



# Inter Care Report **Ghana Visit** **February 2013**

Sister Pat Story and Sister Bernadette Mangan (trustees)

Friday 15th February.

## Birmingham to Accra.

We were met at the airport in Accra by a relative of Emeritus Archbishop Sarpong of Kumasi where we stayed overnight.

Saturday 16th February

Mary then took us to the Airport where we took a flight to Kumasi financed by Archbishop Sarpong.

At around midday we were welcomed by Yaw the driver and taken to the residence of the Archbishop where we stayed for the duration of the visit as his guests. He then took us to a cultural concert in the evening which was a wonderful experience demonstrating the tremendous talents and differing local cultures.

Sunday 17th February

We accompanied the Archbishop to a nearby Parish for a traditional Mass and stayed for lunch. After which we went for a visit to the Cathedral Basilica the only Basilica in Ghana. The tremendous amount of work done in recent years to bring the Cathedral up to the required standard demonstrated the culture magnificently.

We then returned to rest and prepare ourselves for the clinic visits which started on the Monday.

Monday 18th February

The Archbishop had arranged for each clinic to transport us.

## St. Edward's Clinic Dwinyama.

9.45am We were collected by Sr. Laetitia and we followed the same route as in the 2009 report on which we noted only one toll. We left Kumasi on the Sunyani road through Asoyebu and Onkerebu past the turn for Akropong on the right and Hollywood fuel station. We continued through Tabre, Ntsere, Masnkarakso, Attakrom and Amakom to St. Edward's clinic which is under the direction of Sr. Laetitia of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



We noted some changes had taken place since our last visit in 2009 by way of a newly constructed block which facilitates 24/48 hr care for both male and female patients. There are now 15 beds in this unit. Side by side with this is another building which comprises a delivery suite including a lying-in room where they average 17 to 20 deliveries per month. A pre and post HIV test counselling service is now available and as a result, the stigma previously associated with this condition is now minimised.

Martha (Left) a retired nurse employed by Sister Laetitia in charge of the new Maternity section of the new wing.

Personnel The number of staff is growing and now there are three trained nurses 2 of whom are nurse midwives and one who is acting as a Medical assistant. There is also a scheme run by the local Government hospital whereby two pupil midwives are seconded for three months placements. This greatly enhances the quality of patient care.

### Comments and requests.

- HB test strips.
- Amoxicillin and Paracetamol (LOCAL GENERIC PARACETAMOL INEFFECTIVE)

There has been no update of the drug list of available medicines of the National Insurance scheme since our last visit so our medicines are still needed and greatly appreciated. The amount of unreliable drugs is quite problematic.

## St. John's Clinic Domeabra

We were driven to Domeabra by Sr. Laetitia. This clinic is now under the direction of Sr. Esther Adzah who is a member of the St. Louis Sisters. On arrival we shared lunch with the Sisters. This is a 20 bedded general and maternity clinic with 5 beds specifically assigned to Maternity cases. Antenatal clinics are conducted regularly and as part of this, there is a pre-screening component which allows for referral to the local hospital in order to join the preventative care programme to ensure that the HIV virus is not passed from mother to child. The post natal care is provided in the Government clinic.

We visited the small laboratory which is run by a trained technician, the basic tests carried out there are for the malaria parasite, Haemoglobin and urine testing for sugar and protein and pregnancy.

**Personnel:** This clinic is adequately staffed. Sr. Esther is a nurse midwife and fully trained Medical assistant and she combines both roles in her position as Sister in Charge. She is also profiting from the new scheme of which we spoke above, she has 2 trained enrolled nurses. Also on her staff is a very efficient accountant Thomas Mensa who has been employed in this clinic for the past 15 years, shown here with Srs. Esther and Bernadette.



### Requests:

- "One touch" Glucose meter (2) can obtain their own strips.
- Urinary Catheters.

The future of this clinic is most hopeful with the advent of Sr. Esther. The St Louis Sisters

are generally very successful in their endeavours. Sister has plans for further developing the Services they offer.

Route, we will give the directions from Kumasi to St. Johns' Health Centre. Take the Sunyani road and at the Mankaranso junction turn left, carry on down this road to Domeabra. There is a sign on the road for St. Johns – take the right hand fork and the clinic is on the right.

We were taken back to Kumasi by Sister Esther.

