

PRESS RELEASE

INDONESIA TO THAILAND BY TUK-TUK

Team Oxford Project Southeast Asia completes Rickshaw Race Across Southeast Asia

2 charities · 4 countries · 2500 kilometres · 14 days

OXFORD, UK – 1 NOVEMBER 2011 – Braving the rural dirt tracks and urban traffic jams of Southeast Asia, Team Oxford Project Southeast Asia completed the inaugural ASEAN Rickshaw Run by successfully driving a tuk-tuk from Indonesia to Thailand. The three Oxford University graduates who formed the team undertook the adventure as part of an effort to create a Centre for Southeast Asian studies at the University of Oxford. They have also raised over £1,300 (to date) for pan-Southeast Asian disability charity The Cambodia Trust and global conservation partnership BirdLife International.

The members of Team Oxford Project Southeast Asia are: Dr. CHAN Xin Hui (Singapore), Dr. THUM Ping Tjin (Singapore) and Tom HOOGERVORST (the Netherlands). During their journey, they were challenged by numerous breakdowns of the dangerously underpowered and poorly constructed tuk-tuk, the theft of their fuel and tools, Jakarta's notorious traffic jams, and Sumatra's underdeveloped back roads. Of the 28 teams which set out from Jakarta for Bangkok, three teams failed to finish altogether, a further seven arrived after the official end time, and many were unable to finish on their own power and had to have their tuk-tuks trucked to the finish line. The flooding of Bangkok also necessitated a last minute change in the finish line from Bangkok to Krabi. Undeterred, the team successfully completed the challenge on time and drove over the finish line on 29 October with their tuk-tuk intact.

The three team members are all of Southeast Asian descent and graduates of the University, and thus embody Oxford's intimate relationship with the Southeast Asian region. Their route through Jakarta, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Penang (as well as, originally, Bangkok) was designed to be a powerful symbol of Oxford's long-standing presence in the region by physically connecting examples of Oxford's links in Southeast Asia. Apart from visiting The Cambodia Trust's Jakarta School and Oxford's medical research centres in the region, the team also held charity fundraising events that were well attended by Oxford's numerous alumni and supporters. In Singapore, this took the form of a "Free Trishaw Tours by Oxford Graduates" event, where the team gave members of the public free trishaw rides around the City Hall and Padang area while wearing full academic dress including gowns and mortarboards.

In addition, the team were delighted by the strength of support that greeted them throughout Southeast Asia for the establishment of a world-class Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Oxford. They received endorsements from ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Marty Natalegawa, and Timor-Leste President Dr Jose Ramos-Horta, as well as other Southeast Asian leaders, diplomats, academics, and alumni whom they met during their journey. The team also attracted significant media coverage, including BBC Indonesia, the Jakarta Globe, and live radio interviews on BFM Radio 89.9 and ABC Radio Australia.

"Contrary to popular belief, there is a great sense of Southeast Asian consciousness throughout the region," commented Dr. Thum. "Wherever we went, people responded to our Centre for Southeast Asian Studies and to the powerful symbolism of our physically driving across Southeast Asia with great warmth and enthusiasm, and we found unanimous agreement that a world-class Centre for Southeast Asian Studies was of great importance," added Dr. Chan.

The official sponsor of Team Project Southeast Asia Oxford was HungryGoWhere.com.

For interviews, photos and additional information about how to support Project Southeast Asia at Oxford, please contact:

Dr. PJ THUM & Dr. CHAN Xin Hui
+44 7721 763059 & +44 7891 860649
rickshawrun@projectsoutheastasia.com
www.projectsoutheastasia.com
www.twitter.com/projectsea
www.facebook.com/projectsoutheastasia

www.flicker.com/photos/projectsea
www.youtube.com/user/projectsea
www.justgiving.com/teams/aseanrickshawrun

Notes to editors –

About Project Southeast Asia:

The University of Oxford recognises the importance of Southeast Asia and the tremendous potential of Southeast Asian knowledge and expertise. It wishes to apply Southeast Asian knowledge to find solutions for the world's problems and use global expertise to address Southeast Asian problems. This builds on Oxford's already numerous contributions to Southeast Asia - both within and outside academia - and its unsurpassed track record of excellence in the region, particularly in the field of medicine, where it conducts world-leading research in nearly every Southeast Asian country.

