

Kampuchea House Newsletter



October 2020

SUSADEY and greetings to all our supporters.

Here is an update on our latest news from Kampuchea House.

The good news for our kids at Kampuchea House in Siem Reap is that school will recommence between November and January, depending on the year level, school etc. It will be great for our kids to be able to see their friends again and to return to structured learning in a classroom. Just as we in Melbourne are now able to enjoy stepping out of isolation and engaging in limited social contact, our kids in Siem Reap are enjoying a number of treats to keep them busy and break up the tedium before school returns. It has been a long and arduous year.

In early August Leng rented bikes and organised a day out at **ANGKOR WAT**. The kids were privileged to be able to witness this UNESCO world heritage site without the usual hordes of tourists.



The kids in front of Angkor Wat.

Obviously, the lack of tourists is a disaster for the local economy, but the opportunity to have the place to themselves, and see the largest religious monument in the world - empty of people - will surely be a unique and lasting memory for them.

The outing was also a chance for some exercise and the kids loved the shady ride out to the temples on the newly constructed bike path.

Another fun day out was a visit to **PHNOM BOK TEMPLE**, about 22 km out of Siem Reap. This is a mountain temple on top of one of the three hills of the Angkor region, commanding spectacular views. The kids loved visiting this 9th century temple which is dedicated to the Hindu trinity, Shiva, Vishna and Brahmin. Being unrestored, it has a magical and surreal effect - a magnificent ruin arising from the surrounding jungle.

At Phnom Bok temple



KULEN ELEPHANT FOREST SANCTUARY

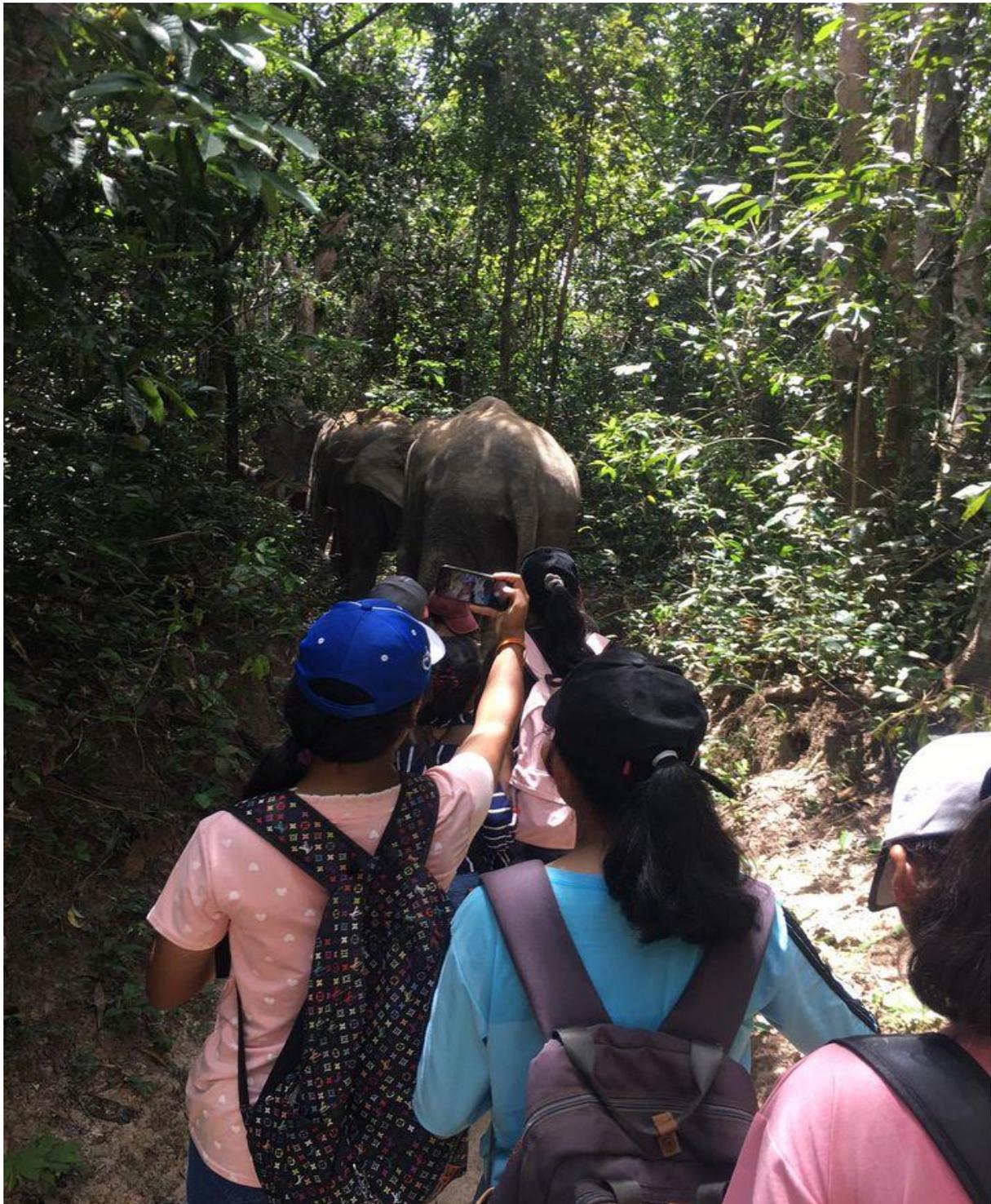
Another unforgettable experience was an excursion to the Kulen Elephant Forest Sanctuary. After a one-hour drive from Siem Reap and a walk to the visitor's centre, the kids set off to the forest to observe the elephants in their natural surroundings. They were able to interact with the elephants, feed them, and learn about the importance of preserving their habitat to ensure their future. Leng said all the kids had an amazing time and were very excited to see the elephants up close. A delicious lunch at the sanctuary café completed a fabulous day out.

