
SAI NEWSLETTER

Lockdown November 2020

A cup of coffee for a life

Thanks to Covid there has been no fund raising for SAI in the UK this year so we are especially grateful to all who have made regular donations to School Aid India via standing orders. This has been our only income, and we were forced to draw on emergency reserves as well to keep the show on the road. Anyone still wishing to join the I40 club to help our I40 pupils get a good education will find details on the web site.

Some great news!

Our very first pupils who started in 2007 sat the equivalent of GCSE exams before lockdown. **EVERY SINGLE ONE PASSED!!**

All ten of this year's top class girls sat an entry test in September for the best Girls Secondary school in Darjeeling, competing with 500 girls for 60 places. They all got through! Congratulations girls, and also to your class teacher Smriti who coached you during lockdown

Letter from Helen Jones

As this extraordinary school year draws to a close we are heaving a sigh of relief that the Roseberry School family in Darjeeling seem to have come through it all relatively unscathed. School opened as usual in March with two dozen 3 year olds joining the pre-school section. Everyone settled down to work very quickly. They had heard of the virus of course, but the centre of the epidemic in India was far away in Delhi, and when in April the country went into lockdown, Darjeeling people felt quite safe on their remote mountain top. After a few weeks all that changed as migrant workers began to make their way home, some of them carrying the coronavirus. Even so, things were not too bad and we heard that school would reopen in July - then in August - then not at all in 2020. Some of the children sent me recorded messages, they hated lockdown, and longed to see their friends and teachers. The teachers met in school two days a week. They helped each other decorate their classrooms and sent work out to pupils via parents' mobile phones or on worksheets for families who had no phone. The work was brought in by parents and later returned marked. An ex pupil wrote me a letter. Just before lockdown began he and his brother had been despatched to an aunt's house for safety. Then in lockdown he heard that his school had started posting work on the internet. He was desperate not to get behind so he tried to buy pens and paper to do the work but all the shops were closed. He tried to get home where he had left his books but there was no public transport. After some weeks he made it back to Darjeeling but is still struggling to catch up. Meanwhile the government has supplied basic food necessities via ration shops to the now unemployed day labourers, so while there have been no treats at least the children haven't actually starved.



