



Newsletter no 25

June/July 2005

Our next meeting

7.30pm

Thursday, 7 July 2005

Mayor's Room Hawthorn Town Hall, 360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn

Our guest speaker will be

Dr Jay Maheswaran, Country Director for East Timor for Caritas Australia who is currently visiting Melbourne

We will also have an update on our Weaving for Life function on 1 September

and reports from Don, Trish and Kevin on their visits to Timor-Leste

We hope you can join us.

From Your Convener

Dear Friends of Same

Don Glasson and Trish Woodcroft-Lee have returned from very successful visits to Timor-Leste. Both visits had important objectives: Trish was supporting the visit of the Australian EyeCare team with the local NGO, Fuan Nabilan, and Don was undertaking to provide planning advice to the Commission, in response to a request for assistance from the District Administrator, Snr Filomeno Tilman. Reports from Don and Trish appear later in this newsletter.

Don's visit coincided with Jenni Kanaley being in Same, and this enabled a rare meeting of the local Commission to be held, to provide direct input and discussion of options for the future planning of Same township. This appears to have been a very productive exercise.

Esther Anderson will be travelling to Timor-Leste in mid July, which will provide further opportunities to follow up on issues and projects. Esther will also be spending some time at Atauro Island, which was the subject of a recent series of talks by Gabrielle Samson, about her work with the NGO, Roman Luan (ROLU), which has overseen the development of a small scale integrated community ecotourism venture

on Atauro. With tourism opportunities in the Same/Manufahi area, there may be much to learn from the careful community planning which has taken place on Atauro Island.

Our speaker at the next meeting of the Friends of Same will be Dr Jay Maheswaran, Country Director for East Timor, for Caritas Australia. Caritas, a Catholic relief agency, has long been a presence in Timor Leste. Following the 1999 humanitarian crisis in East Timor, Caritas Australia was mandated by Caritas Internationalis to take a leading role in the country's emergency relief and rehabilitation. Caritas Australia continues to be involved in a range of development programs. We look forward to hearing more about the scope of their work next week.

Friends of Same may have watched the Compass program on Sunday 29th May on ABC TV about Sister Lourdes, ManaLu, whose work is supported locally by the GOYA Foundation set up by Felicity Fraser, Coordinator of the Timor Leste Relief Fund at MLC. The Compass report covered projects ManaLu is supporting in Betano, in the sub-district of Same, to build a community centre and to start a community garden. This presents a great opportunity for the Friends of Same to work more closely with the GOYA Foundation, for the benefit of the community of Betano, which we will be exploring. For more information on the Compass program see <http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s1379910.htm>

Kate Gillespie-Jones

Support for the Same Coffee Growers

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, Jenni Kanaley has been working with the local coffee growers to promote improved techniques for growing and harvesting the coffee plants. As part of this project, Jenni is to take one of the local growers to Tanna, Vanuatu to study coffee farming and in particular, for first hand experience of the techniques successfully used there to improve quality and output. At the last meeting, the possibility was raised of subsidising the airfare of Clementino Cortereal to Vanuatu. This was supported at the last Steering Committee for the Friends of Same. The airfare, which covers travel from Dili to Darwin, Darwin to Brisbane and Brisbane to Tanna (Vanuatu) and back, will cost \$2449.11. This is a cost that would otherwise have been borne by Jenni herself. The approval of the Friends of Same will be sought at this meeting to pay for Clementino's airfare. As Kevin Bain points out in his Coffee report, this presents an opportunity to provide direct support to the local coffee industry, out of the profits we have earned from sales. Kevin has met with Clementino and considers him an impressive young man.

Visit the Master Weavers

With the support of Timor Aid and Jenni Kanaley, travel arrangements are being made to bring to Melbourne a master weaver from Same for the month of September. Together with East Timor Women Australia (ETWA), which is bringing two master weavers, including, Sra Balbina da Conceicao from Illiomar, director of the Taibesi Cooperative, it is planned to promote the traditional methods of weaving, through a series of workshops and fundraising events, to generate interest and marketing opportunities in the community.

