Newsletter of the Tsunami Support Network

Co-ordinated by



Volume 1, Issue 6 **November 2005**

Welcome to TSN News

Welcome to the sixth 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.

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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.

Local Support Groups/Events

Facilitated Support Group meetings are being organised in the following areas:

- South West/Wales region on Sunday 11th December.
- In the North on Sunday 27th November in Northallerton.
- The London Bereaved group will be meeting on Saturday 10th December before the Reconstruction Issues In Areas Affected by the Tsunami presentations.

Further details are being finalised. If you are interested in attending any of these, please let me know by email:

orzepczynska@redcross.org.uk or by

telephone: 0845 054 74 74

Psychological Support

The FCO is offering funding for psychological support through its package of assistance. This assistance is available to UK citizens who have been bereaved or are survivors from the tsunami. It includes funding for specialist psychological support should this not be available directly through the GP. The referral must however be made by the GP and be to an accredited specialist (e.g. a specialist psychotherapist and include a statement of their involvement in the tsunami).

The FCO package includes up to £600 funding for such psychological support per individual. Invoices should be sent by the counsellor directly to Ian Hester at FCO Crisis Management Team, Room G/99, Old Admiralty Building, London SW1A 2AH. A copy of the GP's referral must accompany the first invoice. Full details of the bank account that payments are to be made to should also be provided in writing. The deadline for this package is 31 January 2006.

Tsunami Anniversary in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan Tourism Board is keen on promoting tourism back to Sri Lanka following the tsunami disaster and has informed us of a commemorative event that is in the process of being planned.

On the 26th December at approximately 5pm (around the time of sunset) there will be a Memorial Service in the park near the beach in Bentota (South of Colombo). It will be an interfaith service of prayer with possibly a ballet performance to follow. Further details are still being finalised.

It is suspected that other national events will be organised after the Sri Lankan Presidential Elections on the 17th November once the new Government is in place.

Phi Phi Memorial Garden

We have been informed by the UK Police Liaison Officer in Thailand that a Memorial Garden is being built by the Sunshine Bar on the island of Phi Phi.

The purpose of the Memorial Garden is to give families visiting the island a focal point. The garden can accommodate over 1000 plaques, which the people of Phi Phi hope can represent the lives that were lost on the island.

To make a donation or if you would like a memorial plaque in the Memorial Garden please contact Karoline at: chillihouse@hotmail.com.

Further information can be found at www.phiphimemorialpark.com

Phuket remembers

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

Tsunami Support Group Committee

There is a meeting on November 26th for those registered members of the Network interested in joining the support group committee.

The meeting will discuss membership; constitution; and future Network events and activities.

Please let us know if you wish to join this meeting and be part of the committee.

Candle Project Group Day: Katie's Review

The Candle Project Group day was all about getting together the kids who had been in the tsunami and who had lost relatives.

We all met at St Christopher's Hospice in London. As people arrived we made name badges, and after Frances, Bill, Patrick, Emma and other volunteers had introduced the day, we had an icebreaker, which was really fun. First of all, we passed around a ball and when you held it you had to say your name and something about yourself and then it got a bit trickier - we tried 2 balls and then even 3 balls. After that we were split into our age groups. I was with Louis(1) and Theo, and Victoria, India, Alex and Louis(3) were in the older age group.

We showed photos of the people who we had lost and talked about them, which was very nice. Next we drew three pictures in a filmstrip, of what life was like before the tsunami, when it happened, and how life is now. Then we talked about what we had drawn in our filmstrips and what we had written. After that, both groups got together and we were each given a worry stone and we were told that if we had any worries, we should hold the stone and all of the worries would sink down our arm to the stone. Then we had a yummy jacket potato lunch all together.

After lunch all the helpers drew two outlines of people, one on one side of the room and one on the other side. They put pieces of paper on the ground with different feelings and emotions written on them, and we picked up some feelings and emotions that described how we felt, and had to stick the pieces of paper on the part of the body that was affected. Then we were split up into our small groups again and talked about how we cope with our feelings if we do not feel very good. During the afternoon we had a break in the hospice garden, it was a nice sunny day and we had a photo taken of all the kids together.