## Tuesday 19th February

### St. Michael's Hospital Pramso

Last visited February 2009-2010 see report of same for instructions re route

At 8.30 am we were collected by the driver from the hospital in Pramso. On arrival we were greeted by Dr.Yow Sarfo-Asante the hospital Medical superintendant. Firstly he expressed his appreciation for the consignments sent by Inter Care and he said that the new method of sending these by post is more satisfactory as it costs little by way of payment on arrival. He explained that the hospital is under the auspices of The Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG).



Sister Mary in the Convent situated within St Michael's.

He proceeded to tell us about the latest building which is almost complete, which is a three storey building. The ground floor will be for patients needing special care and also for some private patients. The 1st floor will provide for all who need comprehensive maternity care. The top floor will be used for ENT and Dental care.

Because of the effectiveness of the weekly one day clinic for HIV counselling, screening and awareness it has become necessary to have a second day to cope with the increase in numbers attending this clinic.

We then went to greet the administrator Kwame Amoetang who is well known to Inter Care. Unfortunately he informed us that he is retiring in June. He kindly took us on a tour of the new building however as it is in the process of being built we could only view from the outside.

We were then shown around the eye clinic where we met Sr. Mary Owusu-Frimpong a member of the Sisters of St. Louis who in fact instigated and brought to fruition this new service, (opened 2010).

Apart from the everyday conditions affecting the sight of the patients, provision of eye drops, eye glasses, there is a surgical unit on the second floor where cataract surgery is performed weekly by an eye surgeon who attends the clinic from Kumasi. From there we were taken to a house in the grounds for refreshment only to discover that this is the convent of the St. Louis Sisters.

The bed compliment is at present 73 but this will increase in the near future. Otherwise there is very little changed since the previous visit. This is a very busy and efficient hospital.

We were then driven to Jacobu.



Outside the new building due to open in a few months!

## St. Peter's Hospital, Jacobu

We were made very welcome in the new Board room by Mr Enoch Deputy Executive Officer, Mrs Pauline Pricilla Opei Matron, Mr Tetteh Annor Larbi the Administrator, Mr Emmanuel Obeng-Agyemang the Hospital Pharmacist and the Chaplain Fr. Denchira. This was a lively meeting where the value of Inter Care's consignments was emphasised. Their plans for the future were discussed in some detail. The Pharmacist was advised by us to be in direct contact with Mrs Carol Austin our Resource Manager. He is very happy about this.



The bed compliment is now 63 and this will increase by 45 when the new buildings for Maternity and Children are built. They are a very enthusiastic team and obviously work very well together. They want the best for their patients and make provision for their comfort as it indicated in the beautiful Out Patients department. The Pharmacy shows a recent delivery of Inter Care drugs.

There were no special requests. Lovely visit to a very well run Centre. We were given lunch provided by one of the doctors.

The route was not noted because we came from Pramso by various shortcuts to avoid poor roads for most of the way.

Wednesday 20th February

## St. Martin's Hospital, Agroyesum

We were collected at 8.30.am by Mr Ralf Odom, hospital Pharmacist .On arrival at the office we were introduced to the Administrator's Secretary Mrs.Beda Antwi. After a short discussion with the Pharmacist who expressed deep appreciation of the Inter Care drugs and our visit, he explained that they are the only pharmaceutical source in the area which has a catchment of 140,000 people. He introduced us to Sr. Angela Assistant Matron who is a member of the Holy Child Congregation. She took us on a tour of the Hospital. We then met Sr. Martha who is also a Holy Child Sister and is responsible for the Gynaecology Department.

We were very interested in the Buruli ulcer unit which has been sponsored by a Dutch donor. The high incidence of these ulcers in this area has dropped considerably because of the existence of the unit where sufferers can present before the ulcers take over, so early presentation; diagnosis and treatment have helped greatly. The effectiveness of the unit spreads by word of mouth and those cured show others the success. This unit is being used presently as a male Medical Ward.

We continued on the tour and met with Dr. Kobia Anthony the superintendant of the Hospital. He too expressed appreciation of the parcels from Inter Care but asked us not to send Psychiatric drugs as there is no need for such they do not treat Psychiatric patients. After lunch we were taken back to Kumasi by Ralph and his driver.

We encouraged Ralph Odum to make personal contact with Carol Austin.

**Comments:** This is one Hospital which certainly needs all the support it can get as the demands are great and the resources minimal. There were no special requests.

Thursday 21st February

## St. Anne's Clinic Donyina

We were collected by Sr. Josephine Ottah a sister of the Dominican Congregation who runs this clinic under the auspices of CHAG- Christian Health Association of Ghana. When we arrived we were introduced to Sr. Stella Udah who works as the Laboratory scientist, we met the pharmacist Emmanuel Kyei and we encouraged him to make personal contact with Carol Austin. His Pharmacy was well stocked and well documented. The Administrator Breanne is away on a study course.