As you are all aware, the weavers and their work will be celebrated at a fundraising event which the Friends of Same is organising with the City of Boroondara and ETWA, 'Weaving for Life', **on Thursday 1st September 2005 in the Chandelier Room of the Hawthorn Town Hall, 6.30pm-9.00pm**. This is a social event, which will take the place of our usual meeting. We anticipate up to 250 people will be attending, including representatives of galleries, museums and retail fashion outlets. There will be an exhibition of Tais, demonstrations of the art of weaving, and performances by Timorese musicians, as well as food and drinks. Kevin Bailey, Honourary Consul for Timor-Leste has accepted an invitation to attend.

The event is also planned to mark the launch of a thread bank, "Threads For Life", to provide long-term support for the production of Tais. This would assist the women in continuing the use of traditional techniques and materials, enhancing the quality of the Tais and its cultural integrity. Importantly the "Threads for Life" program will help to create opportunities for greater economic independence and self-sufficiency, for the women and their families. Donations for the Thread Bank will be sought on the night.

Please support this event. Funds raised will also go towards our other projects in Same/Manufahi. Please invite your networks and enjoy a glass of wine while appreciating the beautiful work produced by the weavers of Timor-Leste.

Jennie Rawther (telephone 9882 6978) and Annette Sweet at the City of Boroondara (telephone 9278 4639) are coordinating this event. If you are able to help or have contacts with businesses or others who might be interested in sponsoring the evening, please contact Jennie or Annette. Rebecca Sirianni (telephone 9278 4751) at the City of Boroondara is taking bookings for the evening. Tickets cost \$35 each.

Planning Project in Same - Report of Don's Visit

My recent trip went extremely smoothly. What I expected would only be an initial exploratory visit turned out to be much more. This was due to a significant degree to the local knowledge of both Trish Woodcroft-Lee and Jenni Kanaley which I was able to tap into, plus their ability to translate for me, and the groundwork Kevin did on his recent trip. I think I also had a lucky run with the extent that I was able to catch up with people whenever I called on them. I gather it is not always that way.

My impression is that FOS has earned its stripes in Same thanks to the good work of those who have been there before me. Many people and groups visit East Timor and make offers but don't deliver. Perhaps this is why Tony had a less than enthusiastic reception when he made the first visit for FOS. They were possibly reserving judgement. We appear to have built on that first visit and gained credibility as performers.

An indication of this was an offer by the District Administrator (DA) to provide a space for FOS in Same. I thanked him on behalf of FOS. A dedicated space just for FOS might be excessive, but it would be useful to have a room available whenever spending time in Same; perhaps with a locked cupboard where we could store some basic gear. We need to decide on our response to this offer.

I spent two days in Dili, which coincided with Trish being there. We collected school supplies from the Alola Foundation, some excellent orthophotos covering much of the Same township (aerial photos with mapping information overlaid) from a planning contact in Dili, and visited Jose Mousaco in the District and State Administration Department. His role is to co-ordinate information about the activities of the Friendships Groups and look for opportunities to integrate those activities.

I travelled to Same with Jenni Kanaley and my time there coincided with both Trish and Jenni being in Same. An initial meeting with the DA clarified that the planning task was limited to the township of Same and not the whole sub-district. At less than 24 hours notice, 12 members of the Commission gathered and, together with the DA and Jenni, we jointly produced an Outline Development Plan to guide the future development of the town.

Other activities were:

- Delivery of a typewriter to the IMM kindergarten, which was gratefully received.
- Meeting with Pastor Martins of the Protestant (Assembly of God) church who had previously contacted Kevin seeking assistance. I visited his building for which he is seeking a new roof (estimated cost \$2000 US).
- Meeting with local teachers to get their views on Alphasame
- Trish bought some tais at the Same market which I have brought back.
- Delivery of supplies to the school at Letefoho

Back in Dili I was able to get a set of orthophotos laminated and sent back to the DA. I met Brian Monaghan on my return to Dili. He had spent the morning at the port where Rotary were finally unloading the container with the school uniforms. He also collected quite a few boxes of school supplies for delivery to schools in Same.

