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PRESS RELEASE

RUH EYE SURGEON TAKES HIS SKILLS ...AND HIS SON TO AFRICA

RUH Eye surgeon Jonathan Luck is travelling to Africa this weekend to carry out sight saving eye operations. He is supporting a British medical charity –“The Ashipti Project”- which offers help to Tamale Hospital in Ghana.

It is Mr. Lucks’ second visit to Ghana - he last visited the Tamale region in 2006. In this area there is just one ophthalmologist for a population of over 2 million people. (Here in Bath for comparison we have five eye surgeons for a population of 500,000).

In the next fortnight, Mr. Luck will be conducting outreach clinics in the rural community to screen for treatable blindness such as cataracts. He is taking with him several thousand pounds worth of equipment for treating cataracts, such as surgical blades and intraocular lenses. These have been donated by medical firms Alcon, Ethicon and SD Healthcare Ltd.

Mr. Luck says he feels compelled to return to Africa:

“I’m going back because I know that not much will have changed! Mr. Seth Wanye (the only eye doctor for two million regional inhabitants) continues to struggle, and there is a seemingly never-ending stream of blind people needing surgery. The donated equipment means that they have access to treatment that would otherwise cost an unaffordable £15.

There is no NHS in Ghana and Aids and HIV infection are major health issues - about 3% of the population are HIV positive and there were 170,000 Aids orphans in Ghana in 2003.

Accompanying him on his trip this time is his 17 year old son Josh - a pupil at Prior Park College.

Josh is head of Charities at the school and his house, Clifford House, have adopted the Ashipti charity to support this year. His father says he hopes his son will gain a lot from the trip :

“Josh wants to firstly see a bit of Africa, and to get involved in the screening clinics. He will help me conduct basic eye tests on patients and is also going to assist me and the nursing staff in theatre. It’s a real opportunity for him to get stuck into something

worthwhile and I'm hoping that he finds it a life changing experience as I did when I first went."

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Notes to Editors

For more information visit Ashipti.com – this is a medical charity set up by UK medical students.

Info from website:

Its aim is to send medical equipment and supplies to Tamale Hospital in Northern Ghana. 'Ashipti' means hospital in Dagbani - the main local language spoken in Tamale.

Tamale Hospital was built in the 1970s and at the time was one of Ghana's showpiece hospitals. However, due to lack of funding and ongoing maintenance, the hospital is facing difficult times. It currently has no running water and much vital medical equipment is either not working or simply not available. The hospital is struggling to afford to replace broken equipment and resources for ongoing maintenance and repair are very limited.

After spending several months at the Hospital working for the US-based charity, Unite for Sight, in the summer of 2006, medical students from the UK and US decided that on returning to their respective countries, they would set up sister charities to help supply some of the much needed equipment to Tamale Hospital.

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