

Bansang Hospital Appeal

Transforming healthcare delivery in The Gambia since 1992



Winter Newsletter, 2015

Urgent Fundraising Appeal



Just some of the dangerous wiring that is threatening the hospital

After 23 years of worry, the BHA is to fully reinstall the hospital's antiquated electrical system at a cost of £36,000. This may sound like a trivial issue to be addressing in these challenging times. Yet it is an issue that threatens the very survival of this hospital.

In just the last 18 months, we have experienced **six electrical fires**; any one of which could have rapidly spread across the whole site. If such fires happened in the UK, our fire service would never have expected a homeowner to tackle them. Yet that is exactly what our brave and well trained staff continue to do. We cannot rely on their bravery and good fortune any longer.

Our decision to press ahead with this project comes at an acutely challenging time for the hospital and for this charity. The Ebola crisis a thousand miles to the south has had a **devastating impact** on tourism across West Africa, which in turn has unavoidably impacted the hospital's budget. We were already confronting the reality that all infrastructure spending would need to be halted to cover the medicine budget shortfall. Yet this is one project that **simply cannot be delayed**.

Our plan is to entirely remove the 1930's era electrical system, which suffers horribly from bad connections, exposed wiring, lack of earth circuits and overloading. A new system will then be fitted by a highly regarded company who provide services to much of the countries tourism/business sector. We will also take the opportunity to fit LED lighting, which will reduce energy costs by 60%! The total project cost is £36,000, of which £20,000 has so far been raised. That will allow us to re-wire and fit LED lighting in the male ward, eye unit, laboratory, out-patient department, female ward, x-ray department, maternity ward, kitchen and stores.

If everyone on our email list were to **donate £20**, our entire £16,000 shortfall would be entirely covered. We know that donating such an amount isn't possible for all – but if you can afford to donate, please, please do.

We have set up a dedicated Virgin Money Giving donation page which you can visit by clicking the link;

virginmoneygiving.com/fund/BHAsafepower

If you donate, please leave your name and a message. It means a great deal to our staff to be able to see the people who **continue to make the difference**.

Thank you for your continuing support,

Anita Smith MBE MRG

Founder & Director, Bansang Hospital Appeal

STAFF NEWS: Bansang Hospital welcomes first female member of staff to the maintenance team!



Anita with Fatoumata, the BHA's newest member of maintenance staff

Bansang Hospital has always been a very progressive and welcoming place to work. Under the stewardship of the BHA, the hospital has made a remarkable difference to how gender and disability is viewed in the wider community. Many of our readers will remember Demba, Chernon and Alhagie – all of whom visited the UK to receive prosthetic limbs, and who are now an **integral part** of the Bansang work force.

Following in their trailblazing footsteps is Fatoumata Baldeh. She is the first woman to be employed on the hospital's maintenance team. Though her employment is funded by the BHA, the decision to employ her was a **unanimous decision** made by our wonderfully progressive hospital leadership team.

PROJECT NEWS: The staff farming initiative is now generating a big crop surplus!



Our long-term supporters will no doubt remember the early days of our staff farming project. The distant hope all those years ago was to create a **self-sustaining farming initiative** that would provide enough food for our patients, with enough surplus to be able to sell and then reinvest in future crops.

It is therefore a real privilege to say that those ambitions have not only been reached, but have been **FAR surpassed**. The 2015 cous cous crop came in at 85 sacks, which is 50 more than last year, and 60 more than we require to feed our patients. That 60 sack surplus can now be **sold and reinvested** in future crops as well as in a myriad of other initiatives. Adding to the positive news is the pre-harvest report from the groundnut farm, where there is every expectation of an equally good crop.



We thank the hospital staff & the community for their dedication in farming this land, and our many donors who helped get this project off the ground (**Scoters in the Sahara, Peter & Michelle Bates, Meg & John Townsend**). We also extend our sincere thanks to the community leaders of Bansang who donated enough land to create 5 separate farms. With their support and our staff's unwavering dedication, the future of the farming project is looking **overwhelmingly positive**.

