



ETHIOPIA MEDICAL PROJECT (EMP)



OCTOBER 2018- AN EXTRA VISIT

We have thought for some time that if we could spread the visits to Buccama over the year, then it might actually be more helpful to the Clinic, and it would also emphasise our continuing interest.

My sister in law, Mia, had long wanted to visit, and a diary opportunity presented itself this October. It was a great decision –we went for 10 days in mid October 2018.

The rains came in July and August, and therefore the fields were planted - it was a joy to see that the crops of wheat and teff (a sort of grain) were high in the fields. There was infinitely more colour around in the form of flowers, birds and assorted greens.

As usual, the greeting was enthusiastic, warm and a little overwhelming for a first time visitor. It was lovely for me to see it through the eyes of Mia.

Our visit was short, compared to our usual month, but pretty intense all the same.

The Clinic has taken on the Podoconiosis (a form of non filarial elephantiasis, very prevalent in this area.) situation with vigour and enthusiasm, and the people are coming to the clinic for it- the word is very much out that we can help here. The plan is to run a clinic once a week, and to give the patients an appointment time. Ninety seven people came the first day, and we went through the routine and the importance of:

- Steeping and soaking the feet for at least 15 minutes.
- Soaping and scrubbing the feet using a cloth, but getting into every bump and crevice of the diseased feet.
- Massaging the feet with Vaseline or oil.
- Wearing socks.
- Wearing shoes.

Then they came the next day, and the next, and the system is becoming much slicker.

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Ideally the procedure should be carried out every day, but of course this is not possible at the moment, as many of the sufferers do not have access to water, soap, Vaseline, socks or shoes. We brought a whole suitcase of socks, we bought lots of shoes in the market, we taught and encouraged the staff and the patients that this is a condition, which can be controlled, and healed, following the right procedure, and mostly without medicine.

The Mothers with Uterine Prolapse continue to come, but in nothing like the numbers that we previously saw. They do come though, and the pessaries are still a tremendous boon to the majority of sufferers. They also know to come back for checkups, and we heard many stories of what life changers these little rings of PVC are.

We visited our old and destitute pensioners, and Mia went on the Rural Outreach Project work into the rural areas, seeing the outreach organisation which encourages people to live safely and hygienically.

The rhythm of life goes on as ever: prayer, food, work, rest. The electricity comes and goes, there is very little access to the internet, but some of the young do have “data” on their phones. Our phones didn’t work at all, and so we heard nothing of Trump or Brexit. It was quite a relief.

As ever, we were overwhelmed with kindness. A goat was killed on the last day. The dancing was as exuberant as ever, and I once again considered myself most fortunate to be involved in such a precious place with people of courage, goodness and resilience.

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ARRIVAL PARTY



PODOCONIOSIS (MOSSY FOOT) CLINIC

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BEFORE



AFTER 6 MONTHS

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