



**Celebrating
125 years
of caring**

A message from the President

SFLG ST FRANCIS LEPROSY GUILD

This year marks the 125th anniversary of St Francis Leprosy Guild. After a

century and a quarter of caring we have much to celebrate, not least the Guild's fascinating history and the amazing work being achieved with the help of our compassionate and incredibly loyal supporters. This Annual Review illustrates just some of the things that we have been achieving together.

With the world currently in the grip of a pandemic, I believe it gives us all the more reason to reflect on why, in 1895, our founder, Kate Marsden, was determined to establish the Guild. At the end of the 19th century, leprosy was a terrible disease that afflicted people across the globe. No one understood how it was transmitted and there was no known cure.



©Medical Missionaries of Mary

The physical symptoms and disabilities caused by the disease meant those who contracted it were ostracised by their own communities and forced to live on the margins of society, often in leper colonies. Many selfless members of religious orders were prepared to travel to far flung regions of the world in order to



nurse and care for people with leprosy, sometimes sacrificing their own lives in the process. We owe these people a huge debt of gratitude and are determined to build on their legacy.

Between the 1940s and 1970s, various anti-leprosy drugs were being developed and used to some effect, but it wasn't until 1981 that the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended the use of multi-drug therapy in order to treat and cure the disease. At that time, there were still more than five million new cases of leprosy being reported each year. In fact, it wasn't until WHO made medicines freely available in 1995 that we saw a really significant fall in new cases of leprosy across the globe.

In the past 20 years, more than 16 million people have been cured of leprosy and I am proud to say

that, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the Guild and its partners have been working tirelessly to play their part in identifying, diagnosing

and treating new cases.

The number now being reported to WHO annually is slightly in excess of 200,000.

We know that this is likely to be a conservative

estimate as new cases continue to go undetected and unreported in communities that have very little access to healthcare. Nevertheless, it is still an amazing achievement and it means that, at last, a leprosy-free world is now within sight.

Of course, our thoughts and prayers go out to our partners around the world who currently have not one, but two enemies to fight: leprosy and Covid-19. You can rest assured that as we emerge from this pandemic – as we surely will – we will be redoubling our efforts to beat leprosy once and for all. People living in poor communities, where leprosy is still rife, will need the Guild and its supporters more than ever.



Michael Forbes Smith, President.



Following in the footsteps of St Francis

Saint Francis Leprosy Guild was founded in 1895 as Saint Francis Leper Guild by a group of dedicated lay people under the inspiration of Kate Marsden. At age 16, Kate trained as a nurse and after her first encounter with leprosy she became attracted to the life of St Francis, proving herself willing to “embrace a leper” and devoting herself to the alleviation of their suffering. This led her to travel halfway round the world attempting to find a cure for leprosy. On her return to the UK, Kate became the moving spirit behind the founding of the Guild.

Kate was just 18 years old when she was sent as a Red Cross nurse to Bulgaria in order to care for Russian soldiers injured in the Russo-Turkic war. It was here that she was moved by her first encounter with people suffering from leprosy.

Learning that leprosy was rife in Siberia, and determined to help these abandoned and wretched people, Kate obtained the patronage of Queen Victoria and Princess Alexandra and in 1890 headed out to Imperial Russia with introductions to the Tsarina and Princess Shachovskaya. They were interested in setting up professional nursing in Russia and encouraged her mission. Armed with this imperial support, she set out to find the outcast Siberian lepers and to seek a certain herb, located in the Yakutia region, that was purported to cure leprosy.

Sadly, the herb proved ineffective but Kate remained in Siberia and set up a hospital for around 70 leprosy patients in the village of Vilyuisk. In both Vilyuisk and Yakutsk, Kate’s memory still looms large, not least because the hospital she established remained in operation until the 1960s. In Vilyuisk, there is a square and a street named after her, as well as a statue paid for by local people. In 2019, the Guild was contacted by Arctic Film company which is based in Yakutsk. It is producing a

documentary about Kate Marsden, and possibly even a feature film about her life. We hope, at some point, to screen the documentary as part of our 125th anniversary celebrations.

When Kate finally returned to England from Siberia, she converted to Catholicism and became a member of the Third Order of St Francis – a lay order. This no doubt gave her much consolation as, sadly, she had enemies and was ridiculed by many who disbelieved her accounts.

Kate eventually decided to stand down from the Guild in order to prevent her reputation from damaging the charity and its work. Soon after, she went to live with friends and, very sadly, she eventually died in poverty and largely forgotten.

