

INTERPLAST UK

3 Barnard Wynd, Peterlee, Co. Durham SR8 1LT
0191 5870275 www.interplastuk.org

Registered Charity No 328688

MISSION TO KUMI HOSPITAL, UGANDA OCTOBER 2015

We arrived at Entebbe airport at around 10 o'clock on the evening of Saturday 17th October and were more than happy to rest up in the comfortable accommodation at Mildmay health and research facility in Kampala. We spent Sunday travelling to Kumi.

Some of the team had been with Interplast UK before and were familiar with Kumi, but for some it was their first mission. The team consisted of:



Charles Viva, Peder Ikander, Georgios Pafitanis, Sinead Morgan and Emma Docherty (surgery),

Jonathan Aron and Usman Ali (anaesthesia)

Mehvish Riaz, Ivy Boardman, Meryl Green, Sue Maher and Jannick Deom (GP and nursing)

Lynn Fletcher, Ray Riaz and Ali Azzam (support)

Operations began the very next day! The experienced members of the team swung into action in the outpatients' clinic, theatre and ward, working alongside local staff. The new members were helped to find their feet and before long everyone was busy.

75 operations were completed over 11 days:

- The youngest patient was aged 3 weeks and the oldest 80 years.
- 34 patients were over 18 years old, 41 were under 18 and, of these, 25 were under 5.
- Conditions operated upon included cleft lip or cleft lip and palate (14), burn contractures (11) and keloid scars (15).



Parents and grandmothers brought and looked after their children, adult patients were carefully tended by relatives – the importance of a caring family cannot be overestimated when a hospital ward does not have laundry, meals or washing facilities. Few patients spoke English and hospital staff helped a lot with communication – but lots of big smiles were exchanged, which know no communication barrier!



Patients and staff really appreciated the gifts we brought, donated by our supporters back home. Craft items to help children pass the time, toiletries to help staff feel fresh in the humid heat – these are gifts that say “we care about you”. This young girl had not seen a jigsaw puzzle before but soon got the idea – and before long her whole family were enjoying it!

The team worked hard, sometimes not leaving the hospital until 7 in the evening, but there was time off for fun. A couple of early finishes allowed time for a game of football, a visit to Kumi town to shop - and to practice the rendition of “Bohemian Rhapsody” to a somewhat bemused group of guests at our farewell dinner!

Sunday was a day of rest from operating. Some of the team opted for a rather strenuous but wonderful day out at the Sipi Falls. Others went out with Elspeth Robinson (Kumi Community Fund – outreach for children with disabilities) to visit two villages, a dressmaking workshop and a children’s shelter. The Amecet “shelter of peace” is a new contact for us, made when the director, Els van Teijlingen, brought one of the children for an operation. Els was glad to receive from us a huge suitcase full of baby clothes and toiletries – especially as she had taken in 4 new born babies whose mothers had died in childbirth just the day before.

The team made two visits to the morning worship at the hospital. One was a traditional service with a strong and encouraging message that there is “a time for everything” and to appreciate each season in life. The other included the wonderfully exuberant singing and dancing of the hospital worship group – a real treat.

All too soon our work was done and we were heading home. One treat awaited us – a visit to the source of the Nile at Jinja, and one hold-up – a night in Brussels when Heathrow was closed by fog. However, nothing could take from us the joy of knowing that we had changed lives for the better and we all agreed that we had made new friends, learnt new skills and had an amazing experience that we would never forget.

Thank you, supporters of Interplast UK, for enabling this mission to take place.

Lynn Fletcher, Secretary

This young lady will be able to walk more easily after the release of burn contractures on both feet.



Effective reduction of a keloid scar



Effective repairs of cleft lips in young and older patients

