Leicester-Gondar Link and HALE Administrator

My name is Kathy and I took over the role as Leicester-Gondar Link & Hale Administrator end August 2016.

I thoroughly enjoy having the opportunity to manage the administration of this worthwhile charity and supporting the Leicester-Gondar Link and HALE members in their varied requirements.

At home I enjoying spending time with my husband walking our two dogs.

Our son is now back home after 2 years travelling in Australia and our daughter is currently 6 months into her adventure over there.

Written by: Kathy Astbury

Visits to Gondar

Laurence Wicks—5th–21st November 2016
Nick Brown—8th November 2016—25th April 2017
Sandra Kemp—21st January—4th February 2017
Christine Iliffe—21st January—4th February 2017
Sandra Kemp—21st February—9th March 2017
Orthopaedic Team—10th—17th March 2017
Heather Dipple—25th April—5th May 2017
Clay Frake—25th April—5th May 2017
Orthopaedic Team—Autumn 2017—TBC

Find Out More

Please keep checking our website at www.le.ac.uk/gondar for updates on all of our projects. You can also discover the fun ways were are fundraising for our work and get involved.
Life in Gondar & Bio-Medical Engineering Development

The Gondar scene — Although the Gondar area has witnessed its share of ‘ups and downs’ over the past year or so, all now seems to be at peace. On arrival late last year to a town that had been, a short while before in the international press, it had by then lost any signs that there had been any disturbance, except for one lonely reminder to the main disturbance mid-year — that of a truly ‘gutted’ Salem bus - left in the place where it had been well and truly felled.

The people themselves too have seemingly been carrying on life to the full and thus ‘business as usual’. This has been confirmed not only with the passing of a successful Timkat, but also with the passing of at least three very successful football matches here recently. These all took place in the stadium here with crowds of literally thousands to greet visiting national teams from as far away as Addis Ababa.

The local team is called Fasil Kami-nar, wearing the colours of red and white - colours which allow me to sport my Father Christmas hat and thus blend in superbly with the best of the supporters when they win - Leicester City eat your heart out this year.

On the hospital campus — Thanks to the obvious enthusiasm and motivation of Dr. Annisa, the CEO of one-year standing, and Dr. Meseret, the Clinical Director, there are plenty of signs of their achievements. From the non-clinical aspect, daily construction work goes on apace. The first being the laying of Gondar cobblestones upon the previously unsurfaced road connecting the upper side of the hospital campus with the new Referral OPD and the other new hospital areas on the lower side.

It is also very pleasing to see that one of the two unfinished hospitals - soon to contain the Department of Paediatrics - is now once again under construction with signs of internal rooms now being fitted out as well.

Although the new Department of Surgery is still lying dormant, the adjoining new construction for Maternity is well underway. The recent upward expansion with an additional floor, of the new Oncology Department building nearby is taking place. Concrete too is flowing daily into the two ‘bunkers’ that will house the new Linear Accelerators.

Thanks also to Dr Annisa’s determined efforts since his arrival as CEO, the hospital has been promised continuous electrical power which, when it does go ahead, will have a tremendous impact in reducing the number of equipment ‘casualties’ in the clinical arena alone, This will have been well worth the combined effort of all involved in securing this longed-for change.

On the clinical front, Dr Meseret, having responsibility for clinical projects and issues has given full support to the Link in our patient safety programme this year, and for this we have been very grateful.

The Biomedical Project - On arrival here in November, it was clear that manpower remains a key issue for us and one that the hospital is still doing its best to address. In the mean time, a well qualified engineer from Gondar - who currently has been given the Head position in the University’s new Biomedical Engineering Department - has just been given the authority by Dr Annisa to lead our department, as well as continue to run that of the University. The two departments working together will have great potential to achieve much in the future, both in teaching and in the very necessary area of maintenance.
The Link wishes to congratulate Gondar University on having recently received approval to run their very own Bachelor Degree course in Biomedical Engineering. Students from the initial batch are now well into their preliminary studies. Running this course in Gondar is being viewed here as leading Gondar to be a future “Centre of Excellence” in Hospital Engineering.

At present, my tour of duty, has again ensured that the Link’s contribution to GUH is one that encompasses all areas that require specialized knowledge that otherwise is not readily available. On the work-front, in addition to this, we have taken on all the equipment in the new Referral Hospital and the new Dialysis Unit.

The real challenges met during this visit have included additional work in the new hospital encompassing the following technical areas: sharing expertise with the electricians on issues they have faced around the installations of both a high capacity power transformer and emergency generators; reviving the Laboratory’s air-conditioning system; repair of their water-storage plant gear; attempting to resolve on-going issues with the CSSD autoclaves; numerous power and switch-gear issues including an initial exposure to dealing with issues around the lift mechanics and, lastly, setting up an effective, albeit interim, mini-PACS system for Radiology image-reporting - images from their new digital X-Ray and ultrasound units, plus their CT scanners.