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After our break we went back in and talked about where we think we will be in a year's time, and we also drew this as the fourth picture in our filmstrip.

We all got together again and the helpers gave us pieces of paper to draw or write special things about the people who had died. We each had a candle and stuck these pictures around the candles, like a candleholder. We ended the group day by lighting the candles and thinking about our relatives who had died. At 3 o'clock all the parents and carers came up to take us home.

It was a great day; we made new friends and were able to talk about how we feel. I felt good afterwards and I look forward to going to another group day.

Katie Weston, aged 12

NB. Louis(1) & Louis(3) are the names these children are known by.

After the Tsunami: A Seminar

The UK Sri Lanka Trauma Group is organising a seminar on 3 December at the Sri Lanka High Commission, London. The seminar aims to bring people together to support each other, share experiences and explore useful strategies of helping.

The day's programme includes recollections of the tsunami by survivors, followed by workshops on topics such as supporting children and young people, moving on and next steps. A traditional Sri Lankan lunch will be followed by a presentation by Jonathan Steele, senior foreign correspondent of the Guardian.

The cost of attendance is £15, including lunch. For further details about the work UK-Sri Lanka Trauma Group and the event, including an application form, see their website:

www.uksrilankatrauma.org or call:
07957 293907 or 07980 126368

Update on the National Audit Office's Review the UK Government's Response to the UK Victims

You may have read in previous newsletters that the National Audit Office has commissioned the Zito Trust, an organisation experienced in helping people affected by traumatic events, to undertake work to gather the views of those affected by the Tsunami. This work is currently being planned and will be undertaken in 2006.

However, in order to capture some of the immediate lessons as soon as possible, a report on the actions taken by the FCO, and how it worked in conjunction with other departments and agencies, is due to be published in November. This joint National Audit Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office report is entitled "Joint findings on lessons to be learned from the handling of the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami."

It focuses on what the Department could learn to improve its preparedness and capability for future crises, looking at lessons learned from the perspective of service deliverers. You will be able to see the report on the NAO website:

www.nao.gov.uk

We are sure that you will find this initial report of interest. If you would like to contribute your views to the later Zito Trust review we would be very glad to hear from you. Contact details are given below:

Zito Trust 01497 820011 <u>zitotrust@btinternet.com</u>

Claire Fisher
National Audit Office
020 7798 7681
claire.fisher@nao.gsi.gov.uk

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 in our future newsletters.

The Sustainable Trust Act Local, Think Global

A Wild Cherry tree was planted in Crenver Grove last weekend, at the Sustainable Trust's tree planting, in memory of Catherine Mullen, who was lost in the Asian tsunami last year. Catherine lived at Praze when she first came to work for Cornwall Enterprise, and enjoyed walking in the Grove.

Members of the Trust return to Sri Lanka soon, to embark on a new project to help poverty stricken tsunami victims, trying to improve the lives of their families. In accordance with their principles of sustainable development, they are involved in a project using a raw material which may otherwise go to waste. Coir, the fibre from the coconut husk is spun in Sri Lanka to make rope for fishermen and construction, mats for the home and export market and, even more importantly, research is being done to utilise the green husks as fibreboard, which should ultimately reduce deforestation.

As a first step, the Trust are raising £4,000, the basic cost of a small factory at Madampagama near Hikkaduwa, which will install machines to spin coir in an innovative and more efficient way. 70 people will be employed here.

Pip Richards, administrator, said; "In photographs of the devastation post tsunami,

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many coconut palms remained intact. It's a most important crop in Sri Lanka, with newspapers reporting the price of a coconut daily.

The Sustainable Trust will be partnered in this project by the Centre for Environment and Development in Colombo, a non-profit making NGO, who have offered to donate \$1,000 towards the start up costs, take responsibility for training, and ultimately hope to roll the scheme out to neighbouring districts.

