

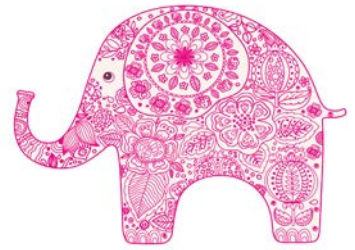


THE  
*Isabella*  
PEATFIELD  
MEMORIAL FUND

issue 02 / June 2013

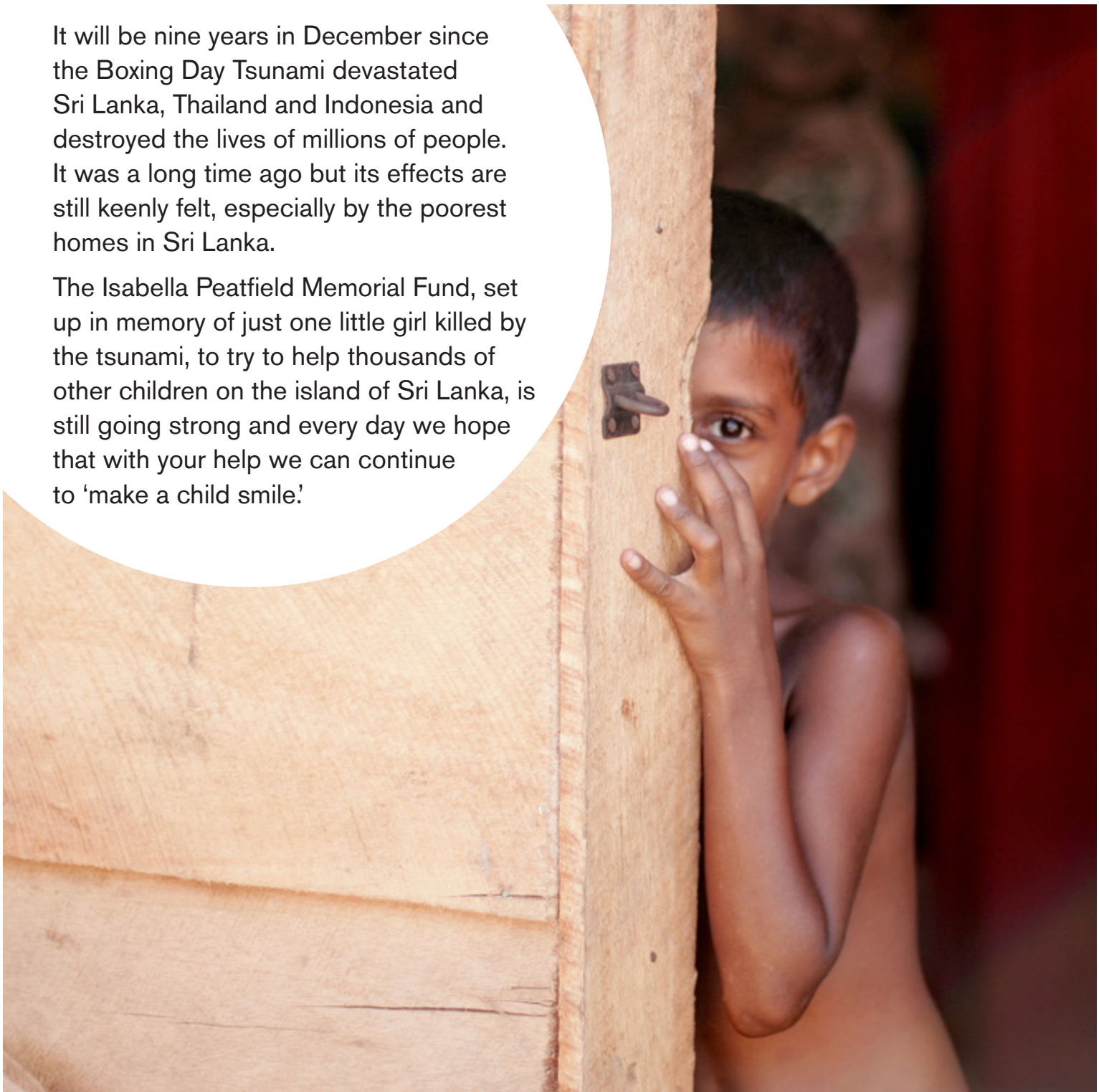
# The Pink Elephant

The Isabella Peatfield Fund Newsletter



It will be nine years in December since the Boxing Day Tsunami devastated Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia and destroyed the lives of millions of people. It was a long time ago but its effects are still keenly felt, especially by the poorest homes in Sri Lanka.

