

Dear All

The "stand in" transformer mentioned below has now blown as well - we are looking forward to at least a week without electricity. Our photos are on the desktop computer that now won't switch on! We apologise that our normal production standards are not being kept this month....

Ben

## **Amos update**

### **December 2011**

We have just returned from a peaceful restorative visit to Peponi for New Year. We were there with some German friends which was pleasant and I was able to study while the boys all played. Sadly we didn't go out on the Dhow as it was well windy and we didn't fancy being sand blasted on the island. Christmas itself all came together amazingly and we had a lovely time with traditional tunes in church, present giving around the wards – this year expanded to soap for all as well as juice and biscuits and knitted teddies and blankets for the kids – which continue to be a great hit, and then presents under the tree for ours and good food all round.

The electricity shambles continues to be just that – you may recall that the main transformer for the town blew up .... well it was replaced after about a week with one that was known to be too small – so now we're on rationing – in addition to the regular breakdowns .... so we're off for about 36 hours for every 48 ..... We clearly need to find a way to manage this long term as who knows when they'll find a new transformer so we're into charcoal buying and ensuring the milk gets next to cold blocks (from the lab) so we can still have breakfast. The hospital, thankfully, has been recognised as an emergency service (after some agitating) and so is only liable to the breakdowns rather than the rationing as well  
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The Diana Centre kids club annual outing was held at the yacht club again this year. I was approached on Wednesday lunch time to be told that they wanted to go that Saturday and the manager at the yacht club had told them that they needed to ask me first (as a committee member). After getting upset for a while at the lack of notice, and being told that they couldn't now cancel the children from coming for a party I relented and spent the next hour on the phone arranging it all. It was

indeed worth it in the end as about 50 kids had a whale of a time on the beach, splashing in and out on the water, tug of warring, singing, eating too much pilau and ice-cream (some regretting this later!) and going out on a yacht for a trip round the bay. I took four of the kids back and asked them what their favourite bit was – they replied the boat.

The wards continue to be challenging with another 2 maternal deaths – both blood related, and a rather large number of sections, balanced of course by even more normal deliveries. I've had large gynae operating lists in an attempt to get ahead as I'm taking the first couple of weeks of January off for study leave – in true African style – it really is the only way I'll get in enough revision to do OK. We've finally got a date for my exam and its confirmed that I can do it in Dar – January 17 ..... The labour ward renovations are going well with most of the knocking down now complete and some new walls going in – its been fun trying to visualise how the space will be and making sure that sinks, power and doors are all in sensible places.

The malaria in pregnancy research is now moving steadily on with women to scan most days to check their gestational age. There is another monitors visit next week so hopefully they'll be pleased with what we've done so far. They were very insistent that we didn't try to go too fast and enrolled at a slow pace – 1 per day - to start with .... then they criticised us as we'd only got 4 in the first week. Meanwhile the ethics approval for my BP machine study has finally come through and we'll be able to start soon which is excellent news ... although gives me yet more work. And finally on the research front another project called the Woman trial, about treatment of large post-partum haemorrhages has finally got going here in Tz – its enrolled 2520 women so far world wide – aiming for 15,000. How many we'll contribute I don't know but it seemed a good idea when I first got involved in 2009 ..... Quite why we're trying to leave with so many good bits and pieces coming on line I'm not sure.

Hawa my PMTCT nurse, who some of you met last year in the UK, has been back for a few days from her university course. She is enjoying it enormously and learning lots, already talking of doing her masters, but finding life challenging. They have to live in a hostel with 4 or 6 to a room of all ages mixed so 50 year olds used to their own home and studying hard mixed up with 20 year olds just having left home and out to play loud music and have fun. They have to eat in a canteen and the lecturers make a bit extra on the side by selling transcripts of all their lectures so the only way through is to buy hundreds of extra sheets of paper to plow through. Still she is doing well and the family is surviving with her so far away – especially challenging I think for

Glory at the age of 2 but a very common scenario here.

The boys are enjoying the last of their holidays, getting involved in a number of things – Max is having a go at improving his drawing skills and Zack and Seif are trying to create a wikipedia article about Muheza. Piran meanwhile is into shapes and colours as well as swords and bracelets. My days are full of ridiculous minutiae like which drugs inhibit and which induce P450 and what anticipation in trinucleotide repeat diseases means .....

Wishing you all good wishes for 2012

God bless

Love

Sally Ben Zack Max and Piran

Prayer and Praise

For happy families over Christmas

For Hawa and Sally and our studies

For the successful completion of all the renovations

For electricity