To date we have collected over £1000, with a welcome corporate donation from Robotmother Ltd. ecodevelopers of Jubilee Wharf, Penryn, and another from Lizard Penininsular Friends of the Earth. Any donations will go directly towards the project. Travel & living expenses will be covered by ourselves. "

The Sustainable Trust, registered charity no. 1091205 can be reached on 01209 831718, 07789 600941 or www.sustrust.co.uk

Building Materials Arrive in Maldives

Construction materials and equipment have started arriving in the Maldives as the British Red Cross prepares to build up to 744 homes to replace those lost in last December's tsunami.

The deliveries have been a morale boost for islanders. Kohlufushi was one of the first islands to see equipment arrive.

"We've been patient and we will continue to be patient. Seeing the warehouses go up has rekindled my hope," said a representative from Kohlufushi women's development committee.

Warehouses have been erected on five islands

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where reconstruction will take place and an operational hub established on a further island

"The main challenge is the geography," explained Agnes Le Bloch, logistics delegate. "The islands where we are building are so scattered and there is a complete lack of local resources and infrastructure for such a large scale project."

All construction material and equipment, as well as the majority of the workforce, must be imported. Goods arrive on large bulk boats that have to anchor offshore before smaller, local boats unload onto the islands – a process that requires dozens of short journeys and can take days to complete.

Reconstructing a considerable number of houses on relatively small islands also requires setting up de-salination plants and generators to ensure work does not overburden already stretched water and electricity supplies.

"These boats are the first of many," said Agnes. "Now warehouses are set up, islands will see construction materials and equipment arriving in increasing quantities on a regular basis. In order to make sure materials are from sustainable sources, we have had to ship supplies in from as far afield as Europe, so it's very rewarding to see them actually here."

With the necessary equipment now in place, contractors have been clearing plots ready for construction to begin. Boats will continue to arrive at the islands almost weekly throughout the next year, with the first families expected to move into their new homes by March 2006.

Rebuilding on Pulo Aceh, Indonesia

On Pulo Aceh, a small island off the coast of Banda Aceh, is a courageous young woman who lost everything ten months ago.

"My village was by the sea, now my village has become sand" says Zaitun, a 17-year-old whose entire family - her mother, father, two sisters and two brothers - were killed when the tsunami struck.

Despite the overwhelming grief, Zaitun perseveres: "I try to study hard in school and talk with my friends. After graduation this year, I will go on to study to be a teacher. My ambition is to teach on my island Pulo Aceh."

In order to help Zaitun fulfill her dream, the Red Cross Movement is working together to not only rebuild individual lives and homes, but the infrastructure of a whole community, including job opportunities, schools, and provide clean water and sanitation.

"PMI (Indonesian Red Cross) and the British Red Cross helped us clean up our village and gave us some money to start working again. We can use it for farming and fishing," explains Zaitun.

Pulo Aceh was the pilot community for PMI and British Red Cross' unique cash grant recovery programme. Individuals are helped to open bank accounts into which the Red Cross pays phased tranches of money so they can start generating an income once again.

The programme has a strong community-based approach, engaging villagers at every stage and ensuring they are fully informed of progress. The investment is already reaping a return in the patience shown by the people of Pulo Aceh as reconstruction plans are developed.

For now, those who have returned to the island from camps on the mainland live in temporary

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quarters built by the government. In some villages only a few people can stay for any extended length of time due to the limited clean water supply.

"The wells are salty, and people can't move back to their villages unless there is a safe water supply," says Teh Tai Ring, water and sanitation delegate for the American Red Cross.

The American Red Cross identified two mountain springs from which clean water can be piped directly into the homes that will be built by the British Red Cross. Work has recently finished on a dam and gravity fed filter system at one of the springs, and similar work is beginning on the second. There will also be a latrine for each house.