About the Rickshaw Run Southeast Asia:

The inaugural Rickshaw Run Southeast Asia was organised by The Adventurists, a UK company that supports charities through activities such as an ice race across Siberia and a horse derby through Mongolia. The official charity for the Rickshaw Run is Birdlife International but teams also raise funds for a second charity of their choice.

www.theadventurists.com/the-adventures/asean-rickshaw-run

About The Cambodia Trust:

The Cambodia Trust was founded by Dr. Peter Carey and others in 1989 to equip the victims of anti-personnel mines in Cambodia with artificial limbs and orthopaedic aids. It has since expanded its activities to seven Southeast Asian countries and now helps to treat all kinds of physical handicaps. It is the largest provider of international standard prosthetic & orthotic education in the world.

www.cambodiatrust.org.uk

About HungryGoWhere:

HungryGoWhere is proud to be the official sponsor of Team Project Southeast Asia Oxford. Together with sister sites HungryDeals and TableDB, HungryGoWhere has been celebrating ASEAN restaurants, cuisine and culture with food lovers from all over the world. Visit www.TableDB.com today to make a reservation at the best ASEAN restaurants, and www.HungryDeals.sg for the best food deals in ASEAN today.

www.HungryGoWhere.com

Biographies

Dr. CHAN Xin Hui Supanee – Singapore

Xin Hui is a doctor at Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital of Thai-Singaporean descent who is passionate about international health and development. She read Medicine at St. Edmund Hall and Lincoln College at the University of Oxford. An active volunteer and student leader, she has won awards for her contributions to the University and her humanitarian work on three continents including the prestigious University of Oxford Vice-Chancellor's Civic Award and the St. Edmund Hall Simon and Arpi Simonian Prize for Leadership. She was named one of the British Council's International Students of the Year in 2008. Xin Hui hopes to become an infectious disease physician and work in a conflict zone.

Mr. Tom Gunnar HOOGERVORST – the Netherlands

Tom is a graduate of the Leiden University Indonesian Studies programme, and is currently completing a DPhil at Linacre College, University of Oxford, in the maritime archaeology and interethnic trade networks of the Indian Ocean. Fluent in half a dozen Asian languages, including Malay, Javanese and Tetum, Tom is passionate about the cultural, linguistic and archaeological study of Southeast Asia. He is also a long-time enthusiast of Southeast Asian music, martial arts and cooking. Tom regularly visits family in Indonesia – his grandmother is Javanese – and has travelled extensively around Southeast Asia for academic fieldwork. He has participated in Malay speech contests and collaborated on a forthcoming documentary on isolated communities.

Dr. THUM Ping Tjin ('PJ') – Singapore

PJ is an academic who teaches history at the University of Oxford. A Harvard graduate in East Asian Studies, he has recently completed a DPhil in History at Hertford College, University of Oxford, entitled Chinese-language Political Mobilisation in Singapore, 1953-63. A Rhodes Scholar and Commonwealth Scholar, PJ swam for Singapore at every level including the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He is also the first Oxford graduate and first Singaporean to swim across the English Channel in August 2005, completing the journey despite inclement weather in 12 hours and 24 minutes.

Dr. Peter CAREY MBE – United Kingdom

Born in Burma, Peter is Fellow Emeritus of Trinity College, Oxford, where he specialised in the modern history and politics of Indonesia, Burma and East Timor. He was co-founder and first chairman (1989-96) of The Cambodia Trust. In March 2004, Peter established the local Timor-Leste NGO – ASSERT (Associação Hi'it Ema Ra'es Timor/Association for the Promotion of Equality for Timor's Disabled People) – which now runs the national clinic. In April 2005, he was awarded the Independence Medal of East Timor by the Timor-Leste Government and in January 2006 made a Grand Official of the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator (Ordem do Infante Dom Henrique), Portugal's highest civilian honour for foreigners. In November 2008, he was selected for the Beacon Prize for Charitable Leadership, dubbed by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown as the 'Nobel Prize for Charities'. In October 2008, Peter took early retirement from Trinity College, Oxford, to take up a position as Country Director of the Cambodia Trust in Indonesia. In the spring of 2011, he was awarded an MBE for services to the disabled of Southeast Asia.

###