The Isabella Peatfield Memorial Fund, set up in memory of just one little girl killed by the tsunami, to try to help thousands of other children on the island of Sri Lanka, is still going strong and every day we hope that with your help we can continue to 'make a child smile.'



## RAISING HUNDREDS OF SMILES

**Isabella's charity has just installed its 7th playground and can happily say it continues to make children smile – thanks to all our supporters.**

Our latest playground was installed in February at Pushpa's nursery school in Weerawila near Tissa, in the southern area of Sri Lanka. This little school is in a dusty village area a little way outside town and many of the 30 children there are from poor farming families. Just going to school every day has an enormously positive impact on the wellbeing of these children.

The Isabella Fund installed a climbing frame, swings and roundabout at this little nursery run by nursery teacher Mrs Pushpa.



As part of a citizenship project at school, to raise awareness about a charity of their choice, two girls from Thorpe, near Ashbourne, have made more than 70 children smile. The two teenagers and a group of their friends threw themselves in to the project and raised nearly £300 from a variety of activities, including busking. The money has gone towards funding a new roundabout at Pubudu nursery school (translates as 'blooming flower') in Tissamaharama, next to the Menik (gem) Buddhist temple on the main road between Debarawewa and Tissa. This is always the most popular item in every playground.

Finally, thanks to one of our international fundraisers, Nick from Switzerland, we have just funded our second plant hand out, also at Pubudu nursery. The plant project has done tremendously well since it was introduced at Malathi Nursery School last year.



## VIEW FROM SRI LANKA



And one of the simplest and best things I have done for schools is our Isabella playgrounds. For only a few hundred pounds my local metalworker makes sets of swings, see-saws, slides and roundabouts. Whenever I go past one of 'my' schools or nursery schools and see children playing, I feel it is money well spent.

Thanks to you we have created several Isabella playgrounds and there are more on the way. The most recent one opened in May in Pushpa's nursery school in Weerawila, a poor and dusty village where parents earn a living as day labourers. At the opening ceremony dirt-poor mothers and fathers came up to me and expressed their gratitude.

Other nursery schools are enjoying the plants and flowers that we have provided for the children. Every morning they water their plants and take pleasure in watching them grow.



The school run in Sri Lanka must be one of the wonders of the world. Every weekday morning at about 7am the roads fill up with every imaginable type of vehicle. Motorbikes whizz along with up to five children clinging on. Children pile in to buses so overloaded that they scrape along the ground. Children arrive on ancient bicycles, in school vans, on tuk-tuks and even on tractors. The rest walk.

Few tourists would believe the hardships these smiling children face each morning as they get ready for school. Many of them come from homes without electricity or water supply. They bathe in irrigation canals or in water collected in plastic containers.

When I first started doing charity work in Sri Lanka soon after the 2004 Tsunami I tried to help every poor family that I met. I wanted every home to have electric light, running water, beds and furniture.

At last I realised that it was impossible to help them all.... but I could do something about the schools. In this way children would at least have a pleasant environment during school hours. So....I have spent years fixing school toilets, repairing water lines, painting walls and buying PCs for classes.

The longer I do my charity work, the clearer it becomes to me that creating safe and happy school environments for children is the single most important thing we can do in a poor country like Sri Lanka. Our Isabella playgrounds will give pleasure to thousands of children in the coming years. It is hard to put a price on that.

*The Isabella Fund is indebted to volunteer Jon Ashworth who oversees the charity's work in Sri Lanka*

## SPOTLIGHT

In each issue of The Pink Elephant we throw the spotlight on one area of our fundraising activities, to see the difference they have made. In this issue we take a look at an orphanage with which we are forging strong links, situated just a few hundred metres from where Isabella died.

### THE ORPHANAGE OF LIGHT

**She has the name of an angel, looks like an angel and has become a true angel to more than 30 orphaned and abandoned boys in Tangalle, Sri Lanka.**

Angelika Riedlinger, from Kaiserslautern, Germany, is now the director of Club Eliya Children's Home, a Tangalle orphanage, which is home to 31 orphaned and socially disadvantaged boys.



A trained children's nurse, Angelika was sent to Sri Lanka in March 2005, in the aftermath of the tsunami. As a development aid worker and health teacher, Angelika worked in a team that oversaw drinking water supply. In kindergartens, schools, villages and camps, she helped to help people learn more about good hygiene. Whilst she witnessed great heartache and heard endless stories of loss and heartbreak she also saw the great resilience of children and their ability to take pleasure in the simplest of things.