"The villages will have their own water committee to operate and maintain their water and sanitation infrastructures," adds Tairing. "The committees will also be trained in hygiene promotion, raising villagers' awareness of health risks and reducing sickness and disease."

Education is a concern for all of the villagers, and the families that have returned to Pulo Aceh currently have no schools for their children. Building four schools on the island, including one elementary school in Gugop - Zaitun's village – the German Red Cross will enable the children of Pulo Aceh to return to the classroom.

Walking along the shores of her beloved island, Zaitun picks up beautiful shells amidst pieces of what was once part of people's daily lives - clothing, shoes, and the remnants of homes. Children's toys remain half buried in the sand.

Zaitun stops and points to what remains of a crumbled cement foundation and says quietly

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"that was my house." She wipes her eyes, tilts her head down and begins to walk again – a sole survivor whose determination to return to live on her island enables her to move forward.

Zaitun's story symbolizes not only the devastation that the tsunami imposed on many across the Indian Ocean and the remarkable strength that survivors have shown, but also how working together, the Red Cross is able to rebuild houses, lives, livelihoods, and economies.

All this takes time, but in the near future Zaitun will have a new home, clean spring water and a school where she can fulfill her dream of being a teacher to the next generation of Pulo Aceh children.

Khao Lak

A group of people who were bereaved and/or survivors from the disaster in Khao Lak have been making contact with each other through the Network to talk about their experiences.

If anyone would like to be in touch with others connected with Khao Lak, please let us know and we will share your contact details with this group.

Email us at:

tsunamisupportnetwork@redcross.org.uk

The Ecotourism Training Centre

The Ecotourism Training Center (ETC) is a long-term Tsunami recovery project focused on providing immediate employment and vocational career training to young Thai adults in the Southern Thailand coastal region. Many of the current students lost everything to the waves including homes, jobs, and in many cases family members and providers. Our program is based on a similar programme developed by Circuit Rider Productions in California, USA. One of ETC's founders and its Managing Director, Reid Ridgway, was one of the very first students and graduates of Circuit Rider's programme many years ago, and credits the program with having changed his entire life, creating the bridge to his formal education and long history of success in business.

The ETC programme trains young Thai people for a career in environmental tourism. The students have three main disciplines: English Language, Computer Skills, and Nature Tour leadership including becoming PADI professional Scuba guides. The language curriculum is superbly integrated with their environmental studies. Both the vocabulary and language exercises are customised to give them the skills to speak about the natural world, dive safety, and conversational skills to be successful as a tour leader.

The ETC programme relies heavily on the use of computers. Our Apple Computer lab is the cornerstone of the programme and provides for integration of our customised English language program, interactive teaching materials, access to current information, video editing, and student communication with the world media. Most never used a computer before, however they are now researching environmental issues, learning about natural history, making their own presentations, editing video, and sending out mass e-mailings with new skills acquired in the programme.

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Another important feature of the programme is teaching advocacy. The core philosophy of the ETC is the premise that the health and well being of humans and quality of the natural environment are interdependent and that conservation and preservation of the natural environment are crucial to the economic health of our region. It is therefore our primary objective to create awareness, knowledge, skills, and commitment that result in informed decision-making, responsible behaviour, and constructive actions regarding wildlife and the natural environment. Students learn to be aware of their natural surroundings and to take care of those surroundings by participating in them. This philosophy forms the basis for creating advocacy for environmental responsibility among young Thai people.

Reid Ridgway and his Swiss partner, Pascal Hernikat have connected the programme with a substantial list of outside resources, including many land-based nature tour companies, scientific and environmental agencies, hospitals and safety experts, retail and merchandising specialists, hospitality experts, media professionals, graphic artists, tour booking agencies, the diving industry, and leadership and management trainers. These outside experts give their time to the programme by providing learning seminars as part of the curriculum. The goal is to expose the students to a broad range of related industries and bridge their new skill sets to employment opportunities when they graduate from the 9-month programme.

