



# Happy New Year from Friends of Nixon!

Happy new year from the 'Friends of Nixon'. We hope you enjoy our newsletter outlining events from our first year as a registered charity.

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## Sierra Leone Association of Nurse Anaesthetist (SLANA) Refreshers Course

In May 2012 the charity funded the hospital's two anaesthetic nurses (Sarrah Kamara and Senesie K. Momoh) to attend a refresher workshop in Freetown on anaesthesia and pulse oximetry (the measurement of a patient's oxygen level). The course also covered pain management together with issues pertinent to obstetrics and paediatrics. At the end of the workshop, a pulse oximeter was donated to the two participants. On their return to Nixon Hospital the two staff members shared their training and experience with colleagues and the theatre is making valuable use of the pulse oximeter.

SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF NURSE ANAESTHETISTS (SLANA) REFRESHERS COURSE UP-DATE IN ANAESTHESIA 1ST AND 2ND MAY, 2012.

IN A WELL ATTENDED WORKSHOP FOR NURSE ANAESTHETIST, (SARRAH KAMARA AND SENESIE K. MOMOH), FROM NIXON MEMORIAL METHODIST HOSPITAL THEATRE PARTICIPATED ON THE 1ST AND 2ND, MAY, 2012. THE WORKSHOP WAS CONDUCTED IN THE BRITISH COUNCIL HALL, TOWER HILL FREETOWN ON THE ABOVE DATES.

THE WORKSHOP COVERED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- INTRODUCTION TO THE PULSE OXIMETER, ITS USE AND IMPORTANCE.
- PAEDIATRIC ANAESTHESIA
- OBSTETRIC ANAESTHESIA
- CRITICAL CARE
- PAIN MANAGEMENT.

AT THE END OF THE OF THE WORKSHOP, A COMPLETE SET OF PULSE OXIMETER WAS PRESENTED TO THE TWO PARTICIPANTS ON BEHALF OF THE HOSPITAL WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE. THE TWO PARTICIPANTS WERE ALSO AWARDED CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION ON THE TOPICS ABOVE.

OUR COLLEAGUES FROM THE THEATRE AND WARDS HAVE BEEN TAUGHT THE USE OF THE DEVICE AS WAS THE KNOWLEDGE IMPARTED TO US IN THE TRAINING WORKSHOP. THE THEATRE IS MAKING VERY GOOD USE OF IT.

WE ARE VERY MUCH THANKFUL TO FRIENDS OF NIXON FOR THE OFFER OF THE DEVICE AND THE INCENTIVE PROVIDED FOR TRANSPORT AND OTHER FACILITIES TO THE WORKSHOP.

SARRAH KAMARA

SENESIE K. MOMOH

Dr. M. J. HISSA  
Director of Theatre

Copy of the report produced by the attendees at the anaesthetic refresher course

## Annual General Meeting

The inaugural AGM of the 'Friends of Nixon' was held at the Notting Hill Methodist Church on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012. Hosted by chairman Reverend Colin Rowe and well attended by members who had travelled considerable distances to join us, it provided an opportunity for a formal presentation of the charity's financial accounts by treasurer Robert Dixon and the annual report to the charity commission by Rev. Rowe. The report highlighted both the progress and difficulties faced by the charity in its efforts to support the hospital and improve the health of the people of Njalaahun chiefdom. The meeting also gave space for a lively informal discussion on the complexities facing the hospital and potential future developments. The impact of the government's free healthcare policy for pregnant women and children upon patient numbers at the hospital was discussed, as were hopes for successful integration of the scheme with faith based institutions including Nixon. Many members voiced the importance of ongoing working partnerships with the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone as well as interaction with local partners in the Segbwema area (including Christian Aid, CHASL and VSO) but it was established that the long term future of the hospital is dependent on community engagement and local ownership. The day to day practicalities of running a hospital in a setting without consistent water supplies, electricity and key drugs were debated as was the importance of understanding the magnitude of what is required to provide comprehensive community healthcare. Priorities for the future were highlighted to include training and education, medical leadership, community health, community engagement and integration.

*Thank you to all those who attended and provided their insight, expertise and questions.*



## Text Books from TALC (Teaching Aids at Low Cost)

'Friends of Nixon' facilitated the donation of 2 boxes of textbooks from the St Albans based charity 'Teaching Aids at Low Cost' which arrived at the hospital in August. The presentation was made in the Chapel by Hon. Robby Fallay in the presence of the students and has helped in updating the resources available for the nursing school.

