

Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2013



Dear Supporters

The UKFTSH continues to finance the Community Team in Freetown. At our AGM in December we shall be welcoming Alice Hackwell and Esther Walker as trustees. Alice is working with Michael on finances and Esther is invaluable with her knowledge of African health matters. Fundraising is our main concern and we need to increase our income to ensure we can continue to support the work of the hospice. We are most grateful to all our loyal supporters and we ask you to let us know if you have some fundraising ideas. With many thanks!

Ruth Cecil

Please let us have your email so that we do not spend money on postage. Thanks



Exciting Times!

Many of you will remember Gabriel's last visit to the UK in 2011 to represent The Shepherd's Hospice and to pay tribute to Sheila Hurton, at a service to celebrate her life and work. This visit also afforded the opportunity for Gabriel to visit the Global Health Centre at Kings College and to discuss the work of TSH with various Health Care Professionals involved in its remit.

The timing of this was particularly helpful, since it coincided with the establishment of King's Sierra Leone Partnership earlier in the year. This partnership aims to strengthen the health system in Sierra Leone by working collaboratively with main hospitals, training institutions and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in Freetown, and by drawing on

staff expertise from across King's Health Partners to support health worker training, care provision, research and clinical services. A similar model is already in place in Zambia and Somaliland. To this end, one of the Doctors from the Global Health Centre moved out to Sierra Leone in January to establish a partnership office at the Connaught Hospital in Freetown.

There is now an in-country team and a management committee (of which I am a member) made up of a wide range of clinical, academic and technical staff from across King's, to support this remit. There is a massive amount of work going on in many different areas and I could fill several newsletters outlining this! The main point at present however, is to let you know that

there is now a specific partnership lead on Palliative care (Dr R. Harding, who has vast knowledge and experience of palliative care in Sub-Saharan Africa) and a Pharmacy lead who has just moved to Freetown for a year. Gabriel had already met Richard and several of the team from Kings whilst in the UK and some have now visited TSH.

Hopefully this collaboration will strengthen in the coming months, giving Gabriel some much needed support in the quest to further establish the importance of palliative care on the educational and political agenda of Sierra Leone and helping to increase access to oral morphine, currently only available to patients of the Hospice and entirely funded by your generous donations.

We will keep you updated!

Jacqui

Hospice care; my true World

Yatta a 52-year old woman married with seven children lives in Bo. In 2008, following left mastectomy she had severe pain. In 2011, her pain became severe with swelling of the left arm. The drugs her doctor gave could not help. She then decided to try native doctors, traditional healers who treat people with concoctions, promising heaven when hell is all the patient gets.

Treatment with some herbs and steam resulted into sores on the arm, increased pain and sleeplessness. Confused by two possible options, neither effective a brother now decided to help by sending her to Ghana for further management. This expensive option by a loved one was tried out of desperation. On her return after three months in Ghana there was no improvement and increasing pain.

In April 2013, Yatta was referred to the Shepherd's Hospice for Palliative Care by a consultant surgeon at Connaught Hospital. Cause for referral was a diagnosis of cancer of the left breast with metastasis to the left arm. Her two daughters, 16 and 27, both unemployed and dependants on Yatta, accompanied her on the first visit to the hospice.

The histology done after the surgery was not disclosed to her. She said she wanted to know her diagnosis. On my suggestion Yatta invited her elder daughter into the consulting room. Breaking the bad news was another era in the life of Yatta and her daughter. Both wept for a while but with counselling we moved on.

This was an opportunity to reassure Yatta that her pain will be relieved and symptoms controlled. But I informed Yatta how terminal her condition was, progressing disease, and demanding acceptance of bad news. Yatta bowed her head for a moment, sitting still though in shock and denial. She surprisingly raised herself, looking straight into my face and exclaimed, "Hospice care; my true world!" shaking her head with tears streaming down her cheeks. I observed Yatta to be speechless and groaning. Asked what her problem was, she replied "pain" pointing to her left arm. At this point I administered an initial dose of 2ml of oral morphine solution, and helped her to the respite room for observation. Yatta asked the two daughters to leave her quiet since she wanted to sleep. For the first time in three months, Yatta slept for over two hours unobstructed. Yatta woke up remarking "Nurse, where is my pain? I am well. Thank you for helping me." That day, Yatta and her children were happy departing for home after care. The younger saying "we are happy we have come to know the hospice".