For further information or to become involved with ETC, please visit our website at: www.etcth.org

Grazia Magazine

Grazia, a weekly women's magazine, is looking for someone to share their experiences of surviving the Boxing Day Tsunami.

Ideally aged between 25 and 45, if you have a story to tell to a sympathetic and experienced journalist, then please do contact me:

Genevieve Fox, genevieve.fox@btinternet.com 07973 300 276

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.

For those who are travelling to Thailand under the FCO Family Assistance Package for the anniversary of the Boxing Day Tsunami, we intend to offer the following support:

You will be met at Bangkok Airport if you wish by UK officials and have use of a lounge if time permits; met again at Phuket airport by a UK official; given a briefing pack (containing the latest travel advice, regional map, detailed map of Phi Phi or Khao Lak, note book, pen, laminated wallet card with main contact numbers, schedule of official events and pick up times, schedule of unofficial events (e.g. church services) and accompanied to your hotels. You will be given assistance with travel to official commemorative events on 26 December as required and accompanied by British Government and Red Cross officials to the venues chosen (unless requested otherwise).

For the main anniversary events on 26 December we are arranging transport on a group basis. One group will go to Khao Lak and one to Phi Phi. Please let Ian Hester (contact details on page 11) know by Friday 2 December which group you would like to be part of. We have hired a ferry for the Phi Phi element and coaches for the Khao Lak ceremonies. We have hired a restaurant on Phi Phi, (the "Chukit" near the harbour, which will be marked on the map in your briefing pack) where you will have free access throughout the day to provide a private area out of the sun, soft drinks and a light lunch before the ferry departs for Phuket in mid afternoon. In Khao Lak we have hired a private room in the Merlin Beach resort about 30 minutes from the main events site where you will have free access throughout the day to provide shelter, soft drinks, a light lunch plus a supper to break the 2½ hour journey back to Phuket in the evening (all on an optional basis).

On your departure, you can, if you would like to, be transported to Phuket Airport, and met again at Bangkok Airport before departure for the UK.

Hotel accommodation is being consolidated into 2 main hotels in Phuket, both of a good standard, one by the beach and one back in town. Those who have specifically chosen to stay elsewhere, will still be able to access transport if required.

Communications: On arrival we will give you a list of telephone numbers where you can contact British officials and Red Cross staff. Tri-Band mobile telephones work in Thailand. If you have one please let us know your mobile number so that we can alert you by text message of any changes in plans or timings. However, you should contact your UK operator to ensure you have opened their roaming facility.

Lord Triesman, the Minister for Consular matters overseas, will be travelling out for the anniversary events to represent the British Government, and with the Ambassador, David Fall, will be hosting a reception at the Graceland Hotel, at Phuket, on Tuesday 24 December from 6pm to 8pm to which you are invited. Details of how to get there will be given to you on arrival. We will arrange transport. (Dress code is smart/casual, no jacket, no tie.)

The Thai Government has, as you know, offered a separate assistance package.

(www.mfa.go.th.tsunami). They will meet, arrange transport for, and accommodate the British nationals visiting Thailand under this. We will aim to have an official present at Bangkok and Phuket airports to meet on arrival and departure and be available to help deal with any queries. We will also include those travelling as guests of the Thai Government in our transport arrangements for events on 26 December (subject to demand).

Helpful hints

Check the FCO Travel Advice for Thailand: www.fco.gov.uk or Tel: 0845 850 2829

Insurance: Please ensure you have appropriate insurance for the duration of your visit. If you have any queries please contact Ian Hester before leaving the UK.

Dress code: When entering temples your shoulders and legs should be covered and you may need to remove your shoes. Those visiting Phi Phi may have to board a speedboat and may need to paddle a short distance though the water.

Sun protection: Remember that the sun will be very strong and you may be exposed for lengthy periods. Please take plenty of sun block and wear a hat.

Dehydration: Take every opportunity to drink water (bottled only) or soft drinks to prevent dehydration.

