

# Amos Update: September 2011

The big thing for us in September was Ben's trip away – for which we've put in an extra sheet thinking you'd be interested. Meanwhile back at the ranch ...



Laisha (and Pip)

I have had a busy time obstetrically – not only is it September (always more babies) but there were also many staff on leave so I kept on turning midwife and helping out with examining women, listening to fetal hearts and catching babies – it was fun ! As we got into October the newly upgraded nurses have flooded in – we now have a fair number on my ward and they've finally got time to actually put sheets on all the beds. One day I had a huge PPH (post-partum haemorrhage) - never seen a woman bleed so fast - I had her in theatre within about 3 minutes of the baby coming out (I was there at that moment - ?lucky?) so was an anaesthetist who got a central line in and I did a hysterectomy (the uterus was ruptured) - we got her off the table and into ICU but she died about an hour later - there was only one unit of blood (500mls) which went up about 40 minutes too late (no blood giving set) - which is just not very much if you dump over 5 litres on the floor .... such are the results of the new government blood policy ... I've caught up on my maternal death figures - 9 up to June this year, and 8 since - 6 of which are related to blood - don't think we'd have saved all of those but ....

The PMTCT service is seeing big changes – Hawa who has been the lynch pin of the service since complex regimes were first coming in (2006) has just left to start her degree. She has finished with a presentation at the Aids Relief Quality Improvement seminar about nurse led clinics. They specifically requested her presence, much to the disgust of the DMO and the doctor overall in charge of the HIV programme in Muheza. She went and spoke about how, with commitment of workers, negative babies with well positive mothers is achievable. Bizarrely within the area under the Aids Relief group (there are four such groups here in Tz through which the American money was channelled), we are only one of two hospitals doing full PMTCT plus. A few others do a more than just basic services but most are still stuck with single dose nevirapine (reduces transmission from 40% to 20% while we get ours down to probably below 1% as well as treating the mother). Aids Relief have homed in on drugs, home based care, TB-HIV initiatives etc etc which are all important but surely achieving negative babies with well parents must be important too, and not just left to struggle with inadequate regimes and funding. Laisha, who came to the UK with me in 2009 will replace Hawa for the PMTCT clinic.

I have had a visiting team of students from the Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene based in the London School, which this year has an East African version – 6 weeks here in Tz based in Moshi and a further 6 weeks in Kampala. In both places they are having a week in District hospitals looking at all sorts of service provisions and of challenges faced by working / doing research here. I had a group of 8 doctors from Tz, Rwanda, Netherlands, US, UK, NZ and Germany doing a unit on “from conception to delivery”. We've been looking in both clinics and the hospital at HIV provision, BP monitoring, partogram usage, clinic equipment etc. Its been interesting in lots of ways. The challenges of working in clinics was adequately demonstrated by the difficulty of getting through the mud ..... and obtaining unbiased samples by asking about HIV stigma amongst women at my mothers club who virtually all claimed to be open and relaxed about their diagnosis – getting on with their lives like their negative sisters ...

Socially September has been a whirl ... Ian (retired GP from near Shrewsbury who comes every year) has been around for a month doing his usual Village Health worker training encouragement. Joy and Colin (friends) have visited from St Matz in Oxford which has been lovely. The USPG sent a team to discuss ongoing health needs and strategy across the continent which included Muheza. Elizabeth Hills, a previous medical super here, came out for the new Bishops enthronement. We've even had a chat to him – he seems very nice and concerned about the health facilities under his jurisdiction which is a blessing. Angela, a previous mission companion teacher at a nearby school has been visiting, and finally we had Andrew and then Ambrose and Griffin arriving – all involved with the Palliative Care teams roll out of morphine usage across the district. Its lovely to meet all these folk – friends old and new, and have some social exchange.

We've managed to renew the children's "work permits" which is reassuring if expensive and are slowly trying to put together the package of what we do and where we go as we return to the UK next year. It looks like we shall be aiming for Falmouth – apologies to all as its a long way from anywhere, but it is a family favourite and has lots of practical advantages – the main one being easy access to grandparents for child help – which in these uncertain times of what Ben might or might not be doing and of me needing to do on call as a GP trainee is huge. Many thanks to Freda and Walter. We just hope to be able to get a house that will fit in lots of guests – and that you'll all want to come and stay !

Water has once again started to be a problem– with the taps working once every 7 to 10 days at present. The boys bring it back from Tanga every day and we're coping. It's a bit galling as lots is currently falling, unseasonably, from the skies ..... we're trying to get guttering put on some of the ward rooves to ease the situation via water harvesting. This is indeed my latest project .... each side of each ward needs £350 to put in a 3000l SIM tank and guttering to fill it. Anybody keen to raise that amount or part thereof, please do get in touch .... On Saturday Z and M decided to see if sea water was really salty, so we brought home a litre of best Tanga Bay and boiled it dry, it stays colourless till nearly the end then suddenly goes white as the salt precipitates. It produces an impressive amount of salt - theoretically 35 g/L but actually we got nearer 50.





The boys are all well and have mostly survived Ben's absence, except the odd screaming fit by Piran at 3am (??) "I don't want you mummy, I want my daddy ..." School has managed to settle down, with the all important AGM and discussion on the schools future coming up on the 19th. Whatever .... I think I have found someone who agrees to take over as Treasurer so I can finally off load this nightmare.

Take care and lots of love  
Sally Ben Zack Max and Piran



Fetching Water!

## Prayer and Praise

-  For the ongoing problems of blood
-  For water, from the sky and the taps
-  For Ben's safe and useful trip to Kabul
-  For all the visitors – friends and colleagues, that their trips to Muheza will have been beneficial