

TSN News

Newsletter of the Tsunami Support Network

Co-ordinated by



Volume 1, Issue 4

September 2005

Welcome to TSN News

Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the Tsunami Support Network. This has been set up to help provide opportunities for support for people in the UK affected by the South East Asian Earthquake and Tsunami.

As well as our website (<http://www.tsunamisupportnetwork.org.uk>) and ongoing telephone support (**0845 054 7474**), we hope this newsletter will enable readers to obtain and contribute information, share common experiences and benefit from mutual support. Do contact us if you wish to know more.

About the TSN

The Tsunami Support Network is being coordinated by the British Red Cross which is working closely with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) & the Dept for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). The DCMS is coordinating aftercare for those affected by the Tsunami.

How to Join the Network

If you wish to receive further newsletters or other general information from us you can register either on our website or call us on the support line number (**0845 054 7474**). Please pass on our contact details to anyone who you feel might benefit from our activities.

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Second Tsunami Support Group Meeting

The second main Tsunami Support Network meeting is taking place on Saturday 17th September. Invitations have been sent out.

If you are able to join us and have not yet returned your reply slip, please either return it or call us by September 9th.

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WWW.TSUNAMISUPPORTNETWORK.ORG.UK
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SUPPORT NETWORK ANSWER SERVICE 0845 054 7474

Planning for the Anniversary

Sarah Davidson recently visited Thailand on behalf of the British Red Cross and the Foreign Office to find out what plans, if any, the Thai authorities are making for the anniversary of the Tsunami. As she writes below, details remain unclear of what is being officially planned; this applies also to other affected areas.

Details of commemorative events in all affected areas are yet to be confirmed but we will keep you informed of latest updates as we hear them. Please keep an eye on our website ('Commemorative Activities' page).

You may also wish to refer to www.phuketremembers.com which has been set up by the authorities in Thailand to give information about planned events there.

Meanwhile, the government is exploring possible ideas for an event here. As mentioned in the last newsletter, they are interested in your views. If you would like to comment, please call us (Tel: 0845 054 7474) or write to us at: www.tsunamisupportnetwork.org.uk.

Our postal address: Tsunami Support Network, Dept of E R & R, British Red Cross Society, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL.

Representatives from the DCMS and FCO will be at the Support Group Meeting in September with an update on anniversary plans.

Thailand

Sarah Davidson of the British Red Cross has just returned from Thailand. The aim of her visit was to see what level of recovery had taken place and to find out what plans might be in place for the anniversary. She writes:

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I visited five areas with members of the British Embassy office in Phuket. In Krabi, the areas where many had been taken from the Islands, I found little signs of any of the aftermath. The Volunteers Centre, mortuary and photo boards had all disappeared. Similarly, in Patong Beach much of the waterfront had been repaired and most, if not all of the buildings along the front were rebuilt and reopened. The beach was busy and people swam in the waters.

On neighbouring Kamala Beach, the devastation was still evident, although clearly a variety of relief agencies were busy in the area. In front of the area near the temple a picture board stood with the name of a sponsoring organisation and a photo of the wrecked buildings and debris that I had seen in January. Behind it, new foundations had been laid and scaffolding rose. To the side there were buildings in various states, some open for business and others still waiting to be gutted and rebuilt.

One of the worst affected areas had been Khao Lak, where miles of land still stood empty and fairly desolate. Silhouettes of hollowed and fractured buildings loomed. Discarded belongings, such as battered luggage, sheets and the odd shoe lay around the most damaged buildings. The most significant impression was of miles of empty clearing where rich vegetation and palm trees should have grown.

Not far from the Navy frigate, resting a mile in shore, was the local Volunteer Reference Centre which co-ordinates the delivery of a range of highly valued services in the area (www.tsunamivolunteer.net). The volunteers talked of the multiple organisations that had been set up in the area and of the continued good will and challenges.