The Centre has developed into a wonderful place of care. The facilities provided by this cohesive team are outstanding despite the obvious underlying poverty. The development of Medical care is greatly enhanced by the continuous support of a German Female donor who visits regularly and is now in the process of setting up a Dental Department which will be served by a Local Dental Surgeon who will visit weekly. All the equipment has arrived and only needs setting up.

**Requests and comments:** Could we send some Malafan as this is given to all pregnant patients?

They have few staff but all are highly qualified and it is evident that not only are they putting into practice their mission statement but they also have the courage to make their vision a reality. The recent consignment arrived with the exception of IPC 4864B AND 4864C. They will let Carol know if they do trace them.

We were driven to Abira by Sister Josephine.

## St. Joseph's Maternity Clinic, Abira.

We were greeted by Sr. Julia a young Indian Sister (of the Handmaids of Our Lady of India) who is a laboratory technician still in training and Sister Reshni.

In the laboratory, basic tests are carried out e.g. Malaria, haemoglobin, cholesterol, fasting blood sugar, sickle cell, and Grouping and VDR plus basic urine testing and pregnancy testing.

This was an unusual but very worthwhile visit community wise. We were dealing with a group of women in the throes of post traumatic stress due to a recent fatal road accident in which three sisters were killed instantaneously. One of whom we knew from Kordiabe The fourth sister was badly damaged physically and is now recovering and is determined to return to Ghana in the not too distant future.



The New Wing Abira.

They are presently awaiting the completion of their new maternity building and experiencing difficulty in communicating clearly with the contractors who unfortunately seem to be taking an unfair advantage of them as foreigners. This new unit will be run by Sr Jaga who is a Nurse Midwife and the existing clinic will be used as an extended OPD clinic.

Sr. Deepthi is the local superior of the community who expressed sincere gratitude for the help given by Inter Care and for the standard of the drugs sent. Sr. Deepthi and Sr. Julia with their driver drove us back to the Archbishops Residence residence.

**Requests and comments:** They have great need of a working Microscope. We advised the superior to inform Carol when the new wing is opened as their needs will change.

## Friday 22nd February

### Akomfo Anokye Diabetes Centre

We were collected by the Hospital Chaplain and taken to the Administrator in charge of the National Insurance Programme who welcomed us warmly. Dr Kofl Boateng collected us and took us to meet the current staff of the Diabetes Centre - a very committed team. This unit established by Sr. Pat in 1992 has grown beyond all recognition and continues to do so. This Clinic is more than grateful for the continued support of Inter Care and is loud in its appreciation of same. We only need to continue sending Insulin syringes which are not provided by the Government and are expensive.

This whole Hospital has grown so much and is serving a vast number of patients; it has received great sponsorship from the USA and also the National Insurance Programme.

In the evening we attended a lecture given by Archbishop Sarpong at the Spiritan's College. This was well attended and a most absorbing lecture on civilisation versus modernity. We were given supper by the Community there. It was a most informative and enjoyable experience. Again an indication of how the Archbishop made sure we benefited as much as possible by our Ghana visit.

## February 23rd and 24th

During the weekend we went on visits to Funerals, Parish Masses and meals with the local people and to the craft village.

