

Namaste

I seem to be getting later and later in writing the UMNHET newsletter. Unfortunately, even with this passage of time, I cannot bring you any better news of the completion of the transfer of Okhaldhunga and Tansen Hospitals fully to the HDCS (Human Development and Community Services), presently managing these hospitals. It is a great disappointment to the staff and all those working so hard to effect the change of ownership that this latest delay on the part of the newly appointed Minister of Health (who has ruled against a Cabinet decision) has brought everything to an unsettling halt.



Visits to Nepal earlier in the year by the Goulds and Marstons (not funded by UMNHET) allowed Trustees time to visit all four hospitals and the reports from them are mainly very encouraging. Bill and Roger both spent time in Patan Hospital meeting the senior staff and learning more about the way the hospital was now functioning. In some areas a concern has been expressed that 'free or subsidised care' was not being made readily available to the most vulnerable but the year end figures did show a big 'free care' provision. This is

an area we will monitor with concern. For the UMN sponsored and the Nepali Christian staff certain pressures can make the working environment difficult, but nevertheless the overall picture was acceptable and major building work is impressive.

Bill and Margaret spent time in Tansen Hospital where there is a real sense of a positive working environment with enthusiastic staff and progress in many areas. The greatest need expressed there is for more general surgeons to maintain the ongoing busy schedules through the coming months. Paediatrics, Orthopaedic and Burns Units are all in new accommodation and the Emergency Department is being upgraded.



Roger visited Okhaldhunga Hospital and spent several days there, returning with a very good impression of a hospital moving forward. Great progress has been made in the rebuilding of the Nutrition Centre and there is an encouraging presence of four Nepali doctors augmenting the one UMN sponsored doctor. Although a road now exists to ease travel from Rumjitar up to the town Roger walked up the traditional way, regretting bitterly his decision to accept a ride on a this rudimentary road on his way back.....and this man does not scare easily!

Jen and Roger visited Amp Pipal, the new experience of going by four wheel drive right to the chautara outside the hospital entrance was a mixed blessing....very rough and probably impassable in the monsoon.... but it must bring a real feeling of progress to the community. Seeing buses loading up in the village gave a great 'buzz' to the area and of course this transport also makes it possible for those





A recovering young patient on his bed

needing health care to travel to Kathmandu. The current German doctor there is working very hard to maintain the high level of care always associated with Amp Pipal and the young Nepali doctor working alongside him has a real heart for rural medicine. They met the Chairman of the Hospital Committee and the Business Manager, for whom the Trust are paying a small grant for training, and felt the commitment to the hospital remains high in the community in spite of the improved travel from local villages to other health providers.

Dr. Mark Zimmerman, heading the new Nick Simon Institute, spoke to Roger and Bill about the progress his team is making bringing training to health workers for rural areas. It was encouraging to know that our hospitals are being brought into the sphere of this work and where they will provide excellent training facilities for NSI students



TB and chest diseases are common

In August the next grants will be made to the hospitals towards their free/subsidised care budgets so that each hospital can be aware of the contribution being made in their current year's work. It is hoped that this gives them an assurance that they can continue to offer generous support to the most marginalized and destitute of any creed or caste.



Another busy day at Patan Hospital

Once again the Trustees wish to acknowledge with great gratitude your part in this provision, indeed without your generosity none of this would be possible. The funds have continued to grow slowly but this letter could not be allowed to be sent without a small plea for your continued support.



Dr Neelam Adhikari, has served Patan Hospital for many years

On an official note, Tim Ruohoneimi has requested that the Trustees accept his resignation. At our last meeting great appreciation was expressed for all his valuable contributions as a Trustee, and though the Trustees regretfully accepted his resignation they are all delighted that he remains committed to the hospitals. Michael Hawksworth, appointed as a Trustee in October 2006, and Prem Maharjan remain our Nepal based Trustees and they give helpful insight to the 'in country' situation.



Intensive Care in Patan Hospital

At the last Trustee meeting a review was undertaken on the investment of the funds held by the UMNHET and professional advice has been taken. In view of the changing fiscal situation in general and recognising the need to maintain some capital growth as well as receive as much interest as possible some changes have been made with all the Trustees approval.

Jen Marston
Trustee and Secretary, 'Goose Mead', 3 Church Road,
Ickford, Bucks, HP18 9HZ, UK
jen@umnhet.co.uk