One of my last visits was to the island of Koh

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Phi Phi, where a high number of multi-nationals lost their lives. Before I was told it had not been possible to see the bay opposite from the main pier. That day, the land between the two strips of beaches was almost flat, with only two large hotels in a now seemingly good state of repair. Although the market bustled near the pier, once through this area it was clear that much of what had existed on this part of Phi Phi was no more. Here too another group of volunteers pulled together to contribute and Help Phi Phi (www.hiphphi.com). Again, the reduction in the rich vegetation was noticeable, although some grass had grown and thinned out palms still waved in the wind.

As I was ready to leave, meetings with various people including Thai officials seemed to conclude that there were plans for the anniversary from 26th December and onwards. Sculptures, museums and non-denominational ceremonies were all anticipated, but details could not be confirmed. Eight months on, some change has occurred, but there are also scars; scars which will be apparent in December no doubt, which will need acknowledgement and care.

Update on Local Support Groups

Since the first support group meeting in May a number of local support group meetings have taken place around the country and we remain keen to put people in touch with others close to them should they wish for this.

There have been meetings in five areas: London:- two groups, one for those who are bereaved & one for survivors; one covering Surrey/Hants/Berks; one for those in Scotland/the North of England; one in East Midlands, and one in the South West/Wales. The groups are tending to vary in terms of the number of times they wish to meet etc. Some have been facilitated for a few meetings and others are organised by group members themselves.

We have been keeping a record of main points discussed at these meetings so that details of the activities and contact details of each of these groups may be passed on to the Support Group Committee in due course.

Do contact us if you would like more details.

Tsunami E-mail Scam

The Metropolitan Police Service is investigating a hoax e-mail informing recipients that a person who died, or is still missing, after the south-east Asian tsunami has been found alive in hospital in Thailand.

The message is clearly distressing for the recipient and the MPS would like to assure anyone receiving this message that it is a hoax. The message purports to come from a non-governmental organisation called 'Missing Tsunami Victims' and has been sent from well-known online email addresses. Neither police nor the Foreign and Commonwealth Office recognise this organisation.

We continue to make every possible effort to identify all victims of the tsunami and police and Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff work closely with families to keep them informed of any developments.

Anyone receiving this email, or any similar message, should not reply to it and should pass it to the police to investigate, by sending it to fraud.alert@met.police.uk or by making their Family Liaison Officer aware.

Reconstruction Issues

Many of you have requested regular updates on how the reconstruction work is going in South East Asia.

Please find below the September update on Red Cross work in the affected areas.

Model homes for the Maldives

Maldives islanders whose homes were destroyed by the tsunami have begun to choose designs for their new houses, which are being built with the support of the British Red Cross. Over the next two years, the Red Cross will spend around £16 million reconstructing more than 700 homes and restoring livelihoods on six tsunami-affected Maldives islands.

Communities are also being helped to prepare for future disasters, and so any new house built will be as resilient as possible. The Red Cross consulted residents on two islands this week about the design of their future homes at the start of a tour of the Maldives.

The chance to contribute to reconstruction is a new thing for many islanders, as one resident Murushida, who is a member of the British Red Cross community mobilization team, explained: "We haven't been consulted on development work before. It's very new to us."

Per Andersson, Red Cross construction delegate, said: "The tour went even better than expected. People were really excited and engaged. The fact that they can select colours and layout certainly builds on participation. The beneficiaries have been given fourteen days to think it over and we are all looking forward to the next consultation."

Families have a choice of three layouts and three colours for the roof, walls, and tiles. Options are

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limited because construction in the Maldives requires importing most building materials and equipment, as well as labour.

The Red Cross is sourcing environmentally friendly supplies and ensuring the highest quality of materials, which meant building contracts could not be rushed.

The good news for islanders is that materials and equipment will be arriving soon and construction of the first houses will begin by the end of September.

Indonesians plan for future

Indonesian villagers are benefiting directly from money raised in wake of the tsunami through a British Red Cross-sponsored livelihoods programme.

