Excellent news from Sri Lanka

8 Jan 2007 by JR

Those of us concerned with the annual travel bursary that is the Geoffrey Roberts Award have just received the following truly uplifting report from Mary Taylor

of New Zealand, the winner of the 2005 Award. See news of the winners of the 2006 Awards and details of how to apply for the 2007 Award here.

I thought it might be timely to update you on my fishing project before I get snowed under!

The fishermen of Weligatanwila on the South Coast of Sri Lanka are back at sea, thanks to numerous generous donations towards rebuilding their fishing fleet.

After screening a documentary about the completion of Project Cru 100 (to replace their damaged outriggers, pictured here) I began fundraising for a 3-tonne flake ice plant and to date have raised half the funds required and with further planned events expect to raise the balance by end March. To simply replace their boats was not enough; an ice plant gives them the chance of ensuring the quality of the fish and getting a fair price.

But an ice plant is also not enough - to complete the quality-assured supply chain the fishermen needed refrigerated transport and I am absolutely delighted to advise that I have found a sponsor for four refrigerated 3-wheeler mototbikes. This news came just in time for Christmas so I was mighty thrilled but not as excited as the fishermen are. We hope to have these vehicles ready to deliver on the day the ice plant opens.

And when people ask why I bothered to keep going after I had achieved the initial objective, I guess it reflects the support given by folks such as yourselves that made me consider going the next step to take advantage of the media attention to not only replace what was lost but to offer the chance to put the fishermen in a better position than they were before.