Of Threads and Glasses - Trish's Report

I spent the week of April 25-28 with the optometrist team and support workers from Fuan Nabilan, first at Same Hospital and then in Weleluhu and Dotik in the Sub-districts of Fatuberliu and Alas respectively. The optometrists saw about 300 patients per day. Most simply required reading glasses, but 49 were identified as benefiting from cataract surgery and were advised to go to Dili in June for the operation when the surgical team arrives.

Fuan Nabilan saw about 15 people who had no useful vision. The staff gave them training in the use of a cane to improve their mobility and also showed family members how to guide their relatives safely. Two patients were very young and would benefit greatly from braille literacy. We also gave white folding walking sticks to people who had some vision but need support when walking. Most people were very happy with their walking sticks, but one or two were fearful of being seen with them because people would laugh at them. This indicates a need for ongoing education in rural areas about the use of aids and equipment.

At the farewell dinner for the optometrists Andrew Maver praised the work of the support workers and stressed the need for follow-up for people who could not have the operation or who might have problems even after the operation. Mr Tilman, the DA, undertook to look for a building in Same which could be used for a training and support centre for Fuan Nabilan. They have since prepared a proposal for Mr Tilman and delivered it to Same. I presented them with \$600.00 donated by supporters of St Edmund's School in Sydney, for initial work on the building, once it is allocated.

It is my hope that FOS might consider providing some modest support for the centre. The issues we might consider are:

- Blind people, families and health workers would all benefit from more extended training in orientation, mobility, appropriate guiding techniques, and Braille literacy where appropriate.
- Blind and vision impaired people could meet for peer support and to teach other skills.
- It would be an appropriate place for teachers from Australia to present train the trainers programs. It is Fuan Nabilan's hope to widen the work of the Centre to include other disability groups, such as people with speech impairments.
- Visitors would spend money in Manufahi and would spread the word about Same as a good place to visit.
- We would be supporting a project which Mr Tilman has identified as being of importance to the people of Manufahi.

ON 29 April Don and I handed over the goods donated by Dr John Knaggs to Dr Victor Martins, the hospital administrator. He promised a reply detailing hospital needs. Perhaps Esther could contact him in July and bring his response back as I had not received it prior to my departure.

I got a lift to Betano with Jenni Kanaley and handed over the banner made by the children of Chatham Primary School and two boxes of materials from Alola at the primary school. Unfortunately we reached Betano after 12 o'clock and the school was empty. We met the teacher at his house and handed the banner over with photos. The teacher, Mr Afonso da Costa, said that the school's 313 pupils, who range in age from 6 to 15, would be happy to make another banner and to make up a book of photos. Possibly Esther could collect them in July or Jenni maybe willing to do so in September.

On 2 May I met with Mr Armandio Acunciano da Costa, Subdistrict Community Development Officer, and Senora da Costa, Director IMM. Senora da Costa said that the kindergarten was going well, but the clinic could not treat adults because of a lack of health workers. At present it is functioning as a kind of sick bay for the kindergarten children, treating minor illnesses and accidents. They seem to have given up on requests for a fence for the time being.

Mr Armandio spoke of the need to develop small business in Same. He said there are a number of people with tais making skills in the district who no longer use them because there was no market for tais among the local people. They presented me with a tais made for IMM for Friends of Same. Don is bringing the Tais back. If we wished to order some, IMM could get people to weave them for us. They are quite good quality and would cost about \$5 each. We could possibly sell them for \$15 or \$17. I hope that Esther can follow up on this in July. Perhaps Friends of Same would consider giving her a small sum, perhaps \$50 or \$60 to order some tais from these people.

Mr Armandio is the Sub-District development officer. Mr Braz, who raised the question of training on Kevin's visit, is the District development officer. There is a development officer for each sub-district and Mr Armandio is the one for the Same sub-district. He thought there was a need for two types of training. One is training in small business management for local entrepreneurs about managing money, forward planning, seeking markets and tailoring products for the market.