The Red Cross is spending around £36 million over the next three years in Indonesia, helping up to 40,000 people get their homes and livelihoods back.

Indonesia suffered the biggest loss of life in the Boxing Day tragedy with more than 128,000 people killed. As part of the livelihoods programme, communities from Lhoong subdistrict are being helped to open bank accounts into which the Red Cross will pay phased tranches of money to support individuals to restore their livelihoods.

Bill Marsden, a Red Cross delegate in Indonesia, explained that people submit their livelihood suggestions at the bank when opening an account. One young boy told Bill his plans to study English at university as they passed the remains of a landslip while driving to Banda Aceh. "This landslip saved my life," he said.

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"I was in a bus on the 26th of December, but the bus couldn't pass because the earthquake had caused the land slip. The bus parked there as the tsunami came in. Afterwards the bus took me back to the village, there was nothing left, just bodies, and the mosque. I looked for my mum and dad but couldn't find them," he said.

"It felt good that we can help him move on but this is why I am here," Bill said. "We are making a difference. Tomorrow we will go to another village with similar stories."

The programme is also helping another student at the university in Banda Aceh. He was at college when the tsunami swept through his village leaving him the only surviving family member. His livelihood package is two phases to set up a khaki lima burger and roti bakar cart (local food), and the third and fourth phases to pay for his university fees.

A woman who was widowed by the tsunami has also opened an account to help her set up a mobile phone accessory kiosk.

Fundraising Events

At the Tsunami Support Network we are keen to know about the fundraising events and memorial funds that many of you have set up with the raised money going towards the rebuilding of various disaster areas.

Please let us know if you would like us to include what you are doing for our future newsletters.

Char's Fund

Alan Jones is once more running in memory of his beloved daughter Charlotte (See www.runwindsor.com). Char was 23 and died on the island of Ko Racha Yai in Thailand when the cataclysmic Tsunami waves struck early on the morning of the 26th December 2004. Char was on a gap year and had just arrived in Thailand after a fascinating yet exhausting month in India. Char ran this race in 2004 with her 'Pops', it being only her second half marathon. Her first was the Reading Half Marathon in March last year. Money raised by sponsorship will be going to **Char's Fund** to help children through their education in Southern Thailand. This will begin in 2006 after Liz, Vicki and Alan have visited Racha Yai over Christmas 2005. All sponsors will be kept informed as to how their money is being spent.

If you would like a sponsor form let us know at the Network and we will send you one.

Contributions should be made payable to Alan D Jones and sent to 29 Love Lane, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU31 4BP.

Charlotte's friends also organised an 'OnionFest' event for Char's Fund: 'A day of Music, Cider and dancing with fantastic local bands playing all day, hog roast and spicy bean burgers' held this summer in a local farm.

Charlotte's father Alan wrote:
"Char had dreadlocks. It was a kind of a mini Glastonbury, and they even had the mud.... We think this will have raised over £500 towards the Fund."

All profits have gone to Char's trust. Money will go to sponsoring children affected by the Tsunami in Thailand.

Amanda Lowe Challenge Trophy Golf Competition

On August 20th the first Amanda Lowe Challenge Trophy was played for at the King Edward Bay golf club in the Isle of Man.

Amanda, who was a resident of the Isle of Man, was lost at Charlie resort, Phi Phi Island on Boxing Day. She was a keen sportswoman who enjoyed playing golf all over Asia where she worked for AIG. As a celebration of this, her partner, Andy, and close friend Hannah organised a golf competition open to all the residents of the island to be played in her memory. Over 140 golfers turned up on the day from all the different clubs on the island and apologies sent from many others who could not play.

The main reason for the day was for everyone to enjoy a sport Amanda loved to play, however money was raised also for the Amanda Lowe memorial fund started by her parents after Boxing Day. The fund was set up to benefit young people both educationally and on the sporting front that live on the island, currently the fund stands at over £5000.