Paying tribute to the Guild’s founder

With the help of friends of Yakutia in the UK a headstone has been placed on the grave of Kate Marsden in Hillingdon cemetery, which was dedicated on 3 September 2019 by the Russian Orthodox Bishop in London and Catholic and Anglican clergy. It was very fitting that representatives of the Guild were invited to attend the dedication of the gravestone and Arctic Film will be including this touching memorial to Kate in their documentary.





Reverend Monsignor Howlett

The first meeting of the Guild

In the 19th century, Catholic church congregations would have been much more aware of the scourge of leprosy than most people are today, not least because of those missionaries who devoted themselves to the care of people with the disease.

Kate Marsden, the Guild's founder, and her contemporaries had clearly heard of the work of Saint Damien of Molokai, who in 1864 travelled from Belgium to Hawaii as a missionary. He was just 24 years old. In 1873, Father Damien volunteered to live among the lepers who had been isolated on the island of Molokai. He remained there for 16 years until his own death from leprosy in 1889. His work in Molokai and his death were widely reported in London.



St Damien of Molokai

It was just a year after Father Damien's death, in 1890, that Kate made her own journey to Siberia in search of a cure for leprosy, returning five years later determined to set up the Guild.

Originally called St Francis Leper Guild, the founding committee met for the first time on Wednesday 23 October 1895 at the house of Baroness Gudin who acted as Chair. The Baroness was the daughter-in-law of French painter, Theodore Gudin, and although she lived in Kensington and was clearly well connected at the time,

just two years before her death in 1922 it seems she had fallen on hard times. She was living in the basement of her London house and sleeping on

a pile of mattresses, although no one who knew her was quite sure why.

Other committee members included Lady Marion and Reverend James Weller, the only Anglicans involved with the foundation of the Guild. The Honourable Mrs Forbes, H. Johnson Esquire, the Franciscan priest, Very Reverend Father David and the Very Reverend Monsignor Howlett (pictured left) were also at that first meeting.

Mgr Howlett was Parish Priest of the parish in Kingsland, Hackney, London, when he agreed to join the committee in 1895, and he served variously as Director and Honorary Treasurer of the Guild until 1926. In a copy of The Tablet, Countess Cadogan, the then president of St Francis Leper Guild, was at pains to acknowledge Mgr Howlett's outstanding contribution to the Guild. She wrote, "Mgr Howlett has filled these posts with devotedness since the foundation in 1895, and without his encouragement, help and counsel the Guild could hardly have attained a secure position."

As well as his contribution to the Guild's work, Mgr Howlett also served as Administrator of Westminster Cathedral and editor of the Cathedral Record from 1905 until 1947. He died in 1949.

THE
**SAINT FRANCIS
LEPER GUILD**
(Under the Patronage of His Eminence Cardinal Bourne and The Hierarchy)
MAY 11th
is
FATHER DAMIEN'S DAY
because on that day 52 years ago this great and heroic
"APOSTLE OF THE LEPERS"
arrived among the lepers of MOLOKAI! The story of FATHER DAMIEN'S life is one of the greatest epics of human renoucement for the cause of CHRISTIAN CHARITY! He lived not only with the lepers and for the lepers . . . but
FATHER DAMIEN DIED A LEPER!
("Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—S. John 15, 13.)
TO-DAY
there are many heroic FATHERS and SISTERS and LAY HELPERS in all parts of the world emulating FATHER DAMIEN'S Christ-like example. They also are sacrificing bodily health and earthly comfort for these poor suffering lepers!
WILL YOU PLEASE HELP IN THIS HEROIC WORK BY SENDING A SMALL DONATION?
Where can charity be like unto this? For to give to the Leper Cause is literally to fulfil the Scriptural injunction of loving our neighbour as
Christ Himself Loved the Lepers

A special appeal is made to the
CHILDREN
who can be taught early in life the heavenly
ART OF CHARITY!
Here is the golden opportunity.
PARENTS AND TEACHERS!
Will you please ask your children to give just
ONE PENNY
on
FATHER DAMIEN'S DAY
(Monday, May 11th)
to
**THE POOR SUFFERING
LEPERS**

Contributions may be sent to
The Hon. Sec., St. Francis Leper Guild,
27 Claverton Street, London, S.W.1
N.B.—Pamphlets giving particulars of the Guild's work
will be sent on application

A fundraising appeal on behalf of the Guild's work, printed in The Tablet on Sunday 11 April 1925.

