

# VIETNAM LAOS CAMBODIA



## MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC AID NEWS BULLETIN

[www.msavlc.org](http://www.msavlc.org)

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# HA TINH GENERAL HOSPITAL

**M**ary Lidgard and I first visited Ha Tinh General Hospital in 2007, with the late Dr Madeleine Sharp and Margaret Methley.

We had not been to Ha Tinh before, and we were struck by the poverty of this rural province, compared with the bustling urban centres of Hanoi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City. The General Hospital at the time was an austere two-storey, concrete building which showed many signs of suffering from the harsh, wet climate.

The hospital was overcrowded, with patients spilling out of the wards into the corridors. Some patients shared beds, others were sat on chairs or laid on make-shift beds. The doctors and nurses were doing a great job, but the environment was challenging and much of the equipment was old and heavily used.

I remember that we were all particularly struck by conditions in the Intensive Care Paediatric Unit. There, frail newborns were wrapped in blankets and placed on a bed next to an electric fire. The hospital was obviously badly in need of incubators. On our return to Britain we immediately started fund-raising, and due to the generosity of our supporters, we were soon able to raise the money to purchase two incubators for the department.

When we re-visited the hospital in 2015 we were immediately aware of the changes and improvements that had been made. Whilst some of the old building remained, a much larger, new building had

been built alongside. It was smart and airy and we were sure it was lot healthier than the old hospital.

We were welcomed by the Deputy Director, Dr Tran Thi Dung. She thanked us, on behalf of all the people of Ha Tinh, for all the equipment which the charity had provided. We toured the hospital with Dr Dung and Dr Phan Xuan Anh, the Vice-Director. Dr Dung told us that the new hospital now has 500 beds but often has 750 resident patients. There are also up to 900 outpatients seen each day. Whilst they were most grateful for the equipment that had been given to the hospital, much of it was now old and outdated.

We toured the hospital, visiting a number of departments where we had bought equipment. We also saw the

theatres where operations were in progress.

The doctors told us that Ha Tinh General Hospital has the only specialist paediatric unit in the Province. With a population of one and a quarter million people, it was hardly surprising for us to find that it was constantly well used.

The incubators which MSAVLC had bought in 2008 were still being used, alongside newer ones bought by the hospital. Nevertheless there were twelve premature babies in the ward, but only eight incubators available for use. Some would have to share or wait for an incubator to become available; it was obvious that more were needed. The doctors also told us that they were in need of phototherapy machines for premature babies with jaundice.



When we visited the Eye Department, we were delighted to see that the eye examination equipment which the charity had purchased some 13 years before, was still working. It was routinely being used to check the eyesight of up to 100 patients each day!

We saw other equipment which had been purchased with funds given by MSAVLC. The doctors told us that the Japanese government had funded some of their equipment, but that they preferred our approach, as we asked them what they needed, rather than decided for them!

As we concluded our visit, we could

tell that the hospital had improved tremendously in just a few years. It was much larger, with a number of new departments. New buildings are relatively cheap to put up in Vietnam, compared with Britain. In contrast, the modern equipment needed to run such hospitals efficiently costs the same all over the world. It was the provision of this essential equipment where the hospital directors were dependent upon aid, such as that given by MSAVLC.

Following our visit the Trustees received a proposal to fund two incubators, two phototherapy machines,

ten syringe pumps and ten infusion pumps at a total cost of £36,241. With the agreement of the Trustees, the funds were transferred and that equipment has now been purchased. On our next visit to Ha Tinh General Hospital, the Trustees will check the hospital's accounts and inspect the equipment which has been purchased.

We will be able to see first hand that your donations are being used to save the lives of many premature babies born in Ha Tinh Province.

*Peter Lidgard  
Chairman of the Trustees*

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# ESSENTIAL MEDICAL CARE

**E**arlier this year, just a few days before we were due to set off on an evaluation visit to our projects in South-East Asia, I was struck down with a severe case of pneumonia and pleurisy. After two hospital stays, intravenous fluids, massive doses of antibiotics, and care by paramedics, doctors and nurses, I have now recovered, and I am grateful for all the care that I received. It made me realise just how lucky we are in Britain to be able to receive immediate, free medical treatment; and it made me think of the people in S.E. Asia, who are not so fortunate, and who still need our help.