Many thanks must go to the King Edward Bay golf club and numerous people who donated their time to ensure the day was a success and ran smoothly. A number of Amanda's previous employers provided sponsorship for prizes.

The response from the players was fantastic and the positive feedback will ensure next years competition will be equally as well supported.

The Art of CARE

My name is Daisy Bell. I am a student at Edinburgh University. With the help of two friends Mary Ramsden and Marianna Chidley I am organising an Art Exhibition to be held in Edinburgh at the end of September.

My uncle, Robin Needham was killed in the tsunami on Boxing Day last year. His death naturally caused my family immense grief but it was his loss to the International Aid and Development world that has inspired me to take on this charity project. Robin worked for CARE International for 25 years helping a great number of third world countries and was director of CARE-Nepal when he was killed. It is ironic that he was taken from us in the world's biggest natural disaster when he would have been in his element helping.

We have sent a single plain postcard (approx: 5 ½" by 3 ½") and a SAE to many established artists, writers, musicians, actors and celebrities. These will be shown in the CARE Exhibition, priced, and then sold by either email auction - closing date for the on-line auction is 6.00pm Monday 3rd October - or at the opening on 30th September by catalogue/representative only. All proceeds will go towards the fund set up in the name of Robin Needham with CARE International UK. Robin was the first director of CARE Britain and helped to form and establish this branch of CARE in 1988.

Through this project we hope to raise enough money to help in specific villages that were destroyed by the tsunami. We have been assured by the charity that all money raised will go directly to these areas affected by the disaster.

Already over 200 works have been returned,

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including postcards from so many wonderful people and artists it's hard to single out any, but including **Sir Paul McCartney, David Hockney, Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst, Nigel Havers, Charlotte Church, Loyd Grossman, The Kings of Leon, David Linley, Gail Porter, Mario Testino, Theo Fennell, Antony Gormley RA, Norman Ackroyd RA, Professor Chris Orr RA, Dr. Elizabeth Blackadder RA, Mario Testino, The Chapman Brothers and Graham Rust.**

Go to:

<http://tinsleylockhart.com/artcare/artofcare/whenwhere.html>

to the Artists List and click on the picture above to see the artwork. If you need any further information, or would like to participate in this project in any way, please do [contact me](#): daisy@artofcare.co.uk. Tel: 07966 589 522. Also see our website: <http://www.artofcare.co.uk>

'My Story' – A Tsunami Account from the Maldives

Yvonne McGreavy, a survivor from the Maldives has written about her personal experience of the tsunami disaster in Hakura in the Maldives. She is happy to share this with anyone who would like to read it. If you are interested in seeing her story let us know at the Network and we will send you a copy.

'Nicola's Account - Facing Tsunami'

Nicola, a survivor from the tsunami in Thailand, has also written about her personal experiences and reactions in the months after the disaster. She is happy to share this with anyone who would like to read it. If you are interested in seeing this let us know at the Network and we will send you a copy.

TVAI - Tsunami Victims Aid Initiative

A survivor who recently revisited Thailand has commended the support offered to them by the TVAI in Phuket. She writes:

'It really is a fantastic project which helped to take the stress out of arranging accommodation etc out there. Their web address is www.tvai.org and I would recommend anyone you know who is going back out there to get in touch with them. The hotels' website is www.surinbeachresort.com.'

The extract below is taken from the TVAI website (see <http://www.tvai.org/english.htm> for the English version):

'HELP AND SUPPORT AT SURIN BEACH RESORT'

Surin Beach Resort, Phuket is open for victims and their relatives affected by the tsunami. The hotel is also open for rescue teams, volunteers and individuals aiding the victims.

We have at the Surin Beach Resort a medical team as well as people from Sweden specially trained to help individuals in a personal crisis situation.

TVAI is a non-governmental organisation with the objective to help and support people affected by the earthquake catastrophe in Asia. TVAI is supported by a Swedish non-governmental foundation and collaborates with Surin Beach Resort, Phuket.

