

# MAGE Medical Aid to Galle and Environs

## Annual Newsletter – May 2008

UK Registered Charity 1108599

### Letter from the Chairman

As I am writing this letter, news of the Burmese disaster and its aftermath is coming through. My mind is immediately taken back to the post tsunami of late 2004, the horror, devastation, sorrow and for us in the UK the sense of hopelessness.

In January 2005 MAGE was conceived. In record time we were registered as a charity, and erected the first field hospital in Sri Lanka which was up and running in March 2005. Shortly afterwards we were supporting a school for affected children, a day centre for children with disabilities and awarding grants to university students who had lost one or both parents. Three of the trustees were in Sri Lanka making two visits in early 2005. The contrast with the Burmese cyclone could not be more stark. Longstanding links developed in medical programmes in Sri Lanka by three of the Trustees from Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) over the previous 20 years has resulted in personal friendships. These friends contacted us on 27th Dec 2004 asking for help and offering to channel it with the minimum of bureaucracy. This was coupled by links with another GOSH clinician and the most fortunate inclusion of two trustees from the City with broad financial expertise.

The past year has been spent on our major new project – the building of a hall of residence for 210 medical students. I am delighted to report that progress is going well and we expect to be finished in early 2009, as planned.

The trustees made a policy decision that no further major projects would be started until we were satisfied that the hall of residence was nearing completion. We are now ready for new challenges.

As ever, the trustees go to Sri Lanka to oversee the projects in action. Chris Rocker and Alison Wisbeach visited in December 2007. Five of the trustees had planned to go in February 2008 but the sudden upsurge of violence and bombing

resulted in cancellation after advice from our man on the ground Professor Nanayakkara who has reliably been our eyes and ears. Fortunately Galle is in the far south of the country and there has been very little unrest in this area, so the project itself remains unaffected by the problems in the North. All six trustees will now visit in November 2008 to review the progress of the hall of residence and our other funded projects. We will also be giving consideration to new bids.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees for all their hard work in fundraising and their invaluable expertise across a broad spectrum of disciplines. I look forward to the further development of MAGE. Finally, I should like to thank all of our regular supporters without whom we could not have made the progress we have over the past 3 years. Please don't forget that the work continues even though the immediate trauma of the tsunami has passed. Physical and social reconstruction will take many more years.

Michael Mars, Chairman



# University of Ruhuna Medical Students Hall of Residence

The decision to raise funds to build a new Students Hostel to replace the existing residential facilities, which was destroyed by the tsunami, was the principal MAGE initiative of 2007. We were faced with a pretty daunting task as the funds required totalled \$650,000 and we only had resources on hand of some \$100,000. What we and the local team in Sri Lanka envisaged was a 5 storey building that would house up to 200 residents, with appropriate study rooms and hygiene facilities.

Given the magnitude of the task, for the first time since MAGE's foundation, we used the assistance of a funding consultant who helped us put together a case for support for the project. I think that it is fair to say that we surprised ourselves with how effective this new approach was. Indeed we learned some valuable lessons for our future work. We were able to obtain more than half the funds needed from two corporate donors. The remainder came from the generosity of a firm of solicitors, a family trust and three individuals, as well as a host of smaller gifts from a surprisingly broad cross section of the UK community.

Five of the six trustees attended a symbolic foundation stone laying in late 2006. By the middle of 2007 the funding for the project was largely in place and work was able to begin in August. However a combination of a very wet winter and difficulties with the excavation of the site itself, resulted in the planned location for the building having to be adjusted slightly. This meant that the actual work of building was slow to start. Two Trustees and one of the corporate donors visited the site in December and although building activity was well under way, it was clear that the project's 18 month timescale was in danger of having to be pushed back further.

We are pleased to be able to report, however, that once the foundations had been laid, work has been proceeding apace, and we remain on target for an early 2009 completion.

These photographs show that construction has reached the third floor and work is to have begun on the 4th floor in May. Construction is now moving at an accelerated pace. The key ingredient in the success of this project remains the participation as full and equal partners of our colleagues and friends in Sri Lanka.



# The PIN (People In Need) Foundation

MAGE continues to support the PIN Foundation by financing the cost of all staff and ongoing expenses. It has been three years since the massive tsunami hit Sri Lanka. Soon after the disaster the Child and Youth Development Centre was established to rehabilitate affected children. The centre offers a free Pre-School, Computer School, Library facilities, English programmes and a Medical Clinic for displaced children. This centre is the first of its kind to be set up in Sri Lanka for the "little victims" of the massive disaster. The PIN Foundation is a fully registered NGO in Sri Lanka.

