contact details. Since then, a number of us have met up socially, usually in twos or threes, sometimes at someone's house but more often, as in this picture, at one of our favourite coffee shops. We do talk about our volunteering experiences of course, but we find we have many other things in common and it's really just a great

chance to socialise with other like-minded people.

We are wondering whether those of you who live in other parts of the country would also like to be put in touch with other **people and places** volunteers who live in your area.

We would not, of course, share your contact details with other volunteers without your permission, but it may be that you too would like the chance to meet up with others who live near you to share your experiences and to socialise. We would be happy to create a list of regional contact details for those of you who would like this, and I would be happy to facilitate a first meeting in local areas to get this off the ground. If you would like us to share your contact details with others who live near you please either post a comment or email me at dianne@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk. I do hope some of you will take part in this – it's a great way to make new friends!

PS [our next volunteer social where Kate and Sallie will be present is detailed here](#) - it's in November, please let us know ASAP if you plan to come.

Go well Simphiwe



We learned today, with much sadness - that Simphiwe - who many volunteers to South Africa will remember for his work at Calabash Trust - collapsed and died suddenly over the weekend.

Our thoughts are with his family and friends - Travel Well Simphiwe - you will be missed

win - yes, WIN - some clever tags that protect your luggage

people & places don't normally accept advertisements, but having just discovered *Smart-Tags*, and the fact that they're a new venture from our 'web wizard' Kerry, we wanted to let you know all about them!

If you've ever lost your baggage whilst travelling, or been worried it may go astray, [Smart-Tags](#) are a great way to minimise the disruption experienced when things go wrong! These amazing little luggage and property tags are indeed **SMART** – each tag has a unique fingerprint that means whoever finds your tagged item can let you know they've found it, either by scanning its unique QR code or simply entering the tag's ID on the *Smart-Tags* web site.

Sallie has been so impressed with these nifty tags (she's got them permanently chained to her bags!) that she struck a deal with Kerry at *Smart-Tags* – five lucky people will get a free set of tags, and anyone not lucky enough to win a set can use a special p&p voucher code to get a discount.

Each set of tags comprises two luggage tags (with stainless steel cables) and a bonus key tag retailing at £10.95 (including P&P – that's Postage & Packing, not people & places!!) You can learn more about them by visiting www.smart-tags.eu as well as test one!!

To be in with a chance of getting one of the free sets of tags, just go to www.smart-tags.eu/pandp - fill in the short form and hit SUBMIT! Kate will do a random draw at the end of July (she's been chosen to do this because she lives just round the corner from Kerry!!)



Congratulations to Kate and Harold

Look what [Kate, our Volunteer Programme Director](#) and [Harold our Co-Founder and Non Exec Chair](#) went and did last Friday!

It was a well kept secret - you should have seen everyone's faces at their annual summer party....when Kate mentioned "my husband and I"

What fun!!!!!!



If you haven't already spotted our YouTube channel it's worth a look. There are video interviews from volunteers and if you have videos of your time volunteering or one of the talks you have done – we know many of you talk to groups on your return from volunteering – please send them to us so we can share them.

click the logo



meet the *people and places* team [here](#)



[Take a look here at slideshare for slide shows from volunteers](#) – if you have a slide show to share please do send it to us, thanks so much to all the volunteers who have contributed to date.

Remember we are on facebook too - [follow us here](#) – in the blog and on facebook are where we tend to post our latest news.

If you like beautiful pictures and funny visuals we are also on [pinterest – follow us here](#)

and finally we are tweeting too – [follow us here](#)