There was also a need for leadership and project management training for the chefe Suco and chefe Aldeia so that they can provide appropriate guidance for their people and so that they can manage small projects in their areas effectively. He would like one or two people from Australia to come to Same to provide the training. He thinks this is more effective than sending staff to Australia for training. Perhaps we could put out some feelers in Boroondara to see if there are any people with expertise in these fields who would be interested. Swinburne comes to mind. We might also be able to find someone in Dili, for example from the NGO Forum, who could undertake such training and finance a trip to Same for them.

Also on the 2nd May we had a detailed tour of a major Timor Aid project based in Same to train people to weave material by the metre. Carpenters have also come to Same to be trained to make the large looms needed. These are based on a model imported from Thailand. Thai weavers are teaching people from several districts how to weave the cloth. We saw samples of their practice runs, men's and women's sarongs (lipa) and a length of furnishing fabric. They appeared to be doing very well and I feel this is a project that could be well worth our support.

Planning for Same Township

After a few days reconnoitring around the town to gain an understanding of existing conditions and the factors that shape the town, Jenni Kanaley and I met with the District Administrator and a number of members of the Commission to prepare an Outline Development Plan for Same township.

The existing town comprises three settlements, Holarua, Same and Babulu along the highway like beads on a string. They are separated by intervening river valleys. The town is very spread-out with ricefields, cornfields and vegetable gardens in amongst the housing.

There has been extensive national planning work done for East Timor by the UN and other bodies, and some planning for Dili and Bacau. The Plan for Same was prepared within the context of two documents, The East Timor National Plan and "Our National Vision".

The Plan identifies the location for the future town centre and three sub-centres. It proposes a network of main roads and a separate network of main pathways. It recommends that further development be excluded from the two river valleys, and that urban development not be permitted on the steep slopes that define the western and northern edges of the town.

The area developed by the Portuguese as their administration centre is identified for protection as a heritage area, with the location and the buildings suitable for use as a tourist centre.

Father Gelasio has taken the draft plan and accompanying report back to the District Administrator to review before the Plan is finalised.

Don Glasson

Update on Alphasame

Alphasame is finally in production and Lynn will give the meeting an update. Volunteers are needed in some assembly operations and it's a great chance for Friends of Same members who aren't involved in the coffee project to help the cause. Some marketing ideas will be put forward and everyone's input would be appreciated.

