



The Rotary Club of Banbury
www.banburyrotaryclub.org.uk

ABERDEEN CLINIC & FISTULA CENTRE

The current facility comprises an operating theatre, with 2 operating tables, 3 wards, day clinic, offices, laundry, kitchen, seamstress room and associated storage areas.

The building of the 35 bed hostel will mean that patients who need a second operation will be able to stay in the hostel, whereas currently they are discharged in the hope that they will return at a later date for follow up surgery and often this does not happen.

The building work is well under way thanks to the efforts of 3 Rotary teams, comprising a total of 37 volunteers, who worked alongside local Sierra Leonian builders in October & November 2005. As well as helping on the project the Rotarians raised funds which were spent directly on the building programme.

In December 2005 the concrete floor was poured and currently building of the second storey is taking place and the ground floor is about to be plastered. There are a further 6 Rotary teams going out to work on the project between February 20th and June 3rd and it is anticipated that completion will take place in June.

The Fistula Centre only began full time operations in April 2005 but up to the end of January 2006 surgeons performed 403 surgical procedures with an 85% success rate allowing most women to go home "dry".

The co-located Aberdeen Clinic which cares for under 12's performed 4,205 health clinic treatments (including 492 vaccinations), put 2,297 patients and community members through health education courses and conducted 6,460 counselling sessions.



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IYE SOWODIE's story

40 year old Iye is typical of ACFC patients – she has given birth to 5 children (2 of whom have since died). Since the birth of her youngest son 17 years ago Iye has suffered from extreme incontinence and her husband abandoned her because of the terrible smell and because she could not bear him any more children. She was captured by rebel soldiers during the civil war, beaten when they did not like the meals she prepared for them and was left destitute and survived for a time by scrounging whatever she could in the jungle.

Iye heard about the Mercy Ships Fistula Centre in Freetown and was told that doctors could "make her dry" and that the treatment was free. Her surgery was successful and after 2 weeks recovery she left the clinic in December "dry".

VISITING SURGEONS TACKLE DIFFICULT VVF CASES

Resident Doctors Jerry Putnam & Josette Hunter occasionally have to tell a VVF patient that her fistula is inoperable or too difficult for them to repair, however they have kept track of patients that they have had to turn away.

At the start of January 46 women were invited back to the clinic to be examined by Dr Biruk Tafesse from the world famous Fistula Hospital in Addis Abba, Ethiopia.

After thorough examinations Dr Tafesse decided to operate on 25 of the 46 women. ACFC staff counseled the remaining patients who had to be turned away for a second time. During a gruelling 10 days of surgery Dr's Tafesse, Putnam & Hunter operated side by side – most of the women are still in recovery and it will be March before the final success of the surgeries will be determined.

AQUAROLLS WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One of the lasting impressions from my visit to Sierra Leone last November was that of youngsters carrying large containers of water. This girl is 11 and twice a day she carries this container, weighing approximately 25 kilos, a mile



I decided to try and make a difference and when I return in May I am hoping to take a small consignment of Aquarolls with me which I can distribute into areas of need. If this works I aim to develop the programme further, with the aid of local Mercy Ships staff, and/or encourage the production of a similar product within the country.

With the sponsorship of “Go Outdoors” in Coventry I have negotiated a special rate for the Aquarolls (normal RRP £45) and am looking to local individuals, organisations or companies to sponsor an Aquaroll at a cost of £30.

If YOU are able to help please contact me.

EVERY LITTLE HELPS

I am leaving for Sierra Leone on May 22nd for 11 days to help complete the building of the 35 bed hostel at the Aberdeen Clinic & Fistula Centre. Day to day items can make a such a difference to Sierra Leonians who have so little – if you want to help me make a difference contact me for further information – £1 goes a long way in Sierra Leone.

NEW STEPS CENTRE, WATERLOOVILLE

The New Steps facility, run by Mercy Ships, was a project I visited during my trip in November 2005. The Centre improves mobility and independence through physiotherapy, occupational therapy, the provision of prosthetic limbs, orthoses (braces), crutches, walking frames and wheelchairs.

During a decade of civil war the polio vaccination programme broke down and a large number of young people became partially paralysed as a result of the disease.

One of the other aids provided by Mercy Ships to give improved mobility to polio victims is PETS – a Personal Energy Transport System. This is basically a wooden all terrain invalid carriage, of a very simple but effective design, which is driven by hand cranking the front wheel by means of a heavy duty chain. It may sound bizarre BUT having seen several of these in operation in the outskirts of Freetown I can assure you they make a REAL difference to those suffering from impaired mobility.

From January 2005 – January 2006 (inclusive) over 3,500 medical treatment sessions were undertaken, 3,990 people received health education talks, 1,800 rehabilitation consultations took place and 980 mobility and assistive devices were distributed.

New Steps is also heavily involved in a School Reintegration Programme for mobility impaired students which aims to “mainstream” children with a disability into regular classes. This includes providing mobility aids for students, training for school staff & parents, construction of access ramps, wider doors and toilet facilities.

280 NEW WHEELCHAIRS AT NEW STEPS

The Wheelchair Foundation & The Rotary Club of Greenport, New York donated 280 wheelchairs to Mercy Ships’ New Steps Centre in January 2006. A thorough evaluation of potential recipients will take place to see where the chairs are most needed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Alan Wolstencroft as detailed overleaf or www.mercyships.org.uk
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