Had I been taken ill a few days later, I would have been in the countryside of Cambodia. A few years ago, along with other Trustees, I visited a hospital in the Siem Reap Province of Cambodia. The standard of care was very basic, the mixed wards were crowded, and patients were lying on the floor, or on mats along the corridors. We were told that the doctors and nurses were very poorly paid and accepted bribes to give better care. The poorest people were given a card to obtain free treatment, but this treatment was extremely basic. Most patients had to pay for their care and medicines, but a week's stay cost \$37.50, for the bed alone. This created many problems, and families had been known to sell their possessions,



and cows and livestock to raise money for their loved one's care; thus depriving them of their livelihood on discharge from hospital. Medicines required were started at the hospital but had to be paid for, so very often courses were not continued or completed. We saw patients who could not be accommodated in the hospital, sat outside in the hospital grounds, with intravenous infusions attached to anything

they could find. One lady had hers attached to an electricity box and one lad had his attached to a stick.

For over 50 years MSAVLC has striven to provide medical aid to the needy, and has provided much-needed equipment to hospitals such as these.

In Vietnam we have been thrilled to witness, over the years, great improvements in many of their hospitals, and we have seen in constant use, the equipment that MSAVLC has provided. However, the legacy of the American War is still very evident, and there are over three million victims of Agent Orange, at home and in hospitals and Peace Villages, who are still in great need of aid. MSAVLC works with The Vietnamese Association for Victims of Agent Orange to help these people.

We also work with the Highland Education Development Organisation to train traditional midwives in the highland ethnic minority villages of Vietnam. These

midwives' skills are passed down to them from their mothers and older women, and although their help is invaluable, their knowledge is lacking. The midwives are essential to the villages, where it is not always possible for mothers to travel through difficult mountainous terrain to have their babies delivered at a clinic.

In Cambodia medical aid and equipment is given to 'All Ears

Cambodia' who provide a unique medical service in ear care for Cambodians from all walks of life. These people include children and adults from some of the poorest families in Cambodia; internal refugees, physically disabled or profoundly deaf children, street children, drug addicts, landmine victims and victims of domestic violence, trafficking and prostitution.

Medical aid is also given to 'Daughters of Cambodia' who work in the heart of Phnom Penh's red light district. 'Daughters of Cambodia' help young women and men escape the horrors of sex trafficking, and start sustainable new lives for themselves. They provide dignified, rewarding employment, paired with vital health and support services, needed to aid their physical, psychological and social recovery from exploitation.

MSAVLC also supports the New Hope Orphanage in Poi Pet, where abandoned and orphaned children are cared for and their medical needs met.

The Disability Development Services Program (DDSP) is based in Pursat, a poor rural province in central Cambodia, and is one of the few organisations in the country providing services to disabled people. The population of the province is about 400,000 and about 18,900 people have disabilities. These are caused mostly by landmine accidents, work accidents, diseases and birth defects. MSAVLC finances a Paraplegic and Quadriplegic

Rehabilitation Project for them, which aims to give their clients help with rehabilitation, social, economic and basic needs. They provide much needed help in the form of medical necessities, physiotherapy, practical and emotional support. In a previous Bulletin Lynn Firth wrote about her visit to some of the clients, giving a fuller picture of the work that is done by DDSP.

In Laos, MSAVLC has installed water systems in three remote villages in the Jumpet District near Luang Prabang. These new systems have provided clean

water for hundreds of villagers, who now are able to access a constant water supply within their villages.

MSAVLC is proud to deliver this aid to those less fortunate than ourselves, whilst respecting their cultural values and traditions. A huge thank you to all our donors and supporters who have made this help possible, and to all our partners in South-East Asia who work tirelessly to deliver aid and care to all those in need.

*Mary Lidgard  
Honorary Secretary*



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Due to Mary's illness we were not able to undertake the planned Monitoring and Evaluation visits to our projects in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos this spring. As soon as we realised that the trip would have to be cancelled, we contacted all our project Directors to explain that we would not be coming. However, the Trustees know that project visits are essential:

- to check that the money which we sent has been correctly spent,
- to give us an opportunity to discuss future needs and proposals.
- to meet and talk to some of the recipients of the aid.