Coffee Report - May and June Coffee Highlights

- Glenferrie Festival on May 1 was good fun, Esther helped while Gemma Furtado assisted our Hawthorn Craft Market stall on same day, as did our regulars Joan R and Heather; we had a good chat to Cr Meredith Butler, and made contact with people from Ruyton Girls school, and a man from Solar Systems in Hawthorn who may be able to advise us with our interest in electricity
- As we need to freshen up the coffee pack, I asked a graphic designer - Bernardo Duarte from Alas, near Same - to prepare some designs for a paper sleeve to go around the pack. These were circulated to a number of FOS members and Steering Committee members for comment, and 3 of the 4 were highly recommended. Lynn Williams and I will meet this week with the Council's print room maestro, Doug Smith, to get a batch of them printed in colour, so look out for them soon. The designs are stylised crocodile motifs (representing Timor) and mountain motifs (representing Same area); we'll have a briefer, smaller paper insert as a periodic report
- Hot coffee was served at the METAC dinner, a Kew High function (Ken Masters helped here), and De La Salle School Trivia Night, Surrey Hills Uniting Church group, St Michael's Timor Sea Oil Meeting, The Avenue Uniting Church, Blackburn
- Meeting with Martin Foot of Council's Arts and Leisure area was useful; he will look out for opportunities to use the coffee "in house"; subsequently a chance to do just that occurred, and we provided hot coffee for the "Yeah Write!" youth literary event at Haw Town Hall on 4 June; Lyn Waters of Community Planning has asked us to provide coffee at the NAIDOC function on 9 July at Hawthorn Town Hall; thanks to staff generally for thinking of us
- Development of coffee selling is continuing in the southern suburbs, with contacts at churches in Cheltenham and East Bentleigh buying coffee, or putting on tastings, and Trakside Café in Sandy selling it over the counter; the tastings requested by 3 churches in that region to celebrate Timor Leste Independence Day (May 20) realised 119 packets sold
- I am meeting this week with Rosemary Patterson of the Carmelites as she wants some of her support groups to sell the coffee for fundraising purposes;
- The National Centre of Sustainability at Swinburne University has asked us to cater for a few of their upcoming meetings, which will raise our profile; our coffee is their "office coffee"
- Augustine Centre is having a festival on Sat July 9, and we will donate back the profits from hot coffee to them; they have sold the coffee packs for some time without taking commission
- Friends of Suai (City of Port Phillip), and our farflung customers in Mudgereeba, Casino, and Mt Zero have reordered; there is some interest in Perth and Tasmania
- Taste D'Vine is our newest outlet in Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn, and a valuable one too; George who works there p/t has worked in East Timor and came along to the talk at Universal Café
- South Yarra Chiropractic in Punt Rd also sells the coffee at reception
- The Steering Committee decision to fund coffee farmer Clementino Cortereal's trip to Vanuatu organic coffee plantations (see pics of him and his nursery on our website) is an excellent way to directly support ag extension work, and we do it with the coffee profits
- Moving to Fairtrade labelling has been discussed by the Steering Committee at the last meeting; I recommended against it – at this time – as we are using our coffee money for good purposes, including direct support to coffee farmers like Clementino's group; there are a number of issues here, and it will be a good item for detailed discussion at a FOS meeting at a later time

- Our volunteers keep the coffee cart rolling along; an hour occasionally from some more people would lighten the load

Conference- Cooperating with Timor-Leste

Several members of the Friends of Same attended this conference, convened by the Australia-East Timor Association, the Development Studies Network and Victoria University, held on 17-18 June 2005. Keynote speaker was the Hon Mari Alkatiri, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste.

Trish Woodcroft –Lee provided the following report:

Conference – Friendship Groups Meetings

The large number of issues identified by the various panels at the Conference as being crucial to East Timor's development, sustainable agriculture, the urgent need to create jobs for a very young population, external assistance to be directed towards creating sustainability and not creating dependency, the appropriate management of oil and gas revenue and problems of education health, including the issue of malnutrition of children, led the Friendship Interest Group to the conclusion that there was a great need to focus on specific issues and to cooperate so that projects did not overlap.

The Friendship Interest Group identified a number of key issues arising from the sessions on Day 1 of the conference. On Day 2 it identified some areas for action and six of the actions listed below were reported to the final plenary. A contact list of participants in the Friendship Interest Groups was also developed and circulated by Facilitator Richard Brown of Friends of Aileu.

Action items

- Link in with National Development Plan and Sector Investment Plans. Be aware of TL government's own policy development
- Be aware of and collaborate with other friendship groups in particular and development and aid groups in general
- Learn what each Friendship group is doing - need synergy and ongoing linking mechanisms
- VLGAs to be asked to act as information store-house and play active role in information dissemination – develop an open and accessible countrywide model such as used by (ACFID).
Could also include
 - List-Server for friendship groups
 - database which can be easily updated
- Clarify role/function of Liaison officer in Dili

- Ensure support for volunteers who are lifeblood of groups
- Share with each other our vision of the future
- Document our experience and practice - both good and bad
- Potential to set up sub interest groups to learn from each other and work collectively
- Develop protocols on accountability and transparency
- Convene follow up working group

Following the conference a lot of documents relating to health (including guidelines for donations of drugs, consumables, equipment and assets to TL, National Malaria Strategy, Manual for the National tuberculosis control program, East Timor National Nutrition strategy, National Immunisation strategy, Integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) strategy - and others) have been put on the website: www.vu.edu.au/ICEPA/cooperatingwitheasttimor

Timor Sea Justice Campaign (TSJC)

The TSJC held a very successful meeting at the Collingwood Town Hall on 22nd June. Over 100 people heard speakers Ian Melrose, Tomas Freitas and Vanessa Hearman discuss the current situation with negotiations. Despite rumours to the contrary, the Timor Sea Oil and Gas Deal is far from signed and sealed, although an Australian offer is believed to be on the table.

