

Steve Waxes Lyrical On The Subject of Starting a Charity Organisation

25th February 2007

Having spent all afternoon thinking and talking about Motec with members of the team, I have, unusually, a few thoughts left unspoken.

As a passing comment to Gladys and Simon over lunch I, almost accidentally, described where I thought we, as an organisation, had got to in terms of climbing a big hill. Anyone who has ever visited the Lakes, or Wales or Scotland for example will have experienced that moment when, having the perception that you have not really got anywhere yet, you pause to catch your breath. When you turn around you are pleasantly surprised to discover a great length of path stretching behind you and you realise that, in fact, you have covered a great deal of ground and you are well on the way. Of course, when you turn back to face the path ahead it now appears even steeper and further than it did before, but you still have that reassurance that you have, at least, made a pretty healthy start.

We have many reasons to feel proud of what we have been able to achieve so far; we have appeared on Ghana's national TV, chatted at length with the Ghana High Commissioner in London, been featured in the 3M international staff magazine, so there's no going back now! We have swelled our numbers from seven to forty six at the last count, have made two very successful trips and are planning the next four. We have expanded our work to include formal education programmes and are planning to include two more hospitals and specialities outside Orthopaedics. We have taken essential equipment with us and managed to adapt their air supply so that we can take any surgical power tools from the UK with their standard UK fittings assured that they will work. We are in the process of shipping some hefty donations of vital theatre linen and equipment to Ghana which will make a real and immediate improvement. We have gained agreement in principle for long-term help from some really heavyweight companies and more will follow.

More important than all of these things, though is that we have been able to support Paul in treating so many patients and adding quality to lives in a really finite way. There really are people going about their daily business in Ghana that would otherwise be disabled by injury or disease and, after April's trip, God-willing, there will be a whole lot more!

Perhaps the most touching so far have been the children of St Michaels JMI CofE School in St Albans who have not only undertaken to make up some little gift parcels from each of them to a child on the children's ward at Koforidua but have also donated the money taken at their Christmas Carol Service which we are currently using to print our group identity with; in a few days we will be able to say not only 'been there, done that' but also 'and got the t-shirt' as well! Where is this going to end?

The sobering truth of the matter is that we have a very, very big hill to climb yet and we have barely scratched the surface of the vast need of the people of Ghana to update and improve the standards of healthcare that they may access, and make it available to many more.

On a personal note, I have come away refreshed, re-motivated and resolved to be part of making a difference in what is emerging as a formidable team.