The activities at Surin Beach Resort are conducted in collaboration with other organisations on site.

The Ecotourism Training Centre

Reid Ridgway, Managing Director of the Ecotourism Training Center writes:

The Ecotourism Training Centre (ETC) is a long-term tsunami recovery programme that aims to provide immediate employment, and comprehensive training to young Thai men and women in preparation for a career in the Ecotourism (sustainable) Tourism industry. It is a 9 month intensive environmental training programme that focuses on three main areas of study: English language skills, Computer training, and Scuba Instruction. Our graduates will be certified professional dive tour leaders or instructors through PADI, and certified in their language skills by the TTT language institute (an accredited TEFL training center) and also have solid skills on the computer including multi-media skills (basic graphic design, photo/video/audio editing, and presentation skills)

We also have many community experts giving workshops and seminars and specialty courses in a variety of related topics, for instance, emergency dive medicine, merchandising and retail seminar for dive equipment, boating and tourist safety, leadership and management training, and eco-tour hospitality workshops for elephant trekking, sea kayaking and jungle/rainforest expeditions. The programme is still seeking funding to create a permanent programme.

Inquiries can be directed to:
reidridgway@yahoo.com. The ETC website is:
<http://www.etcth.org/>

The Phi Phi Tsunami Memorial Park

The Phi Phi Memorial Park is in its beginning stages of construction. For further information and updates on when the garden is ready to accommodate memorial plaques, go to:
www.phiphimemorialpark.com

BBC Horizon Programme on the Tsunami

9pm September 8 2005

Horizon have been following the forensic experts trying to identify the victims of the tsunami in Thailand, and the programme also features the stories of two families who lost loved ones. The film contains images from the mortuary sites in Thailand which may be distressing, so please be aware of this. However they do reflect the scientific procedures that must be applied, in order for there to be the utmost confidence in the accuracy of the identifications.

If you would like to watch the programme it will be aired on BBC2 at 9pm on Thursday 8th September, as part of the Horizon strand. If you would like any further information about what is in the programme please do not hesitate to contact the producer Nicola Cook or the researcher Catherine Wyler.

Nicola Cook 0208 752 6237
nicola.cook@bbc.co.uk

Catherine Wyler 0208 752 4248
catherine.wyler@bbc.co.uk

Candle Project Groupday for Children

The Candle Project based at St Christopher's Hospice in London is offering a groupday for parents and children on Saturday October 15.

To register your interest in attending this groupday please contact us at the Network giving the names (and ages for children) of those attending. For more information or other general queries about the day itself please contact any of the staff of the Candle Project as soon as possible through the main number of St Christopher's Hospice on 0208 768 4500 or via email on www.stchristophers.org.uk

The project leader is Frances Kraus; other members of the team are Patsy Way and Isobel Bremner.

Friendship Forged in the Aftermath of Trauma

B Magazine (a women's monthly) are working on a feature for their December issue about friendship forged in the aftermath of a trauma. The feature will be an inspiring piece, designed to convey the idea that friendship bonds are often closest when you have a shared experience with someone.

They would like to find a UK survivor who found friendship after the tsunami struck. If you are interested please contact Fiona Cowood, Senior Writer at B Magazine by the 9th September.

Tel: 02071507029

Email; fiona.cowood@bmagazine.co.uk

Guidance on Dealing with the Media

We have available a leaflet offering guidance on dealing with the media. This has been prepared by representatives from the DCMS - the Department of Media, Culture and Sport - and Tom Clarke, who acted as media representative for the September 11th Family Support Group in the UK.

Please contact the Tsunami Support Network if you would like a copy of this leaflet on **0845 054 7474** or email us at tsunamisupportnetwork@redcross.org.uk

Talking to the Media

The media occasionally contacts us with requests for interviews with people affected by the tsunami. If you might be interested in this please contact us.