



65,000 Kms for Charity!

In August last year Marianne, daughter of Grand President Jim and Barbara Kelly, along with her husband Alex Towns and good friend Martin Pitwood embarked on a gruelling expedition to drive an estimated 65,000km from the UK to New Zealand in aid of charity! As well as driving half way round the world, part of their charity fundraising is to dive in as many countries along the route as possible.

Five months into the expedition finds the team leaving Pakistan and entering India having visited champagne cellars in France, eaten plenty of ice creams in Italy, hiked, dived and rafted in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, explored the monasteries of Bulgaria before driving across the Bosphorus bridge in Istanbul to complete Europe and pass into Asia. After visiting ancient ruins in Turkey they spent two months exploring the Middle East including Syria with its fabulous citadels, the magnificent Petra in Jordan and the spectacular coral reefs and ancient monuments in Egypt before returning to Turkey to continue their journey eastwards through the lesser explored Iran.

Except for a few minor mechanical and electrical problems and dealing with over-officious border guards things have gone smoothly so far, but the most difficult experience, they say, was negotiating the busy streets of downtown Cairo - a hair-raising experience by their accounts, whether driving or on foot!

They are travelling through some of the poorest communities of the world, seeing people who deal with suffering and hardship on a daily basis. To this end they have arranged with their chosen charity CARE International to visit some of their projects in various countries along the route, including most recently visits to water purification and sanitation projects in Egypt.

The EMPOWERS project in the Beni Suef region aims to improve long-term access to water by vulnerable populations



through more effective local integrated water resource management. Egypt has a very high per capita availability of water, but demand exceeds the amount available because of inefficient irrigation in most areas. Egypt is also almost entirely dependent on water originating from outside the country and it is calculated that over 25% of water is used twice and 50% of farmers depend on drainage water to some degree.

The ALIVE project addresses the problem of poorly treated industrial and sewage effluent polluting the water supply by educating the communities and offering assistance in building low cost waste treatment systems. The team spent a day with representatives of CARE learning about the problems faced and visited some of the affected communities to see first-hand how the charity works with the communities to find the best solutions to their problems.

Whilst on the road, the team are keeping in touch with home by writing diaries and publishing them on their website <http://www.overland-underwater.com> together with their photo albums. Judging by the comments left in their guestbook it is being enjoyed by not only friends and family but also people the team have met en-route or even people who have simply seen the cars whiz past them in the desert!

Media interest has been very intense too, with the expedition appearing on television and radio in the UK both before and after their departure, and local interest has been overwhelming. They have been featured in newspapers in several countries along their route so far, including Bulgaria, Jordan and Egypt.

Such interest in the expedition has enabled the team to raise the impressive sum of over £8,000 for CARE International to date, with their fundraising target set at £25,000.

As this article goes to press, the expedition will have just left Pakistan. The team were shocked by the devastation caused by the earthquake in northern Pakistan and India which killed over 30,000 people. CARE International were very quick to mobilise staff and resources to assist the survivors by organising winter tents, water storage containers and purification systems, blankets, hygiene kits, medicine, water and food. Of special concern is the harsh winter season which prevented the team from exploring the northern areas but this is what the victims now live with on a daily basis.

If you would be interested in helping the team achieve their fundraising target, all the details of how to donate are on their website <http://www.overland-underwater.com>, where you can also follow the team's progress and read their stories. Thank you for your help!

Beside the Seaside



Province 17 returned to Llandudno for their annual Provincial Weekend. Provincial President John and Andrea Ross welcomed a large number of brothers, their ladies and children at the end of September.

With kind weather and an excellent hotel the weekend was one of the high points of John and Andrea's year.

A sponsored rowing competition using two gymnasium rowing machines raised £585 for Francis House, with competitors ranging in age from 12 to 80. At the Provincial Ball on the Saturday evening the presidents for the year were "persuaded" to enhance the entertainment by singing the "Floral Dance". The highlight of the weekend, however, was the holding of Mass in the hotel on the Sunday morning.

Pictured above are John and Andrea, Director Frank and Bebe Hinds and Province 17 presidents and their ladies.