

Bansang Hospital Appeal

Winter Newsletter, 2012

www.bansanghospitalappeal.org



*The staff of
Bansang Hospital
extend their best
wishes to newly-
weds Peter &
Michelle Bates*

*(Peter has
generously
supported the
hospital since
1998, and has
been
instrumental in
getting some of
our most
ambitious
projects off the
ground)*

A note from Anita;

Hello and thank you for taking a moment to read the Bansang Hospital Appeal Christmas newsletter. I had hoped this newsletter would be one where I could focus wholly upon the tremendous progress that is happening in Bansang. Yet I am once again writing the foreword to this newsletter under the pall cast by yet more health concerns. A routine mammogram in November of this year revealed that I have breast cancer – news that absolutely hit me for six (as I am sure you can imagine).

Since hearing that news, my world has been turned upside down. Two flights to the Gambia have been cancelled in favour of progressing at speed with my treatment. To that end, I have been well looked after by Mr Rashed and all of the staff at Kettering General Hospital's Treatment Centre. I had the operation on the 5th December, with radiotherapy due to commence early next year.

With early diagnosis, and speedy treatment, we are all optimistic and hopeful that this latest affliction will be overcome in the New Year. Once I have the all clear, you can rest assured that I will again be visiting the Gambia – and once again striving to achieve all that I can on behalf of the wonderful staff and patients of Bansang Hospital.

News from the frontline:

Although my health issues have once again scuppered my own plans to visit Bansang, I am pleased to be able to report about two very dear friends who stepped into the breach in my place. When Dennis Robinson and Glenis Haynes stepped on to their Gambia bound flights, they fully expected I would follow three days later. However, my cancer treatment forced me to remain behind, leaving them in the lurch. I needn't have worried. Between them they managed to scythe through my mammoth task list. They also helped to push forward with various appeal projects, as well as deliver funds to some incredibly vulnerable individuals and families.



It was only upon Dennis' return that I found out he had been writing a blog about his experiences. You can read about them all by visiting www.theoldgrumpy.blogspot.co.uk. Taken from his blog, the following extract really sums up ones feelings working in Bansang

“Words to describe my feelings for these wonderful, loving, caring people fail me. It would take a poet of some stature, certainly a wordsmith of far, far greater talent than I to express the emotions running through my head last night and indeed this morning. Relief is in there somewhere; relief that we have finally just about reached the end of Anita’s huge list. Concern; certainly concern as to whether we have in fact managed to complete our given tasks to anything like the high standard that Anita sets in her own, inimitable way. Equal measures of bewilderment, happiness and gratitude at how completely Bansang and of course, particularly the hospital staff have taken us to their hearts! Love...oh yes, a deep love that will, I know, keep me returning to my Bansang family until the day I cease to draw breath; a love for the people, for the place and of course for Anita, a lady whose selfless devotion to a cause she so fervently believes in knows no bounds and should be an inspiration to us all. Amazement; that Glenis and I have managed to co-habit in such perfect harmony for two weeks without so much as a raised voice or frown. We have laughed together and cried together, been eaten alive by mosquitos together and had a thoroughly wonderful time together, whilst all the while missing and worrying about our friend, Anita, and just what she is enduring back home”.

Dennis Robinson, 2012 (www.theoldgrumpy.blogspot.co.uk)

No doubt many of you will already have heard of Dennis. For those that haven't, his scooter teams have helped deliver 35 Honda C90 scooters to the Gambia over the past 6 years (delivering them by hand, overland – via the Sahara!). These scooters are critical in so many ways. They are used by hospital staff as part of the community outreach programme...reaching parts of the Upper River Division that would be too inaccessible (or costly) to visit using conventional 4x4 vehicles. They have also proven to be an incredibly

useful incentive for the staff; helping us to keep Gambia's best medical personnel in Bansang!

Dennis will again be stepping into the breach in January. He will be pushing forward with a number of appeal projects, as well as introducing Dr Bella Noel (Obstetric Gynaecologist) to the Bansang family for the first time. Dr Noel will be undertaking assessments with heads of departments to see how her skills can be used to help both staff and patients in the future.

Fundraiser spotlight: Dr Theo & Mathilde Keller

Firstly, my apologies for not having many fundraiser stories in this newsletter...when I am back on an even keel, we will be doing a much better job of highlighting such stories. In the meantime, I would like to give mention to two of our most active supporters.

Dr Theo and Mathilde Keller - and their friends in Switzerland - have been supporting the hospital for the past 3 years. When I first met them, I couldn't have dreamed of just how much time, energy and love they would commit to Bansang Hospital. In 2012 alone, they have donated and shipped a total of 5,000 kilos of



antibiotics, analgesics and vitamins, as well as equipment for the theatres and domestic articles for the staff. The Keller's and their wonderful Swiss friends have pledged to continue with their support for Bansang for the foreseeable future.

Thank you so much to all of our concerned friends in Switzerland that have come together in such a spectacularly generous way. You are part of a global community of friends that over the last 20 years have helped truly transform the outlook for more than 600,000 people who turn to Bansang Hospital in their time of need.

Finally;

As mentioned already, I will be sending a more comprehensive newsletter once I have overcome this cancer. To all of those wonderful individuals and organisations that have contributed over the last year, I thank you personally from the bottom of my heart. You have allowed the charity to continue pushing forward in these difficult times.

My thanks and love to you all this Christmas,

Anita

(If you would like to donate to the appeal this Christmas, please turn overleaf)

How you can help:

Your donations have already made a HUGE difference to thousands of lives. The three pictures below are just the smallest of snapshots highlighting the difference you have all made. From left to right; Edrissa's father can now feed his disabled son with milk from the goat's provided by the Appeal; Haruna's family has the full support of the appeal, ensuring this poor little boy can live in relative happiness and comfort; Abdouli, once destitute, is now happily married...& doing a wonderful job as part of the maintenance team funded by the appeal.



To donate online:

To make a donation, please visit www.virginmoneygiving.com, & search for 'Bansang Hospital Appeal'. You can send a one-off payment, or set up a regular monthly/yearly donation. If you are UK taxpayer, please tick the 'giftaid' option as this will allow us to reclaim a further 25% on your donation from the government.

To donate by cheque:

Please make cheques payable to 'Bansang Hospital Appeal', & send to my home address;

Anita Smith, 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, Northamptonshire, NN14 1JE

All other donations:

For all other donations (including standing orders), please get in touch with me directly using the contact details below. Alternatively, visit www.bansanghospitalappeal.org/donate for instructions on how to set up a standing order

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