The community palliative care team have visited Yatta once every week. She will always welcome the CPCT with smiles. Though her condition is deteriorating due to she is there full of smiles as she explains how she feels. On our last visit to Yatta this week, she said to the team "I see everything happening to me just as you explained. I know am going down. But the "wonder drug, oral morphine" is the ultimate answer for me. "It is a wonder drug because it has returned life into me", Yatta affirmed. As Nurse in charge of Yatta, I have observed her return to a pain free life as inspired by her smiles anytime we visit her home. I hope more patients and families will be reached with the increased capacity of the CPCT.

The UK Friends of The Shepherd's Hospice, Sierra Leone

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Fundraising Activities

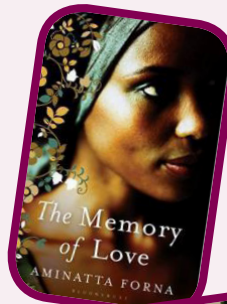
SUMPTUOUS SUNDAY LUNCH

In November 2012 I hosted my first Sumptuous Sunday Lunch for The UK Friends of The Shepherd's Hospice. I haven't much space or many chairs so I had 4 guests. The build up to the great day was eventful as an oven malfunction meant I had to change menu the day before. I settled on chicken cooked in sherry with beans and new potatoes and raspberry and chocolate cheesecake to follow - the chicken was quick to cook and could be done after church and the cheesecake was made in advance - relatively stress-free after the oven excitement. We had a drink with the meal and then tea or coffee afterwards. It was lovely to spend a bit of time with people and pick up travel tips for my cruise (starting the next day). It was a really enjoyable way to raise some money to help the hospice and we all had a good time (and they were kind enough to compliment my food). I would love to host again next year if I am able to - perhaps I won't choose the day before I go on holiday though!

Louise Mount

QUIZ NIGHT 2013

Our annual quiz night took place at Claygate Village Hall in April and was very well attended. We were fortunate to have the services of David Fullbrook as our quiz master and he did an excellent job keeping everyone entertained. Our contestants were challenged with a wide variety of questions and table rounds, for example did you realize that Mental Oil Wish is an anagram of Lewis Hamilton? A buffet and a bar provided refreshment and along with the proceeds of a raffle, we were able to raise the amazing amount of £1228. We are very grateful to everyone who helped to make the event such a success but in particular to David and to Peter Robson his usual technical support. Next year's quiz will take place on 4th April at the same venue, so come and join us.



For your diary...

11th December 2013

Carol Singing
6pm at Surbiton Station

4th April 2014

Quiz Night
7.30pm at Claygate Village Hall

Shortlisted for the Orange Prize 2011 The Memory of Love by Aminatta Forna

This is one of those rare books that keeps you up way past your bedtime and distracts you until you can return to it. Written by the author of 'The Devil that Danced on the Water', Aminatta takes you back to Sierra Leone of the 1960's when much of the world is gripped by the first moon landings, Sierra Leone is beginning to descend into political chaos. In present day Freetown a dying university Professor decides to unburden his soul to a young British Psychologist. This confession winds its way through a story that weaves together the lives of the psychologist with a Sierra Leonean surgeon who has his own haunted memories from the rebel war to survive.

The themes of this book are unrequited and obsessive love that tumbles through history creating consequences for unfolding generations. Wonderfully, Aminatta transports you back to Freetown, its dust infused skies, pepper soups and soaring black kites. Having lent this book so many times it has been lost; it is loved by people with and without a passion for Sierra Leone.

