

Motec Life – UK flourishes at Northwick Park

NW NEWS 2 (Northwick Park Hospital) – Nov 2008

Sharing skills in Ghana



Some Motec members at Northwick Park staff: **Isaac Amo Dadzie**, Staff Nurse (Anaesthetics); **Nadeem Sabir**, Consultant Anaesthetist; **Simon Derby**, Team Leader, Main Theatres; **Mike Brunner**, Consultant Anaesthetist (Intensive Care) and **Stuart Gould**, Consultant Surgeon

Although he left Ghana 22 years ago, Simon Derby, Team Leader in the Main Theatres at Northwick Park, has never forgotten the country he was born in and where he trained.

With other staff that had worked together at the same hospital in Ghana, Simon thought about how they could use the skills they'd acquired in the UK and apply them back home. They set up a charity (MOTEC Life-UK) which now sends hospital staff – including doctors, nurses, anaesthetists, physiotherapists, radiologists and scrub nurses – to Ghana three or four times a year.

Last month Simon led a team of four Northwick Park staff for a two-week visit to the northern part of Ghana, the most deprived part of the country, to identify a particular project in the hospital where he first worked. While in Ghana they also did training (of the nurses, doctors and physiotherapists who will take care of the patients after the group has gone home), education and clinical work – including operations on hips, knees, general surgery and gynaecology.

Simon said: "I feel it's fulfilling to pass on the skills that we've acquired here. We don't go to Ghana to condemn local practices. We work in collaboration with local people and train local people so there will be continuity of care.

"Despite the lack of facilities and expertise we try as much as we can to educate people – and also the government. People wait till a limb is deformed or goes septic before they come to hospital and one of our aims is to get people to realise they need to get to hospital early. Last year we dealt with a chap of about 20-25 who had been involved in a traffic accident and came to us having almost lost his leg. We got there just in time and managed to save his LIFE. It had become septic, was getting toxic and he would have died. We had to take him to theatre two or three times before he got better. He's sent us pictures of himself since and he's now in better health and working again as a peasant farmer.

"We've helped to improve people's quality of life. I remember when I started nursing. Nursing is a calling. It is a great vocation and a real way to reach out to humanity."