Ian Melrose gave a very lucid overview of the Timor Gap problem and Australia's continental Shelf argument, together with clips of those ads the Government didn't want you to see. He appealed for all present to talk with their Liberal MPs to help influence the Government. Something Kate and Esther of Friends of Same have already done!

Tomas Freitas of the Movement against the Occupation of the Timor Sea, made a moving plea for the support of the Australian public to help Timor get the best deal it can and Vanessa Hearman spoke about the origins of the Campaign and the need to keep up the momentum.

Light relief was provided by a video clip of John Clarke as Alexander Downer and by a performance of the Dili Allstars. Friends of the Earth sold some delicious snacks and East Timor Coffee was provided courtesy of Friends of Baucau ably served by Margaret and Serena. East Timor Women Australia and AETA supplied some interesting merchandise.

Congratulations to Tom Clarke and the team for a very good night.

Friends of Same meet with Petro Georgiou

Kate Gillespie-Jones, Esther Anderson and Marsha Emerman met with Petro Georgiou on Monday 6th June, as part of a local delegation to present the Timor Sea Oil petition, which Friends of Same had supported, and to advocate for a just outcome for Timor-Leste. Through our growing network in Same/Manufahi, we are very aware of the importance of a just settlement of this issue, not only in terms of revenue share, but in respecting Timor-Leste's sovereignty.

The petition and the meeting was coordinated by Tamas Wells, Timor Sea Project Officer in the Justice and International Mission Unit, Synod Victoria and Tasmania for the Uniting Church in Australia. Tamas, Mark Zirnsak (also of the Uniting Church), Gwenda Smyth of Surrey Hills Uniting Church and Ken Dempsey, Canterbury Uniting Church also attended. Esther acted as chief spokesperson.

The following statement was presented with the petition:

East Timor is one of the poorest countries in the world where almost half the population are illiterate and twelve children in every hundred die before the age of five. The money from the oil and gas deposits in the Timor Sea represents the greatest chance for the East Timorese Government to meet the essential health and education needs of their people. While there are some media reports that the deal is complete, East Timor PM Mari Alkatiri stated this week that there are still many details to be discussed.

Therefore, it is crucial in these negotiations that the Australian Government allows East Timor to maximise their opportunities in rebuilding the infrastructure of their nation. Australia would benefit from such an outcome by building friendship and respect from the people of East Timor and by increasing Australia's standing in the region.

Groups Involved:

Holy Trinity Anglican Church Kew
Kew Baptist Church & Kew Night Church
St Dominic's Catholic Camberwell East
Canterbury Uniting
Friends of Same
Kew East Uniting Church
St Silas' Anglican Church Balwyn North
Surry Hills Uniting Church
Canterbury Uniting Church
St Hilary's Anglican Church

The petition, and the Friends of Same's involvement, was covered by the local Progress Leader edition of 7th June.

Mr Georgiou seemed receptive to the delegation's views. As negotiations continue, we hope the outcome is something we feel able to live with in our ongoing relationship with our friends in Timor-Leste.

Our Website

The Friends of Same website www.friendsofsame.org has been maintained since its inception by Claudine Chionh, as part of her busy life, working and studying. Claudine also maintains the communications with the Friends of Same network via the email correspondence. This work is very important in ensuring we can effectively communicate locally. Photographs of Kevin's and Don's visits to Timor-Leste have recently been added.

Claudine's efforts are much appreciated.

Date of our next meeting

Please note that the next scheduled meeting is Thursday 1st September. This is the date of the Weaving For Life fundraising event. We hope we see you there.

A luta continua