## UK Visit by Reverend Temple

During his visit to the UK to attend the British Methodist Conference, Rev. Arnold Temple, President of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone (MCSL) attended a meeting with the "Friends of Nixon" trustees at Notting Hill Methodist Church. He was joined by the former MCSL president Rev. Francis Nabieu who is now ministering with the Methodist Church in York.

The meeting clarified the role the charity could play in the development of Nixon Memorial Hospital and refined the process by which funding would take place. It also consolidated the working basis of the partnership between the trustees, the Nixon Memorial Hospital Board and the Methodist Conference in Sierra Leone.



## Trustee's visits to Nixon in 2012

In 2012, two of our trustees, William Hobson and Elizabeth Conteh, independently funded visits to the hospital to help assess and support the charity's ambitions for assisting the hospital in meeting the health needs of its community.

Elizabeth Conteh undertook a programme of voluntary teaching of final year students and ward staff from 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May 2012. Whilst able to provide the students with valuable training from her 36 year experience in nursing, midwifery and public health, she was also able to assess the need for teaching equipment. She recalls that "during the three days teaching, I discovered that the only teaching aid available was a black board and chalk! This posed a lot of constraints for me and the students and with a class of over 100 students made it difficult for students to capture the lecture." She also noted there was no photocopying or facilities to prepare handouts or other teaching aids to facilitate easy learning. Following her visit she has prepared a list of teaching aids required from flip charts to anatomical models and models for basic resuscitation.

"Friends of Nixon" is keen to assist in providing such materials to ensure that the nursing school which provides the State Enrolled Community Health Nurse programme can improve the educational experience for its students and ensure quality academic and vocational development.



Students at Nixon's nursing school having some extra tuition.

William Hobson's visit centered not only on the hospital itself but also encompassed an extensive schedule of visits to 10 surrounding villages with Thomas Momoh of the Nixon Hospital. He undertook invaluable work engaging with local communities to establish the current situation regarding the existence and activity of local health committees, predominant medical complaints, together with progress and planning of latrines and availability of water supplies.

William's visit will assist and contribute to the hospital's "Community Health Sanitation Project" which focuses on latrines and water. This community health project work was initiated by Dr John Cochrane several years ago and the charity is keen to take forward this aspect of the hospital's work. The charity have received a grant for £2000 which is in the process of being transferred to support latrine building in these villages.

***1 in 5 children in Sierra Leone still die before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and average life expectancy remains at 48 and 49 years for men and women respectively. Investment in education, community health and basic water & sanitation infrastructure can help impact upon this global inequality.***

# Plans for 2013

With considerable efforts in 2012 focused on ensuring our processes and systems are in place, the charity is keen to push forward in 2013 with support already planned for the following projects:

- Funding distance learning on hospital management for an hospital staff member
- Part funding transport costs of a donation of basic hospital equipment including cots and mattresses as well as functional materials including lights to help equip the newly refurbished theatre
- Continuing support for the latrine and community health projects
- Provision of teaching aids and equipment for the nursing school
- Facilitation of training for staff at the nursing school
- Facilitation of healthcare professionals from the UK to train students and staff at Nixon

## Reunion ?

Following a successful reunion of the friends of Methodist Church in Sierra Leone in September 2011, the Rev. Richard Jackson would be very keen to arrange a repeat reunion for members of the 'Friends of Nixon' and those supporting the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone in 2013, if there is sufficient interest. It could be held at Cliff College in Derbyshire. If you are interested or would be keen to attend please send a message either to Rev. Richard or Dr Mary (Groves) Rowe ([m.c.rowegrov1@virginmedia.com](mailto:m.c.rowegrov1@virginmedia.com)).

### Progress with Practicalities and Bank Account

One of the core principles of the charity is that any donations received could be used to fund projects and initiatives in the hospital, nursing school or in community health with absolute accountability and transparency. To this end we are pleased that through negotiation with the MCLS and work by our trustees including Sarjo Kamara, the Friends of Nixon have established its own bank account in Sierra Leone at the commercial bank in Kenema with 3 local signatories. This development, together with processes laid out by the charity, will enable monies to be transferred in tranches directly from the UK charity to agreed projects at Nixon in a secure and timely manner.

## Thank you for your ongoing support!

**"Friends of Nixon"**  
**Notting Hill Methodist Church**  
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**Donations** "For the attention of R. Dixon"

**Information** "For the attention of Dr. M. Groves"