



FRIENDS OF SMYRNA HOME

bringing hope to those in need

Autumn Newsletter 2023

Welcome to our latest newsletter. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

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www.friendsofsmyrnahome.com

Registered UK charity no. 1150384

Smyrna Visit 2024

One of the most effective ways of maintaining our contact with those who work full-time at Smyrna Home is to visit Smyrna to support and encourage them in their work. Due to the pandemic and some issues with Indian visas, it's not been possible to organise a trip since a small group visited in August 2019. However, we are planning another trip in 2024, possibly around Easter or in the Summer depending on the availability of those who'd like to come. As well as encouraging our friends at Smyrna, there'll be an opportunity to get a flavour of this fascinating country - many previous visitors have found it to be a transformative experience. We are sending an initial information sheet about our visit to those who receive this newsletter by email, but if you would like one sent by post, please contact us. If you or someone you know might be interested in coming, please get in touch with Tony and Val Neal (or any of the F.O.S.H Trustees) for more information.

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Success for Smyrna Students

Supporting a child from a poor background and enabling them to benefit from a good education not only transforms the life of the child but often makes a huge difference to their whole family. With the encouragement and support that the sponsor children receive from the Smyrna sponsor department, many of the children do very well at school and we were delighted to learn recently that, 32 of 33 children who sat their 12th board examination, have passed.

Following success at school, many children go on to further education and 25 sponsored students finished their university degree course this summer. Eleven of these students visited Smyrna

Home in August and received good advice that will help



them as they enter employment which will build on the qualifications that they have achieved. We have since received letters from five of these students who were supported by UK sponsors, expressing their grateful thanks for their sponsorship, and these have been forwarded to the sponsors involved.

Feeding the Hungry

Most of us in the West can too often forget how fortunate we are and how, for many in the world, hunger is an everyday experience. Although the area around Ooty is not the poorest in India, there are many living in poverty and Smyrna Home's feeding programme continues to be an important facet of their Christian service to the local community. Every Thursday, up to 50 poor and elderly people from the area make their way to Smyrna where they receive a substantial hot lunch - for some this will be their best meal of the week. Also, once a month those who come for lunch are each given a sack of basic, essential food-stuffs for the rest of the month. The average numbers benefitting from the feeding programme have grown recently and the associated cost is a major strain on Smyrna's finances. Friends of Smyrna Home contribute regularly to these costs, but any additional contributions would be gratefully received.



Who's who at Smyrna

One of those who have faithfully served Smyrna Home over many years is **Metilda Fernando**, who looks after the accounts. The managing trustee writes of her that she is "efficient, truthful and a person of integrity, and we can count on her", which is a glowing tribute to someone who makes such an important contribution to the smooth-running of the charity. She is very conscientious in keeping the accounts and is a great asset to the team at Smyrna. The photo shows Metilda with her husband, Vinoth, who is an agriculturalist, and her daughter, Esther who is in her second year studying for a B.Sc in nursing at the PSG college, Coimbatore.



Smyrna Accounts

We have recently received a copy of the audited accounts for Smyrna Fellowship Trust for the year ending March 2023. In recent years, Smyrna have sought to reduce their reliance from charitable contributions from overseas, and have embarked on various enterprises to generate some income, including growing strawberries, raising chickens and selling cakes and biscuits produced in the bakery. These all make some contribution to the income, but it is particularly pleasing to see that the refurbishment of the main building so that it can be used as a guest house has been such a great success that the income from letting out the rooms is now greater than the total amount received from overseas donations.

The Smyrna bakery was also kept busy this year sending out traditional Christmas cakes for sale.

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A taste of Portugal from the Smyrna Bakery

Those who've visited Smyrna in recent years can testify to the quality of the goodies produced in the bakery! As well as feeding hungry visitors, the bakery makes an important contribution to Smyrna's finances as the daily output is sold in local schools and other outlets.

In addition to the traditional biscuits and cinnamon buns, they have recently tried 'Pastel de Nata' - a custard tart which is a popular Portuguese street food. If you'd like to have a go, try the recipe below.



Pastel de Nata (Portuguese custard tart)

Serves 10

80g + 60g butter
150g all purpose flour
3g sugar
2g salt
60g water
3 eggs
75g milk
150g whipping cream
45g sugar

Roll 80g butter in butter paper (in a rectangle shape) and set aside. Refrigerate.

Mix 60g butter and flour. Add water and knead. Wrap in clingfilm and set aside for 30 mins.

Fold the dough and roll in a rectangle shape.

Keep the butter between the dough and fold it into four. Refrigerate for 30 mins.

Roll the dough again into a sheet and roll the sheet into a spiral. Wrap in clingfilm and refrigerate for 30 mins.

Egg mixture (refrigerate for 1 hour):
1 whole egg
2 egg yolks
45g sugar
Milk
Whipping cream

Cut the spiral into 2cm thick discs and press each disc into a tart mould. Freeze for 10 mins. Pour in the egg mixture. Bake for 25-30 mins and cool on a rack.