Avian Flu (Bird Flu): There have been a number of outbreaks of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in domestic poultry and wild birds in Thailand in 2005, resulting in one reported human fatality on 19 October. This is the first human death since the earlier outbreaks in 2004, which led to 12 human fatalities. You should consult your usual healthcare provider for travel medical advice before departure. The risk from Avian Influenza is believed to be very low, provided you avoid visiting live animal markets, poultry farms and other places where you may come into close contact with domestic, caged or wild birds; and ensure poultry and egg dishes are thoroughly cooked.

Dengue Fever (a mosquito borne disease): Since January 2005 the number of reported cases in Thailand, and in particular Southern Thailand has increased sharply. There have been several thousand cases and some deaths. The Thai Ministry of Public Health issued a nationwide Dengue Fever epidemic alert on 9 May. The rainy season - the peak season for Dengue Fever - is May to October. Detailed information about dengue fever is available on the WHO website: http://www.who.int/topics/dengue/en/.

Medical needs: Please ensure you take sufficient supplies of any prescription medications you need. If you develop an illness during your travel out or during the visit please alert one of our officials.

Other assistance: If you require other assistance e.g. wheelchair access or you have difficulty with walking, please let us know in advance.

Drugs: Please be aware that drugs are strictly prohibited in Thailand and the death penalty applies for possession of controlled drugs.

Flowers: We understand many families may wish to lay flowers during the ceremonies. The Embassy office in Phuket can arrange for flowers to be available but it would be useful to know people's wishes in advance. Please let Ian Hester know.

Below are some options for the various anniversary ceremonies. So that we can ensure there is sufficient transport available, please let lan or Tracey know which option, if any, you would like to take up. Please be assured, you will still be able to change your mind when you get there.

Any questions contact:

Tracey Coleman: Tel 020 7008 0665 or e-mail: tracey.coleman@fco.gov.uk or

lan Hester: Tel 020 7008 0886 or e-mail: ian.hester@fco.gov.uk

Phi Phi Schedule

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06.00	Depart from Hotels (you will be picked up)
06.45	Arrive ferry terminal
07.00	Ferry departs for Phi Phi
08.30	Arrive Phi Phi Island
08.30-09.45	Free time. Soft drinks and light snacks served in Embassy Restaurant.
09.45	Assemble on beach for commemoration ceremony
10.00-10.45	Ceremony
11.00-12.00	Free time. Soft drinks and shaded seating available in Embassy restaurant.
12.00-13.30	Lunch served in Embassy restaurant. (People on option 2 will need to leave restaurant
	by 12.30)

Option 1 (Phi Phi only)

1500	Ferry depart for Phuket
1630	Arrive Phuket
1730	Arrive back at hotel

Option 2 (Khao Lak evening lantern ceremony)

12.30	Leave restaurant to board boat
12.45	Depart for Phi Phi by boat for Phuket harbour
14.00	Arrive Phuket harbour and board coach for Khao Lak
16.30	Arrive Khao Lak for evening ceremony.
17.00-19.00	Thai official commemoration events on Khao Lak beach
19.00-20.30	Dinner
20.45	Coach returns to Phuket.
22.30	Return to hotels

Khao Lak 26th December Schedule

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06.15	Collect families from Hotels. Coaches depart for Khao Lak
09.00	Arrive Hotel for toilet stop and light snack
09.30	Leave hotel for Beach ceremony
10.00-11.00	Ceremony
11.30	Return to Hotel. Free time
12.00-14.00	Lunch served in Embassy restaurant. Hotel facilities (including swimming pool)
	available for all

Option 1 (limited availability)

14.30	Depart for Memorial stone laying ceremony
15.00-16.00	Ceremony
16.00-17.30	Return to hotel or visit Temple where bodies were held (TBC)
18.00-19.00	Lantern ceremony on beach

Option 2 (Khao Lak evening lantern ceremony)

14.00-17.30 Free time 18.00-19.00 Lantern Ceremony



19.30-20.30	Dinner
20.45	Coach returns to Phuket
22 30	Return to hotels