Although the MRI project has encountered a delay, it looks now as if work will shortly be resumed on construction in the suite and, if all goes well, we could see the beginning of the scanner’s installation sometime later this year.

A Korean contingent came again to evaluate our Biomedical Department’s needs here. We wait to hear of their findings and any proposed future ‘plan of action’ they may carry out on our behalf. Meanwhile, following the recently agreed allocation of space for our new biomedical workshop in the new Paediatric Hospital building, the Korean team have now agreed to begin the fitting-out of the interior, along with providing basic essential tools and test-equipment - a project they have been generously offering to a handful of major Ministry of Health / University Hospital Biomedical Engineering Departments in Ethiopia.

An unexpected call from one of the out-lying hospitals higher up in the Simien Mountains, in the small town of Debark, presented a technical challenge when they requested assistance to repair an old X-Ray unit that had been out of action for nearly a year. It had already been “worked on”, with a view to being repaired, by two independent Ethiopian technicians during this time but without success. ‘Leicester-Link’ quietly paid a visit and they are now back-on-track continuing to serve the region’s mountain-community there.

Finally, in July the workshop will be receiving the three trained technicians who will have graduated from the technical training school in Debre Marcos. All in all, by mid-year we should have the first signs of an active department, albeit still very small. We hope they will be enthusiastic in tackling the lower-level of repairs that will await them. Even with this welcome change, we still have a long way to go.

And now to round off this tour of duty in Gondar - a surprise for one who has been away from Leicester living under a State of Emergency for a while. There can be little to beat the surprise of being offered a generous piece of chocolate birthday cake, bought only from that icon of the British High Street, Marks and Spencer. How often it is the little things that can mean the most.

Written by Nick Brown
Collaborative Patient Safety—Infection Prevention and Control and Occupational Health & Safety

Our Patient Safety Project has been running for 15 months now and finished at the end of March 2017. The Gondar team has been led by Amsalu Mihiretu and Yalelet Fentaw, who are helped by Avier Mesfin, Hygiene and Sanitation Officer, and Addisu Alemu, Audit Officer. Joining that team are Yordanos Markos, the new Infection Prevention and Control Nurse, Aklilu Takel, Hygiene and Sanitation Officer for the Referral Hospital. Amsalu is now the Quality Officer and Yalelet is the Gondar University Hospital Nutritionist.

We have had many challenges throughout the project but have always worked well together as a team. There have been exchange visits to both countries and the skills of the Gondar team have been improved immensely thanks to the training support they received at University Hospitals of Leicester and the University of Leicester. We have trained 500 members of staff in Infection Prevention and Control & Occupational Health and Safety. We have improved Hand Hygiene from around 40% compliance to over 70% compliance. To support and maintain this we have appointed 50 Hand Hygiene Champions who work in all clinical areas of Gondar University Hospital. We have given Hepatitis B Vaccine to many staff and reduced sharps injuries by 50% by giving training and providing safety boxes close to the patient.

Our biggest challenge came when a State of Emergency was declared by the Ethiopian Government and no visits could be made to the country. Due to troubles in Gondar the hospital admissions increased and travel around Gondar was restricted. As this improved visits started again in January 2017 followed by the final project visit in late February 2017. In March 2017 we all made a visit to the Ministry of Health, in Addis Ababa, to make them aware of our successes and whilst there we made visits to the Black Lion Hospital, St Pauls Hospital and the Fistula Hospital as part of the team’s training and exposure to good practice. We were accompanied on these visits by Dr Meseret, the Clinical Director at Gondar University Hospital, who agreed to ensure that our project would continue to improve Patient Safety there.

Written by Sandra Kemp
London Marathon 2017- Sunday April 23rd

Yes the look on my face is very fitting to just how I felt at that very moment … a feeling of pain and sheer exhaustion as I reached my furthest distance yet, 17.1 miles to be exact!

As I stepped in my door I tried hard to choose from the following options: Cry, Fall to the floor or Cry and Fall to the floor. Thankfully the tears came followed by elation, though the elation was enjoyed an hour later after the nauseousness disappeared!! So why am I doing this exactly???

I have been working in mental health services for the past 11 years as a social worker, starting as a support worker to gain the foundation and understanding of mental ill health for my own growth and knowledge before moving into post a year and a half later. In 2014, I took the plunge and qualified as an AMHP (Approved Mental Health Professional). In this time I have seen many sides to mental ill health, both the debilitating illnesses themselves and the negative reactions from society due to a lack of knowledge; which can be the most debilitating part of living with mental ill health leading to further isolation and segregation.

