

# BANSANG HOSPITAL APPEAL NEWSLETTER APRIL 2010

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Charity No. 1064469

**The January visit** was extraordinary with so many new and exciting things going on. I was accompanied by my daughter Alexia, and youngest son Laurence.



*Alexia & Laurence with Bansang Hospital staff  
(Lamin, Mariama & Kumba)*

Their remit was to help with the ongoing staff motivation and retention initiative headed by the Task Force which resulted in the launch of the 2010 Bansang Hospital Games. This will be a means of allowing the staff to interact and socialize in a light hearted way outside the work environment. Each month there will be an activity, anything from sport to poetry which will give every member of staff the opportunity individually and as a team to take part. At the end of the year Bronze, Silver, and Gold prizes will be awarded. Staff retention is dire in sub-Saharan Africa, but we now have 100% retention which we believe is unique, yet some of the jobs are still filled by dedicated volunteers who would be so grateful for sponsorship. If a friend of BHA would like to help with a standing order for even as little as £2 per month this would go towards paying one of our volunteers and make a difference to helping them support their family.



*British HC Mr Phil Sinkinson, wife Clare, & Pateh Kandeh*

The British High Commissioner Mr Phil Sinkinson OBE and his wife Clare joined me in Bansang to see the latest projects, and to take part in the first annual Prize Giving Ceremony which was held in the new MITIE House.

Prizes were awarded to most punctual member of staff, best dressed, most dedicated etc, and first prize, a bicycle, went to the best all round member of staff.

The Malnutrition Unit is now fully up and running and is the only dedicated unit in the country.

The commitment and devotion of Pateh Kandeh the In-Charge has ensured the success of the unit, which will become a role model for other hospitals in the country. Phil was asked to open the unit and was speechless when he realised that it had been dedicated to him.

In January we welcomed new friends to Bansang Hospital, Dr Theo Keller and his wife Mathilda who are from Switzerland. Following a tour of the hospital and its environs, they have made a generous donation to our new project for 2010 which is a new purpose built Obstetric Suite.



*Mathilda, Laurence & Dr Theo Keller*

This will consist of a theatre, scrub room, recovery room, and changing room at a cost of £20,000. At present 1 in 17 women die during pregnancy and labour which is a shocking statistic. The hospital has only one theatre which is in constant use and not always available to a pregnant woman presenting as an emergency. A dedicated Obstetrics Theatre will allow the Labour and Maternity Wards to be completely self-contained in one area thereby relieving the pressure on the other operating theatre.

The refurbishment of the Labour Ward nears completion. We also, in 2009 completely renovated the old Maternity Ward, Caesarean Ward, and the open sided corridors connecting them. All have now been enclosed and mosquito proofed allowing escorts to sleep safely in the corridors, and staff are no longer bitten going about their duties.

During January the entire Children's Unit was painted and refurbished by our own Maintenance Team at a cost of £2,500. The unit was opened in June 2006, but the hostile environment had taken its toll and it was in need of a revamp. Electrics were replaced where necessary and the

plumbing problems dealt with. I am so proud of the maintenance team's hard work and achievement. They will now tackle the Obstetric Centre. During my visit I was informed that I had been awarded the MRG – A Member of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia. I feel extremely honoured to have our work recognised by His Excellency President Jammeh. I shall accept this honour in recognition of the past 18 years in which every one of you has played a significant part in turning BH into one of the best in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Rotary Club of Norwich** – It is with great delight that I am finally able to announce that we have received the £30,000 matching grant in partnership with Rotary Club of Fajara, Banjul, for the treatment of burns patients throughout the hospital. This will enable us to set up a six bed bay within the Children's Unit, and dedicated beds on the Male and Female Wards. We have been able to purchase equipment for the theatre and laboratory that will help the burns patients and also benefit patients throughout the hospital.



*Anita Smith, with Nick Brighouse & Dr Bill Askew*

It has taken three years of extremely hard work by members of the Rotary Club of Norwich to bring this project to fruition. I cannot praise them enough for their dedication and commitment on behalf of Bansang Hospital. I anticipate the container will leave the UK in May, and I look forward to travelling with representatives of the Club to officially hand over the equipment at Bansang.

**Barclaycard Servo Phoenix** – Stewart Robinson and new recruit Ashley Smith spent 3 weeks in February upgrading and extending the telephone system to 35 phones throughout all departments. The Internet Café is up and running again after our Dynamic Duo rebuilt all the usable computers which had been affected by viruses. This year marks a decade of unflinching support by Stewart and his colleagues which has helped to make Bansang Hospital the centre of excellence it is today in The Gambia.

**Rotary Club of Jersey** have given us £7,500 towards the Glostavent Anaesthesia Machine for the Obstetrics Theatre, and with a final donation from Theo and Matilda Keller I have been able to place the order and this vital piece of equipment will be shipped in May. Thank you so very much for your support and generosity. This machine will save many lives; it is not only an anaesthesia machine which can be used for both paediatric and adult patients, it is also a ventilator, has an oxygen concentrator attached, and a battery back up in the event of power failure. These machines are built for hostile environments and are life savers.

**Boye Bah.** For the past 18 years the only relief for the volunteers from the hospital has been to visit Boye Bah in his café. He and his family have always been friends to all who visit. Recently their entire home and business burnt down. Thankfully he and his family escaped, but they were left with nothing but the clothes they stood up in. Donations have arrived from so many volunteers who remember him with such warmth. A fundraising Cake Stall at Barclaycard raised £300 and was matched by the company bringing the total to £600 to help the family rebuild their lives.

**Dr Daniel Whittam** left for the hospital at the end of March and will be there for six weeks, his interests are obstetrics and gynae surgery. We are delighted to have his services and feel he will be an asset to the hospital.

**HARK.** With the wonderful MITIE house up and running we can now offer teams of specialists the opportunity of regular visits to the hospital and the surrounding area. One of the first to take advantage was HARK who have a complete mobile audiology unit. This was another "first" for Bansang and during their stay the team assessed 40 patients. No less than 17 were fitted with either one or two hearing aids and the joy on their faces gave the team great satisfaction. From now on regular follow up visits will be made.

**Salaries** – from January the government has increased the wages of all hospital staff by 20% which is a marvellous recognition of their work. I will of course match this for all our sponsored staff despite the extra strain on our funds. The government has also allocated us another 3 SEN Nurses which we have agreed to sponsor. All the 32 SEN's we have sponsored so far have remained with us which proves the success of our staff retention policies.



*Sulayman, Mariama, Sira & Anita. Sira has worked voluntarily for 2 yrs*

**Solar power.** Sadly, after 3 years, one of our projects has broken down. The power for the Children's Unit at night is no longer available. The batteries have failed completely and have to be replaced. We now know we require sealed dry cell batteries at an approx cost of \$13,000. I have put out feelers in the hope of picking up grants or donations from charities with remits on power supplies.

On behalf of the entire staff and management of Bansang hospital, they wish to express their sincere gratitude to the many Friends of BHA for their unstinting love and support for both the staff and patients for the past 18 years.

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