Esther Walker

Morphine is helping treatment adherence

In Sierra Leone, palliative care is often dreaded when patients and relatives understand it to be the last stage of life. In the community families do not accept death as a normal development process; carers always say "please do not tell him he is dying". Family members knowing the patient is deteriorating often make one request, "is there a way you can reverse this condition?" At the Hospice we have always tried to be honest, difficult though this is with sad news when the family is expecting you to say, "It will soon be well."

I have a brother, a 38-year old farmer, who has benefitted immensely from palliative care. David was diagnosed with HIV in 2007, with severe diarrhoea and weight loss. In spite of treatment at the health centre in Mongere village he did not improve. Once in Freetown where I can help as elder brother. I received David, slim and disinterested in his environment, weak, coughing and hungry for air. As a provider of palliative care, I asked the community health officer to see him the following morning. Investigations, confirmed David as HIV positive. The sad news was broken to our Dad by the counselor.

I remember that dull evening when my Dad cautioned, "Gabriel, please don't tell my wife, David's mum". Hearing this sad news was an unpleasant experience. But it turned out to be a life-saving encounter. We turned the anger into strength to treat David. He started treatment with cotrimoxazole which kept him healthy all these years.

However, in 2011, David's condition worsened. He had developed candidiasis, severe weight loss, profuse cough and skin rashes. 4 months ago in Bo Government Hospital he had commenced treatment for tuberculosis, but discontinued this due to the shortage of drugs. I was again stunned with the news from my dad, "David is seriously ill", he reported. I requested him to bring him over to Freetown. He stayed with me at home. The first night, David could not sleep, he coughed all night. Next morning, at the hospice his assessment revealed severe pain causing poor sleep, poor mobility and poor appetite due to mouth blisters. Investigations revealed a low CD4 count. So David was recommended for ARV and anti-TB treatments. He was subsequently started on treatment for TB. The Community Health Officer, prescribed oral morphine solution to be taken 1ml every four hours, and 2ml at bed time for his persistent pain. Oral morphine caused a leap in the recovery of David. For the first time in six months, David slept and the cough was better.

The following morning, David was hungry and able to eat. His pain everywhere in his body was relieved. Initial signs of drowsiness was experienced, which faded away on the fourth day. Now that David was pain-free, he enjoyed sound sleep and ate well. His breathing improved. By the third week, David was pain free, slept and ate well had gained weight and was able to walk unassisted. Two months into TB treatment, he was started on ART. By this time, David's weight had increased from 38.8 kg at start of treatment to 60.1 kg. David is now a healthy looking man has returned to his farm, cultivating rice to feed his wife and three children. The family is happy that David recovered and was able to return to productive life.

One week ago, David visited the hospice for care. He was full of life and vigor. I enquired about his thoughts about palliative care. "Please David, can you tell me which one thing that changed the course of symptoms as they developed during your illness?" Without wasting time he smiled; his face beaming with delight and peace. "The medicine that treated my pains gave me sleep and made me eat without pain", he replied. As a caregiver I wonder what would have been the fate of David without oral morphine, and the team of caregivers whose salaries are paid by UK Friends of TSH, and a family that truly cares for a sick relative?

You can help get healthcare to people in Sierra Leone while you are shopping

Raise money for UKFTSH by shopping online! It doesn't cost you anything - just shop online using their partner retailers including: Amazon, John Lewis, M&S and over 2000 others.

Amazon will donate 1.5%, John Lewis 1%, The Body Shop 6%; some insurance retailers will even donate up to £30 simply for taking out a policy with them! When you make purchases, they will donate money to your chosen cause. If you would like to support us:

Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Click on 'Find a Cause' and enter: **The UK Friends of The Shepherd's Hospice**

Fill out the quick form to register your details. Find the retailer you want to shop with. Click to visit the retailer, then shop as you normally would. Your donation will be shown in your easyfundraising account within 30 days.

And finally...

What we have raised through Activities

Quiz Night	£1,228
SSLs	£2,788
Carol Singing	£ 520
Donations	£ 207
Hampton Court Trail	£ 494

As always our heartfelt thanks to you for all your support.

On behalf of Michael, Jacqui, Kathryn, Liz and Ruth.