PROJECT NEWS: Bansang Hospital receives second phase sanitation funding from the BPEC Legacy Award



BPEC Trustees (left to right); Watson Carlisle, Mark Antrobus (Anita & Nick Foley) & George Thompson

One of the most rewarding aspects of the BHA is the long-term support that many groups/organisations have extended to the hospital. At its most basic level, this long-term support brings **stability** to the hospital's future plans. Equally importantly, it allows Anita the opportunity to show how a vision (with the right backing) can become a vibrant reality.

It was therefore a real privilege for Anita and Nick Foley to head back to BPEC to receive the funds for the second phase of the Legacy Award – and to report back on the successes of the first phase. For those that aren't aware, the first years funding has built a magnificent purpose built maintenance unit. Giving our staff an inspiring place to work is an **absolutely vital** part of our staff retention & motivation strategy.

The second and third phases of the award will focus on fitting out the stores and workshops, and ultimately purchasing the tools and plumbing materials that will be used to upgrade the sanitation system across the hospital. Clearly inspired by the work already completed, BPEC Trustees Mark Antrobus and Neil Collishaw will be heading to Bansang in January to work and train the 26 man workforce – with particular emphasis on health and safety training.

VOLUNTEER NEWS: Dr Andrew Lowden

Dr Andrew Lowden volunteered at Bansang back in 2011. His tireless work on the paediatric ward as well as in the wider community really exemplified the positive impact that volunteers make at the hospital. It is therefore our profound pleasure to report that he is now happily married, and living/working in Australia. It is a measure of Andrew and his wife's generosity that rather than receive presents, they instead asked their wedding guests to donate money to Bansang. We thank them for this selfless gesture, and wish them both a very happy life together.

THIS IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO



VOLUNTEER NEWS: BPEC funded sanitation project makes big progress thanks to Nick & Kane Foley



Kane, Anita & Nick, alongside Maintenance Supervisor Dembo Jawara

Plumber and long-term BHA volunteer Nick Foley has been an instrumental part of the maintenance project for a number of years now. It was under his guidance that the BHA secured the wonderful support of the British Plumbing Employers Council (BPEC). Their funding allowed us to push forward with a hospital wide sanitation project – which is already making a huge difference to the **wellbeing of our patients**.

It was therefore a real privilege to accompany Nick and his son Kane on their August visit to the hospital. Their staff training programme is helping ensure that the BPEC funded sanitation infrastructure will be sustained **long into the future**.

ADVOCACY NEWS: Anita guest speaks at the Rotary International District Conference!

The Rotary Club of Kettering have always been hugely supportive of this charity. In our earliest years, they were **instrumental** in securing funding for the renovation of the paediatric ward (along with numerous other projects). With this in mind, Anita was honoured to be invited by their Director General, Geoff Blurton, to be the club's guest speaker at the Rotary International District Conference in Bournemouth.

Accompanied by husband Steve, the conference was an occasion to see old friends, make new ones, and be inspired by a range of speakers. One of the most **important connections** to be made was with Ken Billington from Trade Aid. The charity is dedicated to helping communities **escape poverty** through the provision of tools/training that promote self sufficiency

After hearing about our efforts to make the hospital self-sufficient, Trade Aid donated and then freighted a huge amount of plumbing, mechanic, electrician and tradesmen tools. This equipment will enable our staff to do the jobs that would otherwise go to contractors.

FUNDRAISER SPOTLIGHT: Dr Theo & Mathilda Keller



The BHA has been very fortunate over the years to have a succession of incredibly generous donors. With their support, the most **challenging and worrying** of times have often become some of the most positive. Most of these donors discover Bansang Hospital via Anita's UK based talks. Every once in a while though, donors arrive in the most unexpected circumstances, then make the most **profound differences**.

That is precisely what happened with Dr Theo and Mathilda Keller. The Swiss couple were first introduced to Anita in 2009 via a chance meeting set up by the Rotary Club of Fajara (a club that has helped extensively over the years). That smallest ember soon progressed into the Kellers visiting Bansang, where they were profoundly moved by the warmth and affection shown by all whom they met.

