

June 2019



LEPRA AMBASSADOR VICTORIA HISLOP RAISES AWARENESS OF LEPROSY TO PASSENGERS ABOARD THE VOYAGES TO ANTIQUITY CRUISE

Victoria Hislop, Lepra ambassador and best-selling novelist of *The Island* gave a presentation to the passengers aboard a Voyages of Antiquity cruise. Victoria spoke about her visit to India, what inspired her to become an ambassador for Lepra and the work we do to help the millions affected by the disease. The Voyages to Antiquity cruise incorporated a trip to the island of Spinalonga, where Victoria based her novel *The Island*.

When asked about the cruise, Victoria stated:

“I had the great pleasure of taking a big party of people on a cruise with Voyages to Antiquity to Spinalonga, to talk about my novel *The Island* and Lepra too. The film of Lepra’s work had been shown on the boat the previous evening, so many people were ready with their questions about leprosy.

We talked about the disease while we were on the island of Spinalonga itself. I think this group of visitors found it easy to imagine how isolated and desperate people were before the cure was found. The modern day story of leprosy is encouraging, given how much Lepra can do for those affected by leprosy and I hope that some of those passengers on the cruise ship will become life-long supporters. It was a great opportunity to talk to them.”

Although many still believe that leprosy no longer exists, more than 600 people a day are diagnosed with the disease, with over 50 of these cases being children. Those affected still face terrible prejudice and discrimination in their daily lives, despite the disease being curable and disability preventable if treated early.

We are delighted that Victoria was able to engage with those on board the voyage to continue to raise awareness about leprosy and thank her for her unwavering support. Our thanks go to Voyages to Antiquity who supported Lepra by allowing us to showcase our work.

All the money raised from the event will be used to contribute to the ongoing support of people affected by leprosy in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique.

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For more information please contact:

Laura Butler – Communications and Marketing Manager

laurab@lepra.org.uk -01206 216752



Notes for Editors

About Lepra and leprosy

Lepra is a UK-based international specialist charity that has been working to beat leprosy since 1924. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of Lepra in 1952, shortly after the death of her father King George VI, who had been Lepra's Patron since the charity was founded in 1924.

Leprosy affects over 7 million of the most vulnerable people in the world, causing life-changing disabilities and attracting terrible prejudice and discrimination. **But there is a cure.**

Lepra works to beat leprosy in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique by finding, diagnosing and treating people affected by the disease. By raising awareness, pushing for early detection and supporting people living with disabilities caused by leprosy, Lepra works towards a day when this disease no longer destroys lives.

Last year, the charity reached 301,000 people through diagnosis, treatment and care. It reached a further 1.7 million people through health education and events to raise awareness of leprosy and other neglected diseases.

Find out more about Lepra on its website and social media channels:

Website: www.lepra.org.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LepraUK>

Facebook: <https://https://www.facebook.com/LEPRAUK/>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LEPRAHinA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/LepraUK/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lepra/>