The Trustees firmly expect that the postponed Monitoring and Evaluation visit will now take place early next year and we look forward to meeting with our Project Directors and their staff then.

## INNER WHEEL - CIRENCESTER

**O**n 22nd March, Nic Hewlett, President of the Inner Wheel, Cirencester invited John and Lynn Firth to speak at their monthly meeting.

It was not a fund-raising event, but a chance to talk to the group about MSAVLC and the projects which we support. The talk highlighted the difference between visiting Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos as a tourist and the visit that we made last year to assess the projects and the needs of the people there.

We talked briefly about each project and how much support has been given by MSAVLC. We explained that the Trustees visit each project every two years, to check that the funds provided by MSAVLC have been spent on the agreed proposals. It also gives us the chance to discuss their future needs.

The talk was followed by a question time, with lots of interest in what we were doing as a charity. We would like to thank Nic Hewlett and the ladies of the Inner

Wheel for inviting us to talk to them and explain the work that we do, and for their generous donation to the charity.

*Lynn Firth  
Trustee*

**DON'T FORGET  
TO 'GIFT AID'  
YOUR DONATION.**

**If you are a  
UK taxpayer, for  
every gift-aided  
pound which you  
donate,  
the Chancellor will  
give us an extra 25p.**

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**T**wo years ago the Trustees decided that, as an experiment, they would hold the charity's Annual General Meeting in Cheltenham. Previous AGM's had always been held in London, but as many of our supporters live in the Midlands or the South-West, it was hoped that they may attend a meeting in Cheltenham, instead of travelling to London. As that experiment was a success, we agreed to hold the 2016 AGM once again in Cheltenham, and it took place at St Mark's Methodist Church on the 22nd April 2017. However, attendance was low and we expect to return to London for next

year's AGM.

In her report to the meeting Honorary Secretary Mary Lidgard briefly outlined the work of the Trustees during 2016. She thanked all the Trustees and supporters who had contributed to the smooth running of the charity during the past year.

The Financial Report was given by John Firth, the Honorary Treasurer. He noted that compared with the previous year, donations had increased slightly. However, our project expenditure was lower compared with 2015, which had been an exceptional year. He thanked Nic Hewlett for examining the charity's accounts, once again. Project

expenditure for 2016 is shown in the table below.

Officers re-elected for a further year were:

Peter Lidgard: Chairman.

Mary Lidgard: Honorary Secretary.

John Firth: Honorary Treasurer.

Lynn Firth: Bulletin Distributor.

Deborah Dainton: Website Co-ordinator.

Susmita Ghosh: Facebook Co-ordinator.

Finally Peter Lidgard thanked everyone for attending and all the Trustees for their work during 2016.

The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2016 will be published on the Charity Commission's website in due course.

## PROJECT EXPENDITURE 2016

Month Completed	Recipient	Grants (including Bank Charges)
January	<b>Highland Education Development Organisation, Vietnam</b>	
	Training course for 100 Traditional Midwives in Da Bac District, Hoa Binh Province.	£ 14,152.00
January	<b>New Hope Children's Home, Poipet, Cambodia</b>	
	Sponsorship of two children for the year.	£ 528.00
March	<b>Daughters of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia</b>	
	Emergency funds to help prepare new premises.	£ 380.12
April	<b>British Friendship Hospital, Ky Anh, Vietnam</b>	
	Joan McMichael Fund Prize.	£ 330.00
May	<b>Disability Development Services Program, Pursat, Cambodia</b>	
	Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Rehabilitation Project. Two-year extension.	£ 30,099.15
June	<b>Highland Education Development Organisation, Vietnam</b>	
	Obstetric Course for trainee doctors, Thai Binh Medical University, Vietnam.	£ 4,627.50
September	<b>Daughters of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia</b>	
	Health and Wholeness Project 2016.	£ 18,451.72
November	<b>New Hope Children's Home, Poipet, Cambodia</b>	
	Christmas gifts for our sponsored children.	£ 50.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 68,618.49</b>

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