We recommend a visit to the sanctuary if you are in Siem Reap in the future. The elephants here previously worked in the tourism industry, but are now free to roam 530 acres of lush forest, and are treated with great care and attention.



Many thanks to our wonderful supporters Mandy and Gordon for their very generous donation in sponsoring this unforgettable day out.

We would also like to thank the sanctuary for the considerable discount on the entrance fee, which enabled us to visit.



PHARE, THE CAMBODIAN CIRCUS

Phare Ponleu Selpak, or 'Brightness of the Arts', is the parent organization of a non-profit school in Battambang and a circus in Siem Reap. While the school helps young Cambodians transform their lives through art, the circus provides jobs for a brighter future. With the pandemic, the sudden disappearance of international tourism in Siem Reap meant that the primary source of revenue for the circus, which also helps fund the school, disappeared too. On 31st July the circus re-opened for local audiences, until international tourism resumes. However, most people in Siem Reap rely on tourism for a living as well, and so are facing financial difficulty.

Thanks to the generosity of our wonderful supporters Yvonne and Richard Seeley, our kids were lucky enough to attend the Phare circus, preceded by dinner at their café. They were mesmerized by the skills of the acrobats, accompanied by live music, and enchanted with the folklore and stories recounted in the show.



A big thank you to Yvonne and Richard for the outing and the chance to support another local organisation.





Phare circus performers.

Finally, we would like to bid a fond farewell to Andrew McGregor after nearly eight years at Westbourne Grammar School, during which time he was heavily involved with fundraising for and school visits to Kampuchea House. We are sad to see Andrew leave, but wish him all the very best for his future as Principal of Haileybury in Darwin. Thank you, Andrew, for your great enthusiasm and support over the years and we look forward to seeing you in Siem Reap again one day.

And so, for now, **CHOUM REAB LEA until next time.**



For more activities and news about everyday life in Siem Reap check out our **Kampuchea House Facebook** page.