She said: "to see children laugh and be happy over small things during their everyday life made amends for so much that I had seen but also for what they had endured."

Angelika returned to Germany and worked as a nurse in her home town for several years.

But she kept returning to Sri Lanka and carried in her heart, as she says herself: "a dream to construct a Children's Home in Sri Lanka in an effort to help orphaned children live a better life."

Some things are meant to be and Angelika's dream came true when she was gifted a parcel of land in Tangalle as a special thank you for her help following the tsunami. In May 2008 the Club Eliya Children's Home was established and in September 2010 construction began.

Angelika continues: "Just one year following the start of construction, the home was ready and I was ready to change my life and move to Sri Lanka as the home's director. I now look after my family of boys full-time, as well as providing five local staff members with valuable employment and lodgings."

Angelika thanks everyone for their generous support of the orphanage and begs you to consider joining our Elephant Club and becoming a sponsor of one or more of her boys. "We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support! With love, everything is possible."



**Angelika welcomes visitors and volunteers to the Home. This year two Isabella Fund supporters, Janice and Iain from Ashbourne, spent time at the orphanage. This is what Janice had to say:**

"One thing that strikes you amazingly quickly about Sri Lanka is how badly they all drive! We had the most hair-raising five-hour journey down to our guest house in Tangalle, a small seaside town on the south coast of Sri Lanka. This was where we would be based for most of our stay in Sri Lanka and was one of the country's areas most badly damaged by the tsunami in 2004.

The next day we were introduced to our 'home' for the next few weeks and to the boys who live there. When we arrived there were twelve boys aged from three to 16 years old, when we left there were 28!

It is a wonderful home and the children are very well cared for. Routine is paramount and everyone has his job to do. The day begins early at 5.30am to escape the sun's scorching heat and the children spend their mornings at the local school, before returning to the home for lunch and a rest period. The afternoons are spent doing their chores, followed by another lesson period before the evening meal and then it's bed around 9pm.

During school time I spent my mornings at the Eliya kindergarten, Angelika's latest project, run in a building kindly donated by the local monastery. Children from the local community attend the kindergarten along with the pre-schoolers from the home.

We would then prepare an English lesson for the afternoon with small groups of boys who had similar knowledge levels of English. It was tough as they had been taught the letters but not much in the way of phonics so putting words together was a challenge, but we tried hard to make it fun and a little bit different.

Although I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, I soon realised that there just isn't enough play-time and fun!

Equipment consisted of the odd ball and a few building blocks.



There were no toys, no children's storybooks. Having worked in the UK in pre-schools where the children are provided with everything, I know how important play is in developing a child's learning. So I used sand and coconut shells from the beach and showed how children learn through the experience of play. We made play dough from flour, salt, water and food colouring and the children spent hours exploring different ways to manipulate the dough. It was an inspiration for me to get back to such basics and really felt the thrill of teaching again and that I was actually making a difference.

Lack of play facilities seems to be the norm in all pre-schools in Sri Lanka, which are not regarded as a stimulating environment for young children to develop natural skills through play. We also realised that apart from going to school the children often don't get away from the home too much.

We thought it would be a great idea, therefore, to take the children on an outing to the beach, but most of them can't swim and a few of them were really frightened of the sea. We persevered, however, and ended up with all of the 28 children, whether toddlers or teenagers all wearing rubber rings or arm bands! The children loved these outings and it was great to see them let off a bit of steam and have fun.

The physical impact of the tsunami has now virtually gone but the psychological scars are still left untreated. It was a wonderfully rewarding experience to know that no matter what you have to offer, be it money, knowledge or physical effort, it was all welcomed and appreciated by the people we met and worked with during our stay.

The most humbling part though was the kindness and appreciative nature of the Sri Lankan people, adults and children.

## SEE YOUR DONATIONS IN ACTION

*Sowing the seeds for the future*

Isabella's charity is indebted to the generosity of its supporters. We could not do what we do without the kindness of people who make donations. One of the most important ways you can help is by joining our Pink Elephant Club.

## THESE CHILDREN NEED SPONSORS NOW



Akila, 8 years old



Udara, 11 years old

**By making a regular monthly donation you can sponsor one of these children.**



Here we talk to **Louise Dunning** from Belper, one of our founder members. What does being a Pink Elephant member mean to you?

