

Newsletter No. 3 December 2008



From the Trust Desk

- At the end of the first full calendar year of TTT, the Trustees can report on a number of achievements. However, during this period, the Trustees have realised that there are innumerable opportunities for the kind of contact work, which we have set out as the Trust's aims. For those new to the Trust, our aims in a nutshell are:

TTT seeks to exchange knowledge, skills and understanding between the United Kingdom and Lithuania. To achieve this, the Trustees seek out individuals and organisations in one country with something to offer in the other. This may be in terms of practical knowledge about a certain area, perhaps in the social sphere or education; techniques, maybe training methods or literature; and skills, such as improved ways of achieving a desired outcome. The Trustees are laypersons with the enthusiasm and the contacts to bring needs, solutions and people together. Whenever advice or support is provided, it is by organisations and individuals with relevant expertise.

- Our primary work since the last Newsletter has remained the Cancer Support and Palliative Care Project (CSPC). We report below on the visit to Northern Ireland and London in October by the Franciscan Monks and colleagues from the St. Francis Cancer Support Centre at Kretinga (referred to for ease as Kretinga), which exposed them to the kind of work done in these areas in the UK. The following extract from a recent letter from Kretinga gives a good summary of the Centre's ethos:

We are pilgrims of hope, who are united in helping each other to live with cancer. In the last eight years, more than 800 cancer sufferers and their loved ones have rediscovered a purpose in life and found a new light and motivation to live. Together with the Franciscan Brothers, we have been able to create a healing environment; where a word, a look and a touch becomes a friend, a teacher, a doctor and a prayer. Inspired by the resilience and faith of patients, we decided to create the first cancer information and support centre in Lithuania.

- TTT is broadening its range of contacts in CSPC and we look forward to two major initiatives - a survey of activities in CSPC in Lithuania to be carried out by a top expert from Macmillan Cancer Care. We have high hopes that a report resulting from the survey will indicate the needs and point to ways to meet those needs in these sensitive and emotional sectors that affect a large number of vulnerable people. The second initiative is the introduction of the Cancer Specific Expert Patient Programme being planned by Madeleine Mulgrew of Cancer Choices and Trustee Wendy Howe. A further report below looks forward to our planned activities in the next few months.

- In Newsletter No. 2 we mentioned the publication of Megan's Book in Lithuanian. Our Trustee, Mida Babiliene, reports that the book has been well received and copies are being sent to more children's hospitals in Lithuania as well as being available on the web. We are keeping an eye open for further examples of this type of British publication that could benefit vulnerable groups in Lithuania.

- We are profiling in this Newsletter one of our closest partners so that our readers can get a better understanding of those helping us. Other profiles will appear in later Newsletters.

- With the transfer of Ambassador Vygaudas Usackas from London to Vilnius in December, to take up his new high appointment as Foreign Minister of Lithuania, we have lost one of our Patrons but we are pleased that we now have a good friend in the Government in Vilnius. We will approach the new Ambassador, when appointed, to ask if he or she will be willing to become a Patron.
- In one of his last kindnesses before he left London, Ambassador Usackas told us that he had nominated TTT to receive a sum of £1,300, on behalf of the Kretinga Project, from The Westminster Challenge, a group of MPs and diplomats who jointly undertake fundraising expeditions. This sum is part of the proceeds from a visit to the Great Wall of China. Next year, we understand that there will be a Westminster Challenge visit to parts of Lithuania.
- To help the volunteers at Kretinga, who are learning English so that they will better understand Macmillan training and printed material, a parcel of classic English language texts were sent in time for Christmas by Dr. Richard Bibby, following a contact made during the Kretinga visit in October. Trustee Wendy Howe reports that a friend in Vilnius who teaches English to adults swears by Mills and Boon – clear, simple but spicy language! However, we believe that a classical education never harmed anybody and are grateful to Richard.
- Readers will see that there is much going on at the desks of our Trustees. We are all looking forward to the challenges of the New Year, not least raising funds to allow us to do all of this good work.