In just 6 years, the Kellers have sent the equivalent of 4 containers of medical aid to Bansang. Their help could not have been more timely, and has **helped sustain the hospital** through some of its most difficult times. In addition, Dr Keller has provided equipment for the new surgery department, and equipped the new obstetric theatre. Another container filled with pharmaceuticals will be arriving in December 2015.

With all of these wonderful contributions, we are so very pleased to report that the Kellers have been **honoured by the Gambian Ministry of Health** for their services to healthcare. Thank you Theo & Mathilda!

FUNDRAISING NEWS: Our French sister charity has another successful fundraising year!

We will be reporting in full in our next newsletter about the activities of the 'Association Aide pour L'Hopital Bansang Gambie'. However, for those that have yet to view the website article, we wanted to again highlight the **magnificent job** that Linda & Terry Nicholson and associates are doing out in France. They raised the huge sum of **8,865€ in 2014** – and have continued 2015 in the same spirit (with a very successful 1970's fancy dress evening being just one of the events!).

RETENTION & MOTIVATION: Bansang Medics football team is now twinned with AFC Rushden & Diamonds!



Glenis with the Bansang Medics football team & AFC Diamonds banner

We have said it many times before, but the absolute cornerstone of all the wonderful things happening in Bansang is our **unparalleled ability to retain staff**. This isn't simply about offering higher wages – it is about **valuing each and every member of staff**, and giving them the opportunities to maximise their potential. It is about being creative, and trying to think of ways to really inspire our staff – and help them recognise just how much we value their ability and dedication.

What better way to inspire our footballing medics than by twinning them with an English league football club; Rushden & Diamonds AFC! Of course, those that know Anita will know that this couldn't possibly have been her doing. It was instead arranged by our long-term donor and supporter, **Glenis Haynes**. Such is her enthusiasm that it has now spread to her son, Gareth, and his wife, Karen. They recently hosted a successful fundraiser – with 50% of the proceeds going to the BHA to help us rewire the hospital's electrical system.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Chris and Jeannette Payne



It is difficult to give mention to all of the wonderful **long-term supporters** that have helped keep this charity going over the years. However, one couple who are long overdue a mention (and who have **always** answered the call) are Chris and Jeannette.

Chris (Mr Shelf Man) and Jeannette have been visiting Bansang Hospital for the last 6 years. Jeannette is a Neonatal Matron at Kettering General Hospital, and initially went to the hospital to advise and develop neonatal and new born care. Under her guidance, Bansang has introduced 'kangaroo care', fixed feeding regimes as well as the appropriate use of oxygen. These advances have helped ensure that many more babies are **surviving those critical first weeks of life**.

'Mr Shelf Man' Chris, a HGV driver by profession, has been **tireless** in his efforts to improve the living/working environment in Bansang. He has fitted shelving across the hospital site, renovated the staff social area, fitted out the staff library, and is now fitting high tension wires in clinical areas (which will allow us to hang curtains to improve patient privacy). We look forward to welcoming them back to Bansang in 2016.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

The Appeal urgently needs **£16,000** to fully fund the installation of a safe and cost-effective electrical and lighting system. The very future of the hospital depends on this vital project. To donate, **please** visit our dedicated donation page;

virginmoneygiving.com/fund/BHAsafepower

Donate monthly:

We desperately need ongoing monthly donations. To find out why they are so important, please contact Anita or visit; <http://bansanghospitalappeal.org/urgent-appeal/>

Donate via text:

You can donate from your mobile through Vodafone's JustTextGiving. To make an instant £5 donation TODAY, just text **BANS14 £5** to telephone number **70070**

Like us on Facebook:

Liking us on Facebook helps spread the Bansang story to all your friends. It doesn't cost you anything, but it helps us no end! So please go and click the like button on our [Facebook page](#)

Fundraise for us:

Running a marathon? Sponsored silence? Whatever your fundraising idea, we would love to support you! We have pamphlets that you can share. We also work with Virgin Money Giving – so a fundraising page is just a few clicks away! Whatever your idea, please get in touch.

Contact us:

Anita Smith, MBE MRG. Bansang Hospital Appeal, 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, NN14 1JE
anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org
07783 551945