Therefore, when the opportunity came up to run in the London Marathon for HALE I immediately put my name forward, having a tremendous passion and belief in the work we do; both the education and support we can provide to increase a person’s independence and belief in themselves.

Though I have to admit some of it was for my own personal reasons; having turned 40 this year I went into panic mode deciding the only way to get through it was to do some of those things I had dreamt of but never achieved or even attempted. What I did not think through was the fact I had only just reached 3 miles in my retraining following an injury a year previously, so when my name was pulled out the envelope of 5 other nominees I was both thrilled and daunted for what was to come!

And then the training and pitfalls began…..This training has been extremely intense, initially getting up at 5am to get in the miles before an 8 hour working day, which has now moved to a long run on Sunday morning due to the hours required. Running through rain, snow, icy paths and physical pain to reach this point, with continuing challenges ahead to reach the 26.2 miles on the day! I never thought I’d be training for a marathon but here is to the beginning of my 40’s!

And then the BIG DAY arrived and there I was standing in my ‘pen’ waiting to be released into the Marathon extraordinaire! With injuries from my first fall ever just the week before leaving me with swollen knees I stood there with nerves/excitement in my stomach and non-stop chatting to the young girl beside me! The run itself was truly the most challenging but exhilarating experience ever!!! The physical exhaustion was like nothing I have ever felt before and the energy from the wee banana I ate two hours prior to the run was soon gone BUT the atmosphere was overwhelmingly amazing!!!! People where along the whole stretch of the route cheering and offering words and songs of encouragement which, at the time of my hitting that wall, were soaked up to see me through. I had moments of tears due to my own emotional experience and the emotions picked up from others alongside many moments of pure delight to be part of such a unique event where I could literally feel myself smiling. This sure is a moment in my life I shall never forget……….and three days later following a quick recovery I decided to put myself in for it again

Oh My!!!!

HALE has at least 13 projects running with the University of Gondar. The Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Project are made up of 5 projects; Community Based Rehabilitation, Community Outreach Programme, Community Links, Training and Capacity Building and Rehabilitation and Occupational Day Service Programme.

All donations would be truly appreciated Google me on: Virgin Just Giving Robyne McCarthy

Arriving at the finishing line I saw my family and friends there waiting and cheering me on. The best feeling ever
Ways to Support our Work

Through the Post
You can send cheques made payable to “Health Action Leicester for Ethiopia (HALE)” to the Administrator at the address below:

Kathy Astbury
Leicester-Gondar Link & HALE Administrator
International Office
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
Tel: 0116 252 5321 - Email: gondar@le.ac.uk

By Credit/Debit Card
You can donate either as a one-off or regularly online with your debit or credit card through virgin money giving.

Scan this code with your smartphone to be taken directly to our Virgin Giving page.

Please specify with project you wish to support in the comments box, else your donation will go for general funds to aid project start-ups.

Note: Please send us a copy of the receipt with your name and address and registration number so we can match this to our bank records (you can complete the back page donation form to send your details); alternatively you can email gondar@le.ac.uk with all the details.

Donate by Bank Transfer
You can make a donation by standing order, or direct bank transfer. Details:
- Bank: CAF Bank
- Account: Health Action Leicester for Ethiopia (HALE)
- Sort Code: 40-52-40
- Account Number: 00017188

Please send details of your donation along with your name and address and which project you would like to support so we can match this to our bank records and ensure that your donation goes to the right cause.

Current projects include:
⇒ Mental Health Fund
⇒ Kola Diba Health Centre
⇒ Nursing
⇒ Children’s Ward
⇒ Patient Safety
⇒ Equipment Maintenance Support

Where possible please complete a gift aid declaration and make your donation work harder at no cost to yourself.

Please see our website: www.le.ac.uk/gondar and go to support our work, donating and you will see a highlighted link for the donations form which includes the gift aid declaration.

Other Ways to Help
Visit our website www.le.ac.uk/gondar to see details of our forthcoming events or contact gondar@le.ac.uk to suggest a new event.

Buy one of our £1 charity wristbands—you can order these from our website—complete order form and send payment and your wristbands will be sent to you.

Register with Everyclick.com to make the power of your internet searches benefit our work. You can also download the give as you shop widget.

Thousands of retailers are waiting to give to our cause at no cost to yourself as you shop online.

Please register at www.giveasyoulive.com/join/hale to make your online shopping benefit the work of our Link programme
Important Leicester-Gondar Link Contacts

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