



INTERPLAST (UK)
ANNUAL MEETING OF TRUSTEES
FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER 2012

ANNUAL REPORT

2012 has been an extremely busy year planning and preparing for two very different mission trips.

The charity hospital in Mirpur, Kashmir, have been waiting anxiously for Mr Viva to take a team to their very needy area. This was our first surgical camp here and, I understand, the first time for any foreign charity to visit. This was also apparent at the border crossing where Passports were scrutinized and telephone checks resulted in a long delay. The hospital is situated in a low lying area on the river bank which, unfortunately, appears to be a dumping ground for rubbish. However, the hospital was reasonably equipped and maintained. On our arrival we were greeted with scenes of crowded waiting areas and stairways as patients eagerly sought treatment. As expected, there were many children requiring cleft lip/palate repair. It also appeared that, whether by choice or circumstances, few children received an adequate education. The needs were great and a week was insufficient to deal with all the patients but we needed to move on to Islamabad. Professor Hassan welcomed Mr Viva and the team to the 9th International Workshop on Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. The local medical staff are always keen to learn and observe Mr Viva's surgical skills. At Benazir Bhutto Hospital there were multiple theatres facilitating surgery on several patients simultaneously. A number of patients presented with severe burn contractures needing release and skin grafts. It is not surprising that electrical burns are quite common,

especially observing the dangerously inadequate wiring and poor condition of appliances. In complete contrast to BBH, we were invited to visit a new private Burns Unit at a hospital on the perimeter of the city and the difference was astounding. It seemed immoral that some patients could be treated in luxury with sophisticated equipment whilst the poor are treated in underfunded government hospitals. Professor Hassan is to be greatly admired for choosing to work in such a government hospital serving the local community.

In October Mr Viva made a third visit to Kumi Hospital, Uganda, with another team. Earlier in the year we had been contacted by a Ugandan lady living in London enquiring about help for friends in Kampala who had suffered acid burns. We therefore collected Rhama and Ibra together with their carer on our arrival in Kampala and transported them to Kumi Hospital where Mr Viva skin grafted Ibra but, unfortunately, his wife's burns affected her eyes and no treatment was possible. Every patient needs a carer which can prove difficult as seen when Sarah (17 years old) arrived on our last day. Her hand was badly deformed due to burns and although Mr Viva was prepared to operate before leaving, she declined as she had no carer, her parents both having died. She will attend next year with a carer. Keloid scars and burns were frequently seen on this visit. St Bernadette's School at Nunthorpe kindly provided a bountiful supply of football strip for the children on the ward. They were delighted. Conditions in the hospital had improved slightly under their reliable management team. There were also a lot less power cuts but road conditions remain treacherous. Our thanks, again, go to Elspeth Robinson for her invaluable preparation and help.

As air fares are forever increasing, it was helpful for Mr Viva and I to meet with a representative of Diversity Travel through whom the Ugandan flights are booked. He was able to advise regarding group bookings etc and internal flights with MAF.

We have produced a new information pamphlet which has proved very useful, especially when speaking to groups about Interplast. Promotional sashes were also purchased for use at fundraising events etc. It is also hoped to contact the local Press to increase the profile of the charity.

Our thanks, as always, go to Mr Viva without whose vision and selfless dedication Interplast (UK) would not exist and many lives would be the poorer.