Working towards a leprosy-free world

A strategy for today and tomorrow

When the Guild was first established there was no cure for leprosy, therefore its main purpose was to help care for the sick, disabled and marginalised people who were suffering from the disease. More than a century later, our focus has changed in line with changing needs. Today, we are working with partners who are determined to root out leprosy wherever it exists, providing treatment before the disease takes hold.

Detecting, diagnosing and treating new cases of leprosy as soon as they occur are key to preventing the spread of the disease. They are also the means by which we can reduce the stigma attached to leprosy since prompt treatment means people need never suffer the disabilities it can cause.

Since the World Health Organisation made multi-drug therapy freely available, more people with leprosy have been able to receive treatment in their own communities, either in general hospitals or as outpatients. Therefore, the notion of people with leprosy being marginalised in 'leper colonies' is a thing of the past. Those who have already suffered severe disabilities tend to be from an older generation. They are often cared for in general care homes and clinics and are gradually passing away.

Therefore, in the future, the grants we provide will mainly be aimed at helping our partners to train medics and volunteers to work inside people's communities, raising awareness of the early symptoms of leprosy and actively seeking out new cases for diagnosis and treatment.

With the help of our supporters, we are determined to create a leprosy-free world, one community at a time.

Over the past year...

These are just some of the things our supporters have helped us to achieve over the past year. The Guild would like to say a huge thank you for making them possible.

77,428
people have been helped



We have supported

26
leprosy centres



Annual grants to leprosy centres totalled
£115,000



Our work spanned

12
countries across the globe



2
junior doctors received grants to support their training work in Nepal and India



BANGLADESH



Dhanjuri Leprosy Control Centre (DLC), in Bangladesh, has been caring for people with leprosy since 1927 and the Guild has been awarding grants to support their anti-leprosy work for over 20 years.

The centre identifies and treats leprosy patients in the Dinajpur District where there are 13 clinics across the region, providing treatment for local villagers and carrying out a fantastic range of outreach work to detect new cases.

To ensure early detection of leprosy, DLC is taking a holistic approach, part of which includes health education, surveys in schools and house-to-house visits. One of the main aims of the education programme is to dispel local people's superstitions and misunderstandings about leprosy in order to prevent those with the disease from being discriminated against.



Seeking out new leprosy cases



A leprosy patient receives physiotherapy

If people suffer discrimination, they will often hide their symptoms until disabilities occur, by which time they may have already transmitted the disease to others.

By raising awareness of leprosy symptoms among health workers,

NGOs and the public, the DLC is not only able to examine people who have been referred to their clinics, but more individuals are proving willing to self-refer, so they can be examined, diagnosed and receive curative treatment before they develop disabilities.



Leprosy awareness education session

For example, DLC has spent 52 days making public announcements from a decorated rickshaw that visited local markets and other places where the public gather. Approximately, 229,254 people heard these messages and received leaflets as a result, and this led to 1,439 people being examined at leprosy clinics in the region.

In the past year, DLC have identified a total of 317 new cases of leprosy that can now be treated and cured. This was achieved by using a range of education initiatives together with various methods of contact tracing, such as the centre's Healthy Contacts Check Up. This is an examination of the family members of past leprosy

patients. Of the 2,270 family members who were examined in the past year, 34 new cases of leprosy have been found.

The Dhanjuri Leprosy Control Centre is an excellent example of the thorough work that is needed in order to beat leprosy for good. Its 13 clinics and Dhanjuri Hospital also support people who need treatment for a range of conditions that stem from leprosy, such as eye problems and ulcers. The centre also provides physiotherapy and specially adapted shoes to help leprosy patients protect their feet from injury and remain mobile.

Fr Michael D'Cruze, Director of the Dhanjuri Leprosy Control Centre, extends his sincere gratitude to all supporters and friends of the centre for their generous help in making this leprosy programme possible.



A patient has his foot dressed in hospital

INDIA



Thanks to generous donations from our supporters, St Francis Leprosy Guild was able to make a grant of £2,500 to the Poorna Sukha Leprosy Centre in Tamil Nadu, South India. In the past year, they have been using this grant to help detect new cases of leprosy in the region and to care for those who have already contracted the disease.

The Poorna Sukha Leprosy Centre is based in the city of Dindigul. As well as providing medical care and support for 152 patients and their families, the centre carries out regular monitoring and diagnostic treatment from five health centres across the region. In the past year, 48 people were referred for examination and six tested positive for leprosy. They will now be receiving six months of multi-drug therapy to cure the disease.