"I was lucky enough to know Isabella well and to be asked to be her Godmother. She was a delight to be around; a vivacious child who threw herself into everything with the 'in the moment' concentration that we associate with small children. Confident, fearless and fun loving, she was the first to whiz down a slide or jump on a swing.

This is why it's so great to be a Pink Elephant Club member and to be able to contribute to all the terrific child-centred projects that the Isabella Fund instigates and supports. I really appreciate the fact that the Fund not only sponsors the important infrastructure and capital projects that are essential to help the people of Sri Lanka to rebuild their lives, but it also finds the money and the will to focus on the children and to bring some fun and happiness in to their lives by paying for facilities like the Isabella playgrounds. I can't think of a better way to remember Isabella."

## CHANGE THEIR STARS

*Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day;  
show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.*

As the old proverb says, we don't just give a child a meal – we provide them with an education for life.

It is thanks to members of our Elephant Club that we can help children further their education, learn a skill or a profession and break out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

Our newest protégés are two teenage girls **Gayani** and **Ritmi**, who have spent the past 10 years in the Weerawila children's home. With our help they are going to live with a foster family and to continue their education. Jon Ashworth said:

"The alternative was that Gayani, the eldest sister, would be forced by the orphanage to leave school and to work in a garment factory. Now she will be able to do her exams and continue her education. They were the first two children to live in this orphanage, so it is a huge thing for them – a real milestone in their lives."



## Help us to help a child change their stars



## YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS

Thank you so much for your letters, comments and messages of support. We can't print everything but here is a poem written in memory of Isabella, from supporter **Julia Mathison** who felt inspired to write these words after learning of Isabella's tragedy from the documentary 'TSUNAMI: Caught on Camera' (available to view on YouTube.)

Sweet girl, I didn't know you  
For you were but a child  
When you died with the many  
In the wet and the wild -  
That was so much more  
Than the words - Tsunami 2004

You would be almost fourteen now  
If you would have lived  
There's no greater sacrifice  
Your parents could have given

I watched them speak  
And it broke my heart  
Those waves that tore through everything  
Ripping lives apart

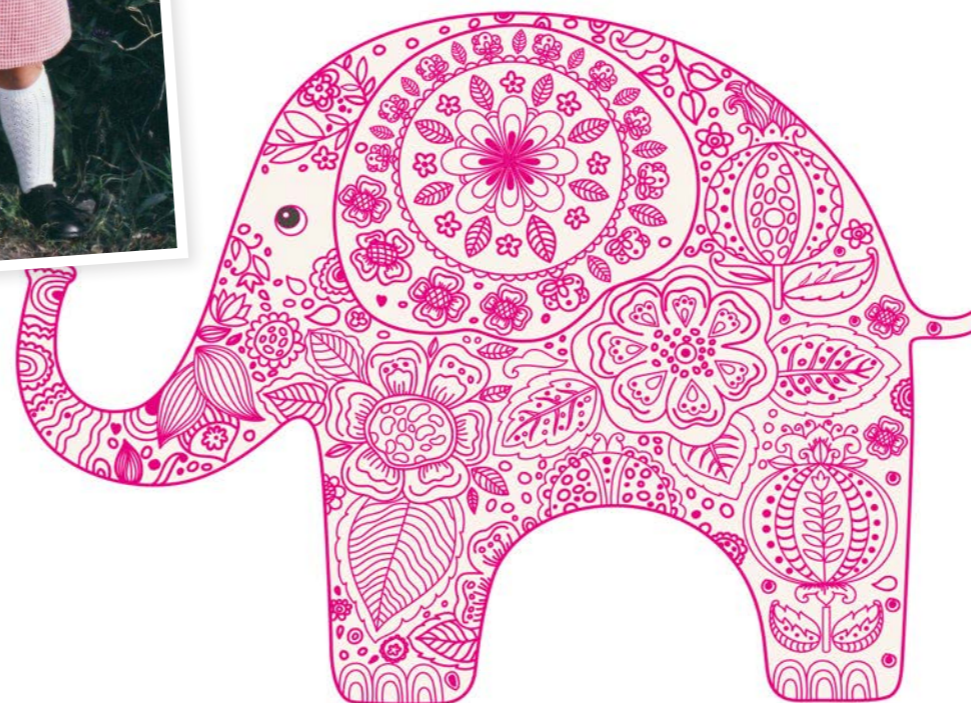
I truly feel you're up there  
As an angel and a star  
I pray you guide your parents  
That you bless them, from afar

It still makes no sense  
I guess there'll never be a why  
But maybe your one purpose  
Was just to pass on by...