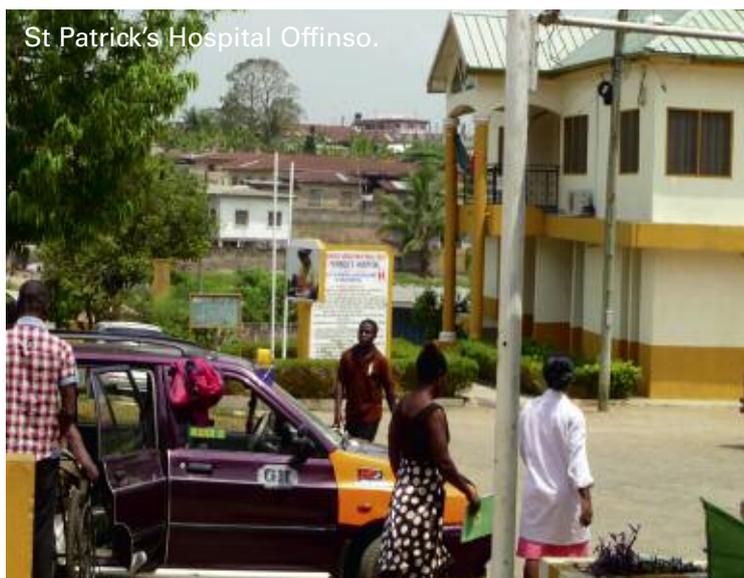
## Monday 25th February

### St. Patricks Hospital, Offinso

We were collected at 8.30 by Mr Amoetang Kwame the Hospital Administrator. We were warmly welcomed and assured of how good the Inter Care drugs were and how very much they were appreciated. We were joined by Mrs Stella Owusu the Chief Pharmacist who knows us well. She took us round the busy Hospital which has grown so much since our last visit. We visited the Pharmacy and were introduced to her team including a Trainee Pharmacist. His training is being funded by the Hospital and in return he has to give 5 years back to the Hospital which assures continuity.



Mrs Stella Owusu Chief Pharmacist with Sister Pat.



St Patrick's Hospital Offinso.

The Hospital is developing to such an extent that the need for Kiosk type pharmacies placed strategically around the Hospital has become necessary. There is already one in the old eye unit and this will be replicated in the new Eye Unit and in Outpatients. There also will be a special clinic for TB, HIV and Diabetes Clinics in the near future. There are buildings for a new labour ward and surgical section in progress. Also plans for a new Dental Clinic and Physiotherapy Department. Old buildings are being renovated to fulfil many of these plans.

**Comments and Requests:** Mrs Owusu asks we do not send Clexane but rather Heparin 5000 units which is needed as soon as possible please. This is because of the great number of surgical operations being undertaken. Also if we hear of any pallets they would appreciate it!

A very well planned busy hospital with great hopes for the needs of the people both local and distant that rely on St Patricks. A wonderful visit. The Staff treated us to lunch and then the Administrator kindly drove us back to Kumasi.

In the evening we were given supper by Father Mike Taggart at the Centre for Spiritual Renewal. For the last 3 nights we slept at the Centre whilst continuing to eat at the Archbishop's house. This was to make bedroom space for the numerous guests from Nigeria etc who were in Kumasi for his 80th Birthday.

## Tuesday February 26th

This was a busy and unusual day - the Archbishop's birthday. The outside had been decorated with ribbons and balloons. Loud music played for the entire morning and later. Breakfast was very festive with numerous visitors who were all fed. Everyone dressed up for the occasion! The Prison Chaplain who came to take us to the Kumasi Prisons had to eat before he could leave with us!

## Kumasi Prison

Father Martin Padi, the Prison Chaplain and the Archbishop had arranged a meeting at the Prison with all the representatives of the Prisons we supply instead of actually visiting the Prisons this time.

Present to welcome us at the Kumasi Prison were Emmanuel Adzator the Deputy Director of Prisons.

Raphael Tuelepe, the Chief Superintendant of Prisons with his deputy Owusu Archaw Frank both from Nkuanta Prison.

Emmanuel made us very welcome and praised the work of Inter Care and stressed their continued need for our help. The reason for this meeting was to work out the best way for the medicines to be delivered with reduced cost to the prisons. The duty expected was heavy at Accra and given the nature of their care of the Prisons there was no way they could recoup any of the cost as other health centres can. The suggestion is that all medicines would be sent to the Director General of Prisons Headquarters in Accra and labelled individually for attention of Kumasi Central Prison, Kumasi, Manhyia local Prison and Duayaw-Nkwanta Prison. In this way costs would be minimised.

It was confirmed that we would also see the Accra Prison to discuss the same method.

We then were taken back to the Archbishop's house to rejoin the festivities and have lunch.

In the evening we all attended a celebratory Mass at the Cathedral which was packed to overflowing. The Mass was rich in Ashante culture and the choir was outstanding. Eventually around 9pm we proceeded to the Parish Rooms for a supper to complete the celebrations. This too was very well attended.

## Wednesday February 27th

### The Madonna Clinic

We were collected at 8.30am by Sister Freda Agle. Sister has very few staff to work at the clinic and a number of outside responsibilities. She has recently come into post and so has not had a chance to plan any developments for the Madonna Clinic. Sister Annette is away studying. There is not a great deal of change since the last visit in 2010. The delivery rate is still around 10-12 babies per month and have the Welfare Clinic for babies still each month. The number of patients attending was 400 OPD per month, but is less at present because the Centre is not yet registered with the National Insurance Scheme. Application for this is in hand.

We visited the Inter Care Laboratory. Basic tests for Malaria, Anaemia, and Urinalysis are carried out.