Detection and after-care



Mrs Ponnammal with fieldworker, Mr Jacob



Dr Divya, a dermatologist, examining a patient



Mrs Muthu Lakshmi with her granddaughter, and Mrs Stella, co-ordinator

A large proportion of Poorna Sukha Leprosy Centre's work involves outreach into local communities. Depending on the stage that the disease has reached before a patient is treated, many will need follow-up examinations to ensure they do not develop severe disabilities. Leprosy causes nerve damage, which means those with the disease need to be aware of injuring their skin and limbs, since this can lead to complications.

Medics from the centre conduct mobile clinics, making regular visits to patients in their own communities to conduct sensory and voluntary muscle tests. They also advise on therapeutic exercise and the care of ulcers, as well as providing medication, nutritional supplements and pairs of shoes, known locally as chappals, to help patients avoid sustaining injuries to their feet. Those patients found to be severely ill are offered free and prompt treatment at the centre's hospital.

In the past year, the Poorna Sukha Leprosy Centre has benefited from having a dermatologist on the team and they have seen 168 people either as in or outpatients and carried out 1,453 treatments and consultations.

For those whose livelihood has been affected by leprosy, many of whom are now elderly, the centre has also provided goats to help people generate an income from selling their offspring, milk and meat. Funds have also been made available to help with children's schooling and, in some cases, to provide food parcels for those unable to feed themselves.

The Poorna Sukha Leprosy Centre is far from the largest project that the Guild supports, but through their diverse outreach work, they are not only enabling people with leprosy to live with dignity, but are also making an invaluable contribution towards the goal of a leprosy-free world.



The centre marks World Leprosy Day

NEPAL



INF Nepal runs programmes across the western regions of Nepal covering several areas of health and development work. The Guild supports Green Pastures Hospital, which spearheads the organisation's battle against leprosy.

Green Pastures Hospital serves Pokhara, the second largest city in Nepal with a population of around 265,000, as well as Nepal's three Western Development Regions. With over 60 years' experience caring for leprosy patients, the hospital is a centre of excellence. It treats and rehabilitates patients by providing multi-drug therapy, necessary surgery, counselling, and self-care training.

In 2010, the Nepal Ministry of Health announced that leprosy had been eliminated in the country, based on the



Supporting a centre of excellence



World Health Organisation's description that for every 10,000 of the population, there is less than one person affected by leprosy. However, the Nepal Ministry of Health were clearly basing their information on reported, rather than actual cases. For the poorest, most marginalised people in Nepal, leprosy still continues to be a significant issue.

In fact, the prevalence of leprosy in the country has been revealed to be two and a half times the global average.

"I am thankful towards Green Pastures Hospital for their support and care. I am looking forward to having my hands corrected and living life with dignity."

Bal Krishna



INF Nepal is determined to see an end to leprosy and is therefore committed to leprosy education programmes in people's communities, conducting as many as 2,729 health education sessions in the past year. INF is also training hundreds of healthcare professionals who are actively seeking out new cases. Last year alone, a further 89 cases were detected.

Unfortunately, the discrimination that people with leprosy continue to suffer in Nepal and the remoteness of many poor communities means that accurate reporting is very difficult to achieve. Sadly, this means significant numbers of people have already developed disabilities. In the past year, Green Pastures Hospital has treated 2,380 outpatients and 384 inpatients. The hospital has also provided 35 people with reconstructive surgery, which plays a vital role in maintaining their mobility and independence.

INF Nepal's Green Pastures Hospital has recently been involved in an in-depth review of the National Leprosy Programme, and in the development of a roadmap that will enable the country to reduce cases of leprosy to zero – an aim that St Francis Leprosy Guild and its many kind donors will continue to support.



Patients celebrate the change that reconstructive surgery will bring to their lives

Notes from the field...

Ediofe Health Centre in Uganda is run by the Comboni Missionary Sisters who provide much-needed compassion and care in a region with precious little health care provision. Part of their work is caring for people with leprosy, both at the centre and in their communities. Here, you can read a moving testimony from one of their patients and see evidence of their work in action.



"I thank God very much for this centre and the support they give to me. I get food, I am given free treatment when I fall sick. I am given blankets and soap, which would be very difficult for me to get in my condition.

I thank Sr. Paola and all the staff of this health centre for their support. I also want to thank the people in Europe who are sending money to support us. I want God to bless them."



A staff member runs a health education session for leprosy patients on a clinic day.



A Clinical Officer from the health centre during a home visit tour. He is advising the patient in self-care methods, such as not walking bare-footed, wearing protective footwear and avoiding injuring his legs.



An outreach visit to the home of a patient. She is explaining about the roof of her house, which needs repair but her disabled hands mean she is unable to repair it by herself.