## School activities update

The preschool has enrolled 100 children for this year all of whom are victims of the tsunami. They have already built a new classroom in 2006 to accommodate more children. In order to satisfy the increasing demand for facilities a further two storey building is nearing completion. This will accommodate preschool and older children for a Computer School and English programme. PIN have recruited more preschool and assistant teachers. There are at present eighteen staff members which include four pre-school teachers, four assistant teachers, two computer teachers and one English teacher. MAGE is committed to support the PIN Foundation for 2008 and looks forward to continuing to support this excellent enterprise for the foreseeable future.



## Senehasa Children's Resource Centre

The centre was established in August 2003 as a non profit making organization to provide therapeutic, educational and social support to children with special needs and their families. This service includes both individual assessments and treatment, as well as group work for children with a wide range of disabilities.

Since 2007 MAGE has funded the entire operating budget for the center, which has, amongst other things, enabled the center to employ a resident security guard as well as build a boundary wall.

Most recently a sound proof Audiology Unit was built using funds donated by the Senehasa Trust Fund of the UK. The unit has the technology needed to carry out hearing assessments of infants and children.

There is a need for ongoing training of audiology technicians to ensure delivery of a quality service. MAGE is exploring the possibility of a partnership with World Jewish Relief to fund this project.

# A Perspective from Galle

by Professors Malik Gunawardene (Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Medical School Galle) and Professor Ganananda Nanayakkara (Professor of Anatomy Medical School Galle)

The Teaching Hospital Mahamodara Galle (THMG), the only tertiary care gynaecological and maternity hospital for the Southern Province of Sri Lanka, was badly damaged by the tsunami of 26th December 2004. Patient care services as well as undergraduate and postgraduate medical, nursing and midwifery training were disrupted. A timely, thoughtful and magnanimous donation of a field hospital costing approximately £250,000 together with medical equipment costing approximately £110,000, was arranged by MAGE. This mobile field hospital commenced functioning as an outpatient clinic and day assessment unit by 28th March 2005. It also enabled the resumption of teaching, training and evaluation of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Since 2005 all clinical examinations including the Final MBBS Examination in Obstetrics & Gynaecology of the University of Ruhuna have been conducted at this field hospital.

Subsequently, utilizing a further donation of approximately £110,000 from MAGE, a Day Surgery Unit, a Clinical Skills Laboratory and a Uro-Gynaecological Assessment (UGA) unit were also established. These have enabled assessments, investigations and minor surgeries to be carried out as outpatients. The donations from MAGE also enabled enhancement of the gynaecological endoscopic

surgery facilities in THMG. These developments have led to a reduction in the number of inpatients easing overcrowding and congestion at the THMG. The Clinical Skills Laboratory has enabled an improvement in the clinical skills training of both undergraduates and postgraduates. The Uro-Gynaecological Assessment unit has been of benefit to patients not only in Galle but the entire Southern Province of Sri Lanka.

MAGE has also started constructing a hostel for the medical students of the University of Ruhuna, Galle at an estimated cost of £325,000. It will have 106 double rooms providing accommodation to 212 students, a library, computer room, study room, dining room, common recreational area and a kitchen as well as sub-warden's quarters. MAGE has already spent £60,000 and the hostel is expected to be completed by February 2009.

MAGE also granted a number of scholarships and has spent approximately £7000 for nine medical students who were seriously affected by the Tsunami. Six have completed their studies and the three remaining students continue to receive these scholarships.

We are delighted to take this opportunity to express our thanks to MAGE on behalf of all who have been the subject of MAGE's generosity.



## Student Support

Four years on from the tsunami support for affected medical students has reduced to just three students as they have already qualified as doctors. Over this period MAGE has supported 25 medical students both financially, and with the funding of lost books and stethoscopes.

### Trustees:

**Dr Michael Mars**  
– Chairman

**Mr Chris Rocker**  
– Secretary

**Dr Tony Sirimanna**  
– Treasurer

**Mr Patrick Foster**

**Ms Alison Wisbeach**

**Dr Debbie Sell**

**In conclusion we hope that you can see that this has been a busy and productive year for MAGE. Our donors have the satisfaction of knowing that their money has been promptly and successfully spent on a variety of extremely worthwhile projects, which have had a profound and long lasting beneficial effect on the quality of life for the residents of Galle and the surrounding area. We hope that we can report back to you soon with further good news of additional projects successfully completed.**

**Of course, none of this work is possible without the continuing support of you, our donors. We do hope that you will agree that your money has been appropriately spent and that you will want to continue to support us for another year.**

Any further donations will be gratefully accepted on behalf of MAGE by:

Dr. Michael Mars,  
34, Birch Grove,  
London W3 9SS

MAGE is a UK registered charity – number 1108599.

**Our web site is**  
**[www.mageuk.org](http://www.mageuk.org)**

Gift Aid form available.