To give your folks a little Louis  
And a higher goal in life  
To bond with a whole, new country  
To help children there in strife

It is a huge, incredible project  
Borne of a huge, incredible cost  
But Isabella, you'd be smiling  
To know that all was never lost

Your parents survived you for a reason  
Even though they broke in two  
You were here, but for a season  
But 8 years on,  
These words I write  
They're for  
YOU.



## Please do keep in touch on Facebook.

Here are some of our latest messages.....

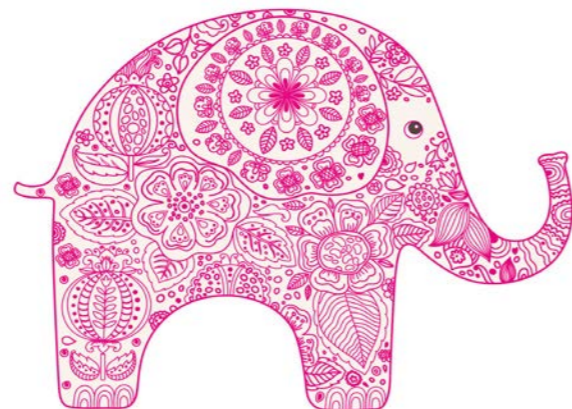
"I just watched the tsunami documentary, what can anybody say. So, so sad. keep up the good work, and your little girl will live on with this memorial fund." ...**Paul**

"Such an important thing you are doing for Sri Lanka. I hope the small donation I sent to you helps in someway. I'm sure your daughter is looking down on you with pure love and joy" ...  
**JS**



# TAKE ACTION NOW!

## How you can help



Any donation made to the fund goes directly to support the projects. There is no deduction for administration as everyone involved gives their time and support for free. Our completely transparent donations procedure means you can see exactly where your money goes and the smiles it has put on a child's face.

### Join our Isabella Elephant Club

For a regular monthly contribution from as little as £2 you can become a member of our Elephant Club. All members receive regular updates, a wrist-band and an elephant lapel pin. Members donating £15 or more a month also receive an Isabella t-shirt and everyone making donations over £1000 a year has the opportunity to have a playground in Sri Lanka named after them. See what one member has to say about being part of the club on page 4.

### Become a company sponsor

We are looking for companies to sponsor the Isabella Fund. As a company sponsor you will be able to sponsor your own named playgrounds and put your company logo on playground plaques. All your employees will be offered the opportunity to buy lapel pins and wristbands and you will be able to publicise your company further through sponsorship of fundraising events. If you make regular donations to charities, please consider choosing us next time. All company sponsors will receive profile features on their business and the good works their donations have achieved in future Pink Elephant newsletters.

### Become one of our fundraisers

Get involved and help us raise money. If you have an event coming up at which you could raise some money for charity or have an idea how to raise money, then please do get in touch. We are also looking for helpful, friendly people to help sell our lapel pins and wristbands at their place of work. If you think you can help then please do get in touch.

### You can make a one-off donation online or by cheque

If you can't commit right now to a regular contribution to our work then please do think about making a small one-off donation. A little goes a very long way in Sri Lanka and every penny really does make a difference.

## APPEAL

We often have volunteers travelling to Sri Lanka to help out in the schools and orphanages we support. They would LOVE to take your gifts to the children with them!

If you have any spare new pens, pencils, colouring pens, small drawing books, colouring books, stickers, rubbers, pencil cases or very lightweight items of clothing such as hats or t-shirts – all new please – we would love to accept them. Why not buy a few spare things next time you go shopping with your own children? Young children are often very aware of the hardships faced by kids of their own age in other countries and would love to get involved and help!

If you have any thing to donate please email us at [donations@isabellapeatfield.co.uk](mailto:donations@isabellapeatfield.co.uk) and we will arrange to collect them or get them sent to us.

We beg you to spare a thought for children who are so much worse off than us and how the littlest things can make the biggest difference.....  
Thank you!



**JOIN US NOW**  
and make a real difference to children in Sri Lanka.

To find out more you can: Visit our website [www.isabellapeatfield.co.uk](http://www.isabellapeatfield.co.uk)

Follow **Isabella Peatfield Memorial Fund** on Facebook

Email us at [info@isabellapeatfield.co.uk](mailto:info@isabellapeatfield.co.uk)