Guidance was given by Sr. Bernadette re proposals for funding. Buildings are inadequate for work with Widows and Orphans. The plan is to start cottage industries to generate funding.

We were warmly thanked for the Inter Care drugs and mention was made about the value of the drugs as they are known to be both authentic and up to date. There were no special requests. The recent consignment arrived safely and intact.

Sister Freda drove us back to Kumasi

The evening was spent taking the Archbishop out for a Chinese meal locally to try and thank him for all his kindness and generosity. It was a very enjoyable evening which included his Cousin Agnes visiting from Essex, Sister Grace who takes care of Archbishop and his driver Yaw Danso.



## Thursday February 28th

This was departure day and we left Kumasi around 9.30 with Yaw for the car journey to Kordiabe in Accra. This was quite a lengthy journey but the roads were not too bad....

We arrived around 2.45pm.

### St Andrews Clinic, Kordiabe

We were made very welcome by Sisters Lucy and Grace and immediately taken over to their Convent (The Holy Child Sisters same as St Joseph's Abira) where we given a beautiful lunch. These Sisters too were still grieving for their lost sisters in the car crash mentioned in the Albira report. The Sister in Charge on our last visit – Sister Dhannya was one of the fatalities.

After lunch we returned to St Andrews Clinic where we were introduced to Donatus Adalety Director of Health for Diocese of Accra who was visiting.



Sisters Lucy and Grace (also Deputy Matron at Jacobu).

Sister Lucy who is a practising Pharmacist is running the Clinic at the moment. The Clinic is going well despite Administrative problems caused by the accident. The issue being, that nurse training in India is not accepted in Ghana so replacement personnel are not easy to find quickly. The paper work re Sr. Rhannya is not yet completed re her position as Sister in Charge at St Andrews. This is all being addressed. However for the time being, it means there are less Sisters available than before for St Andrews. Sister Lucy has recently taken over but their Superior Sr. Deepya is the caretaker at present. The Service continues to be given to the patients and the determination of the Sisters is evident. Their guardian is Father Andrew Campbell, a Devine Word Father, after whom the Clinic is named, has been instrumental and the driving force behind the magnificent new Maternity Wing equipped with the latest beds and equipment as is typical of the Devine Word Fathers. This new Wing is run by a local Midwife and will offer a much needed resource to the area.



The new Maternity wing Ante natal ward.  
 St Andrew's Clinic.

**Comments and requests:** Sister Lucy has carefully completed the drug and information forms. The last consignment arrived safely and intact. We were warmly assured of the value of Inter Care's help and the authenticity of drugs which in today's climate is so important. They asked if we could send more! Also they asked for extra vitamins. They are celebrating their 10th year anniversary as a clinic on July 3rd and would appreciate if we could add little toys and clothes etc etc in the next parcels to give to the children to make the day special for the local people. We felt despite logistical and administrative difficulties all will be well at Kordiabe.

We were then driven by Yaw to the Pink Panther Hotel in Accra for the night as Archbishop Sarong's guests.

## Friday March 1st

We were driven to the Accra Prison by Mary the Archbishop's adopted daughter. On arrival it was evident we were not expected but eventually seen by a representative of the Director of Prisons in Accra. We confirmed the new arrangements re the sending of the Inter Care parcels. Gratitude was expressed for the Inter Drugs and their quality.

We were then taken to Mary's home and given both lunch and supper. She then drove us to the Airport for our flight back to the UK.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Archbishop Sarpong, his family and staff. We were taken care of from arrival to departure. The visit was greatly facilitated by the Archbishop who not only arranged our timetable but the transportation as well. This together with his generosity to us as his guests kept us safe and well and costs were minimal. The welcome we were given at each clinic was warm and gave us the opportunity to update our records but importantly to foster our personal friendship with each one whilst meeting new contacts as well. Ghana has grown and the fabric of the country is stronger each time we visit. The warm welcome remains unchanged!

### **The present contributions for the National Insurance Scheme:**

If unemployed is 15 Ghana Cedis per annum

If employed is 2.5% of income.

This scheme is working reasonably well. In some places very well and others not. The delay in repayment is felt strongly by the smaller clinics that have fewer resources. Others like Offinso and Komfo Anoyke are thriving. However the general health of the people has greatly improved and patients come directly to the professionals more speedily. Although the lesser cost of the local healers and other unreliable schemes do still attract patients. We had one Sister approach us for help but owing to the timing we simply gave her Carol Austin's contact details explaining the system and our present waiting list.



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