

BANSANG HOSPITAL APPEAL

CHILDREN'S WARD

<http://www.bansanghospitalappeal.com>

Charity No. 1064469

NEWSLETTER – Updated, June 2005

Chicken Farm – Sponsored by Wellingborough Club of Rotary Hatton.

201 chickens arrived safely at the beginning of March. They have already been fattened and sold. The staff were able to buy at a reasonable price, the rest were sold and the funds have been put back into purchasing more chickens. Problems encountered were loss of stock due to excessive heat, a donation will allow us to build a large chicken run, which will make Alhagie Bah's life a little simpler in keeping track of them. Although no layers were received, the project has been a great success and will continue to thrive as we learn to overcome the various obstacles.

Water Wells

The first water well project that the Appeal organised, was funded by David Crosswellers charity Wherever The Need and is now flowing. The opening to which Anita and Bob Parfitt attended was a celebration. Excited children were allowed water fights, women queued up with their buckets amazed at this crystal clear running water. We are at present in negotiation for the second well. Our aim for the Bansang area is to provide six wells, each of which will be covered and capped and serve approximately 3,000 people.

Barclaycard

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Mr Eddie Wearn while in Bansang. It was his first trip there fulfilling a long-term ambition. We offer our sincere condolences to his family. The five-man team left at the beginning of April to continue the work of upgrading the computer systems in the hospital and the State Enrolled Nursing School, plus the local High School amongst many other smaller projects. Their major plan was to centralize Medical Records so other hospitals could access patient's medical history when they were transferred. Sadly following Eddie's death the team had to return home earlier than planned.

On Going Training

Dr Peter McCormick, Chief Medical Advisor, left at the beginning of May with Naomi Wright a 4th year medical student from Leeds University. Dr Peter is training SEN students in care of the sick newborn in preparation for the new neo-natal unit, which is included in the new children's ward. So successful has he been that the training is being offered to outside

medical centres and other hospitals. The charity is paying for the students travel and living expenses. We see this as a positive move as the trained staff move around the country on a rota basis and therefore will return to our hospital to work in due course. We hope this initiative will reduce the mortality rate across the whole of Gambia.

Naomi is being sponsored from other sources to research a low tech Resuscitare. This consists of a Wardrobe off Kettering tip, light bulbs that have been donated, as opposed to the £20,000 ones used in our high tech hospitals. In four weeks Peter and Naomi have attended 80 births of which 65% of babies had to be resuscitated, and there was only one fatality. So rock on wardrobes and light bulbs.

Anita's Travels

I went out in January with Cath Smith (Health Care Assistant, Kettering General) and Bob Parfitt (Wellingborough Hatton Rotary) who has been running Refugee Relief for over 10 years. This was Cath's second trip out; sadly she was taken ill during the first trip. This time all was well and she helped train the Play Nurses. I thank her for all her innovative ways of fundraising.

This was Bob's first trip to Africa. He has enormous enthusiasm, and is going to take over the despatching of non-medical supplies to the hospital. This is a huge undertaking. He has decided to also take under his very large wings the Bansang Lower Basic School, which has a role of 1600, taught in two shifts of 800 in the morning and the other 800 in the afternoon. The school has no electricity, no water, holes in the asbestos roof and no equipment, just lot and lots of enthusiasm to learn. He is also sponsoring a new local primary school, which has been founded by the local Pastor Mendy who has christened the school 'Agape' which means Unconditional Love. The fundraising for these projects is entirely separate from the Bansang Hospital Appeal, but as ever when improvements are made in the surrounding areas it has an immediate knock on effect for the hospital. His first container has left, leaving sufficient supplies to fill another four.

The excitement of signing for the new Children's Ward went nationwide. It was on the National TV, Radio, and

Newspapers. The signing took place at The Ministry of Health in Banjul, attended by the Health Minister, and many other dignitaries, Mr Dampha the Chief Executive of Bansang Hospital, and of course me. What a wonderful day, totally chaotic, but a dream comes true.

Dr Annabel Kerr

Annabel is a Doctor of Medicine, previously working at Northampton General and Cransley Hospice. She went out to Bansang October 2004-February 2005. She worked with the Adults Outpatients and the Women's ward. Whilst living out there she wanted to have an input into education at Basic Healthcare Level, by giving talks and demonstrations to children. To enable her to have a better understanding of the problems encountered by the people she went and lived in a village compound for 3 weeks, undergoing tremendous hardships for a westerner. She lived there while still continuing her work at the hospital.

Following her return to the UK she has made a commitment to return to Bansang for a two year period, unpaid by the charity. We are in negotiation with the Government to see if they could employ her at £29 per week as the only English speaking Doctor for the Female ward and Outpatients Dept, and she will also continue her outreach in Basic Healthcare. Gambia's first language is English; there are eight different tribal languages, which her interpreter can translate back into English.

Malnutrition/Play Nurses

It is with regret that we see Malley leave her position as play nurse, but we rejoice for her on being sponsored by Bob Parfitt to train as a State Enrolled Nurse at our SEN School attached to the Hospital. This brings our total to 5 Nurses under sponsorship. We keep our recruitment to the local people because we know they will stay with us after qualifying. We have found a replacement Play Nurse who has already started with us.

Pest Control

Dr 'Ratman' alias Peter Trotman, from British Pest Control Association, will return this year. You may remember that we had a plague of rats and cockroaches, in fact we had an estimated 1,500 rats on the Children's ward alone. Following Peter's last visit he was able to contain the problem. Then he set up a continuous control programme by sponsoring and training two of our Maintenance men. We now have severe problems with termites and the ever present Mosquitoes. On his return he will initiate an Educational programme to include the surrounding area in effective mozzie control.

Mariama

A little orphan girl I have known since the age of six. She is just completing her schooling, and will be coming to the UK for a prosthetic leg, which is being

sponsored by the same company who helped Alhagie Bar in 2003. Mariama will then enter the SEN School. The culture is such that anyone with a disability has no future. Youngsters such as Alhagie and Mariama will prove that disabled people can make a contribution.

Her mother died in childbirth when she was two years old, and she has a blind stepfather who sells carrier bags. As a toddler she had an infection, she would have arrived at the hospital too late, and her leg had to be amputated. Such is her determination she hobbles 3 hours a day to school, does a full day, then returns home, all in 53°C. Now she is 18 and has stopped growing arrangements to bring her to the UK are ongoing. She has her passport, and awaits her visa. The Prosthetic Limb Centre in Northampton are giving their time. The same sponsor who helped Alhagie has encouraged others to fund Mariama's flights, clothing, and personal expenditure while in the UK.

Our Thanks To

We have just sent our 32nd Container; each one now costs nearly £2000 to ship. It never ceases to amaze me how the money arrives just in time. The whole procedure runs like clockwork due to the fantastic help of Britannia Pink & Jones in Kettering. They store all our goods free of charge, and when we load on a Saturday John always appears with a smile to help, along with Lloyd, and other loyal supporters. Without this ground level support the doors of Bansang Hospital would have closed many years ago.

To the Evening Telegraph for their continuing articles and backing.

To our big sister Hospital, Kettering General, thank you for recycling your old equipment which has kept us alive.

To Richard, The Accountant, for his ever open door, and his ability to remain calm whatever I throw at him.

To Kath, The Secretary, I hand her the letters, she hands me the ironing!

Finally, to each and every one of you who gives of time and money. **You have truly made a difference.**

I WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY SUMMER

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