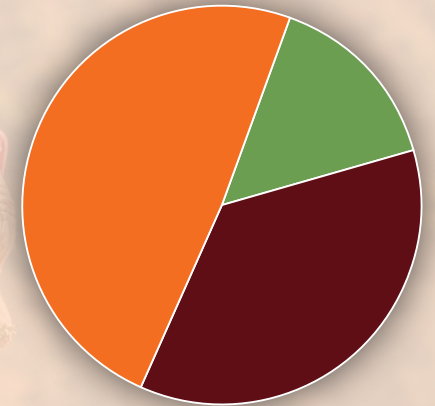
Financial summary

The following charts show the Guild's voluntary income for the year Jan – Dec 2019 and also how that income was used to provide grants to leprosy centres across the world.

Voluntary income 2019

- Donations
- Trust income
- Legacies

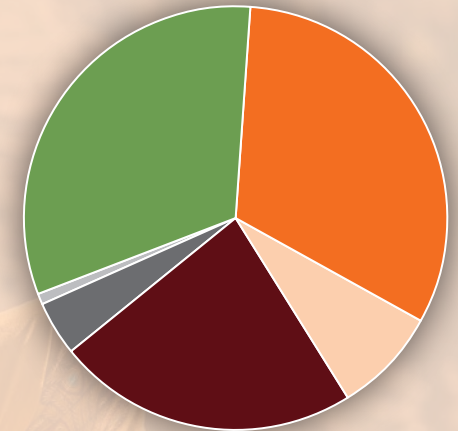
Total voluntary income 2019: £282,580



Grants awarded 2019

- India (£38,500)
- South East Asia (£38,500)
- South America (£10,000)
- Africa (£28,000)
- Emergency Cyclone Grants - India (£5,000)
- Grants for two Medical Students to work with leprosy patients overseas (£1,000)

Total grants awarded in 2019: £121,000



Support costs and governance: £73,244

Investment in fundraising (from designated legacy) £78,764

Total resources expended in 2019: £273,008

As a result of isolation measures due to Covid-19, audited accounts have not been completed. Full accounts will be available as soon as possible on the Guild website: www.stfrancisleprosy.org and on the Charity Commission website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission. Charity number 1188749



Help create a leprosy-free world with a gift in your Will

Making a Will and keeping it up-to-date is an important way to provide for the people you care about and ensure that your final wishes are carried out. However, when you come to make or change your Will it is also an ideal time to consider how you might make your mark on the world by supporting the causes you care about.



Remembering St Francis Leprosy Guild in your Will costs nothing during your lifetime but it will help us to continue our work for as long as it takes to create a leprosy-free world. Gifts that kind supporters leave to us in their Wills are making a huge contribution to the grants we award to our partners around the globe. On average, they represent more than half of our total voluntary income.

If you wish to leave a gift to the Guild, there are several ways to choose from. You could leave a specified sum

of money or even an item of value, such as a piece of jewellery, a painting or an antique. Leaving a share of your estate helps to protect your gift from inflation – even a 1% share can make a huge difference. Alternatively, you might decide to leave the remainder of your estate, once your loved ones have been provided for.

In the future, your gift will help bring vital medical care to some of the world's poorest people. It will help to train medics and healthcare volunteers to work in their communities, seeking out, diagnosing and treating new cases of leprosy before the disease takes hold – and until it is finally



beaten. What an amazing gift that would be!

If you would like to know how to leave a gift in your Will to St Francis Leprosy Guild, please contact Sheila Pereira, Administrator, on **020 8969 1345** or email **administrator@stfrancisleprosy.org**

Kathleen Mary Morant *Remembered in our prayers*

St Francis Leprosy Guild would like to express its enormous gratitude to Kathleen Mary Morant who died on the 4th February 2019 at the age of 107, having left a gift in her Will to the Guild.

Kathleen was born in Weymouth on 16th June 1911. As a young woman, she attended a veterinary college and opened her own veterinary practice at a time when it was very much a



man's world. She continued to practise throughout the Second World War before retiring in 1950.

A devout Catholic, Kathleen became a keen supporter of many charities. After a long and active life, she would be delighted that her greatest wish, to leave the bulk of her estate to the charities she supported, is being honoured. St Francis Leprosy Guild is extremely grateful to be one of them.



† SFLG ST FRANCIS LEPROSY GUILD



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www.stfrancisleprosy.org



**Donate at www.justgiving.com/stfrancisleprosyguild
or at www.cafonline.org**

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We are grateful to INF Nepal, which is supported by the Guild, for supplying both cover photos.

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