

Graham & Jenny

January 6, 2010

Earthquake

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — admin @ 9:59 pm

After the Christmas & New Year holiday we expected life at Helena Goldie to resume its normal pace with a steady flow of patients requiring medical attention. Instead we found ourselves evacuating the hospital after the first tremor struck us during the morning ward round. We had tremors during the morning – the largest measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale & producing a wave 105metres high at Rendova Island. The decision was made by the senior staff on the recommendation of the National Disaster Organisation, to move patients inland to the church, and then on to the nearby school overnight. The truck was used to transfer those unable to walk (we do not have an ambulance), so Graham & Eddy were busy moving patients & equipment, highlighting the need for an emergency transport vehicle & a store of medical equipment well away from the sea (leg splints dressings & minor surgical instruments). Jenny continued to see the trickle of patients remaining in the out-patient department. Most people became worried and were keen to “go to bush” for safety, so the hospital acquired an air of peace & quiet. It was interesting to see the look of horror on the face of people as they remembered the devastating “tsunami” of 2nd April 2007, which also occurred at the time of the morning ward round. Fortunately in Munda we did not experience a “tsunami” (Japanese for a wave in the harbour) but houses were damaged & destroyed in other places not far away: no casualties have been reported as yet, other than 2 overseas visitors who had minor injuries. We continued to experience several more shocks with rattling of doors & furniture; it is a bit like being on a ship, especially as we look out from our veranda & see the ocean quite close! We are now returning to normal after taking the opportunity to have a major clean-up of the wards before the patients return. Spraying by the malaria team completes the job & it is wonderful to be free of ants & cockroaches for a while.

January 1, 2010

New Year

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — admin @ 9:53 pm

It is hard to believe that this time last year we were saying goodbye to staff & patients at Fieldhead Surgery after many years and preparing for our preliminary visit before going to college in Birmingham. It is also hard to believe that in the U.K. you are battling against the cold & snow as we seek relief from the heat, humidity & hot sun. We have enjoyed a more relaxed pace over the holiday period: last night we joined the feast & early evening celebration at the Assembly of God Church before returning to see in the new year at the hospital with another service in the open air at the hospital. This was followed by buns, biscuits & tea.

This morning we have woken to no electric (not uncommon) and we usually resort to the generator.

Unfortunately electricity is very expensive here, the 2nd largest expense after staff wages. We are not allowed to generate our own except in an emergency, but we plan to investigate the possibility of solar energy if we can get permission. Hopefully there will be some sympathy with this plan after the Copenhagen convention where the threat to some of the Pacific islands was highlighted. We will then need to attract some funding to help with set-up costs. This is one of the projects in our minds.

December 26, 2009

Christmas

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — Tags: [Add new tag](#) — admin @ 11:29 am

A very different Christmas for us this year. There was a general air of excitement as streamers & balloons were put up around the hospital 2 days before Christmas and things became quieter on Christmas Eve as most patients were discharged. However the arrival of 2 men with ammonia inhalation changed that (a pipe burst on their fishing vessel). General ward had also chosen to have their Christmas party in the evening, clashing with the carol service at the Assembly of God church; Sally our theatre nurse had asked us to share some carols!

Christmas morning was beautiful with a service outside between the wards at 7-30 am followed by breakfast.

Fortunately our 2 new patients had improved, allowing us to have a peaceful afternoon and a swim before enjoying our Christmas dinner of fish, salad & bread, followed by banana cake & custard on the veranda. As we watched the sun set over the sea we thought how nice it was to celebrate the birth of Christ without all the commercialism that is normally attached to it. We missed our family, not managing to speak to any of them & thinking especially of Katherine also away from home in New Zealand & working a long shift in paediatrics on Christmas day. We were glad that the rest of the family were able to be together, weather permitting.

December 18, 2009

Touring Rendova

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — admin @ 9:58 pm

With Christmas rapidly approaching the hospital is quiet, but as Dr. Dina left for a month in India & Jenny went on tour, Dr. Zoti & Graham were kept busy. Graham is now acting medical superintendent. Jenny really enjoyed her second tour, this time to Rendova, the volcanic island we see from our house with tree clad mountains rising to 1,000 metres from black sandy shores. We arrived on Monday in time to do a clinic in one village & enjoy a meal prepared for us before returning to sleep in an unmanned clinic in another. As it has no running water, we enjoyed a wash in the sea in the dark before sitting under the star-lit sky chatting with Effy – local Solomon Island lady married to an American who told us about the revival in 1958. After sleeping on the floor, we were up at dawn & patients began to arrive at 7-30 am. From there we moved by canoe to visit small communities dotted around the coast. Choppy seas made for an exciting ride onto our next overnight stop. Another busy clinic put us behind schedule, so our 3rd. night was spent unexpectedly on the school floor, leaving us one final village the following morning. We can now understand why patients present so late with injuries or illness having appreciated first hand the problems with transportation. The people live & work from their “gardens” & the sea, having very limited access to money for fuel needed for transport by our board motors: it is a long journey to

paddle! We saw our first presentation of Kwashiorkor – protein malnutrition here. Sadly we were told that this was due to custom tradition of feeding only dried/baked food to a sick & malnourished child. She had a swollen, swelling of both feet & change in skin /hair colour. Best wishes for Christmas & the New Year

December 14, 2009

Children's Convention

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — admin @ 10:54 am

This week has been the National Children's Conference of the United Church here with 1,000 children gathered from parts of the Solomon Islands.

They have slept on the floors of the school & church hall or under canvas giving the place a festival atmosphere.

The sound of 1,000 children's voices lifted in praise to God was quite an experience; the theme was "God's children live to testify".

A number of people are leaving their posts in the Church at this time including Jim the education officer. We enjoyed a meal with Jin & his family together with the Moderator & his wife at No.22, before thier departure to another island.

The hospital is quietening down a bit as people go away to their families for Christmas.

Graham has enjoyed using his schoolboy French this week with a French lady who became ill on their yacht.

They are sailing back to France from New Caledonia over the next few months. Small bites or injured soon turn to severe infections in this climate & need intensive treatment.

[Comments \(1\)](#)

December 10, 2009

Salvation through Christ's Birth

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — admin @ 12:21 pm

Salvation through Christ's Birth is the theme for our morning devotions in December. Christmas gets off to an early start here because the schools close for the long holiday in the first week of December. Adults take their holiday and return to their home islands for Christmas. The Children's Ministry finished last week whilst Katherine was still with us, so she was also treated to their party with singing, exchange of presents, feasting + dancing, all done amidst great jocularly, the high light being a dance from our usually quiet hospital secretary, Eddie in a grass skirt. The women took the final evening fellowship for the year + Jenny was asked to preach. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for" was the text as we think of Jesus arriving in our world as a baby, but look forward to his return. Tomorrow is a public holiday in the Solomon Islands + the Outpatient department is holding their Christmas party to which we are invited.

Our dug-out canoe arrived yesterday just in time for Graham's birthday, so we enjoyed an overnight camping trip to the nearby island. We enjoyed the company of Joyce + children from next door yesterday. They left us at dusk to enjoy the moonlit sky. We slept early to avoid the mosquitoes but got up for the sunrise + enjoyed a relaxing morning, swimming + reading before returning. It was good to have a complete break as the work remains busy + challenging, but we feel we have made a lot of progress since our arrival.