

Chris and Vicki's Newsletter

From Shipyard in Cadiz, Spain

August 2001

Having spent a wonderful 7 months in W Africa, we have returned with the Anastasis to Europe again. At the moment the ship is having its annual maintenance in shipyard at Cadiz in the south of Spain and soon we will leave for our publicity tours and re-supply in Germany, Norway, Scotland and Holland. Sadly the visits to Guernsey and London were cancelled due to delays and technical difficulties. Maybe we'll come next year!

In this newsletter we've tried to give you an overview of what the Anastasis achieved in Benin plus a little of what is happening in our lives. Our newsletters only give a general overview and we would love to give you more information about anything that particularly interests you – a particular patient, event, project, whatever! – so *please* email or get in touch so we can tell you more about what is going on the Anastasis....

By email – the Anastasis always has email access, even when we are at sea.

**Chris@thegreggs.co.uk
Vicki@thegreggs.co.uk**

Emails sent to these addresses come straight to our computer and we can read them in our cabin.

By Phone – when we are docked in port, phone lines are connected and we can make and receive telephone calls.

The latest telephone numbers when we arrive in a new port are published on the Mercy Ships website at

www.mercyships.org/fleet/anastasis/contactnos.htm

It's so exciting to get a call!



By post – mail is forwarded to the Anastasis wherever we are in port.

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Vicki's News

It was hard for me to say goodbye to Benin but I have had lots to keep me busy since leaving West Africa. The Child-to-Child course I did was excellent and has given me lots of ideas and resources for my new role in health education. I am now working on producing some new teaching aids for our work in the villages so that we can share our knowledge about preventative diseases that kill so many people in Africa.

The medical department is also making a new ward on the ship so that we can increase our in-patient capacity. So I have swapped a needle and syringe for a 'needle gun,' put on mask, goggles and ear muffs and have been working with the renovation team getting rid of the rust on the steel floor. It's quite funny for those of you who know how much I dislike DIY and mess to know that I have been involved in this way!

In addition to this I am on the stretcher team for emergencies and am the 'on-call nurse' for any crew health problems about once a week. It is funny to know that the ship insurers question our safety record because it is so unusual for a ship of our size to have so few accidents. We thank God for his protection of the crew of the Anastasis. When we reach Bremen, I am one of 12 crew members who will be doing an intensive 'Safety at sea' course which involves fire fighting, man overboard drills and training for other emergencies. I'm looking forward to it but with a little trepidation, as I am one of only 2 girls doing the course.

Lighthouse, the Christian club for 5-7 year olds also begins in 2 weeks time – so with all that I am doing, plus the medical receptions, unloading and sorting medical cargo and preparation for the next outreach, I am going to continue to be very busy. But that's the way I like my life to be!



Chris' News

These 2 months in shipyard has been interesting but also quite a difficult time to be living on board. Seeing the Anastasis out of her usual environment, high and dry in the dry dock was a highlight - she was due for a complete re-paint of her hull and the opportunity was taken to do other work not usually accessible below the waterline. Consequently, for over two weeks the services were very restricted, with no hot water, no toilets, limited cold water and electricity, no air conditioning or ventilation. The portaloos we used were not very pleasant after a fortnight in the Spanish heat!



The ship has been like an industrial site with work going on all over with lots of banging and noise until late in the day. There have been a number of floods due to broken pipes but thankfully our cabin has not been affected although both our neighbours cabins have. It's not surprising that over 100 of the crew who have experienced shipyard before, went on vacation at this time. The largest project has been to replace the emergency generator that provides power to the important systems if there were to be problems in the main engine room. There have been a large number of volunteers, such as welders, pipefitters and electricians here just for this shipyard work. The projects have been successful and the surveyors have praised the work of the Mercy Ships staff.

We currently have two more staff in the IT Department, making four of us. This has meant we have been able to tackle the long list of things that we have been postponing due to lack of time. The time in Europe is quite busy as we have only this short period to re-assess and re-supply for the whole year. When we are in Africa, it isn't possible to just go out to the shop to get a spare computer part – we need to be fully prepared before we leave Europe.

Benin Summary



MEDICAL AND DENTAL TEAMS - During our time in Benin we did 1400 surgeries (2/3 adults 1/3 children and babies). The procedures included facial reconstruction, cleft lip and palate repair, tumour, goitre and cataract removal.

Our Community Health Team treated over 5000 patients for such conditions as stomach problems, skin diseases, malaria, respiratory disorders, gynaecological and orthopaedic problems.



8000 people received basic health teaching in the villages and 2600 others in the town received teaching on HIV/AIDS prevention and nutrition. Three villages participated in a child nutrition, growth and weight program; and another three villages received training on water-related diseases. The dental team did 8984 treatments including fillings, extractions, root canals, minor oral and facial surgeries, dental hygiene and education.



RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT - The teams constructed two buildings - a clinic/dispensary & maternity centre in collaboration with local church. They also assisted a local health and development group to construct a grain store. 100 villagers were trained in water & sanitation principles, including a group of pastors who will now train others. A water system was also installed in one village. In a Mercy Ships training centre, 16 students had a six-month curriculum of woodwork, metalwork and computer skills, to teach them how to construct, market and sell quality products.

CARGO DELIVERED – 110 tons of medical supplies, building materials and relief cargo were distributed in Benin during the outreach.

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH - over 40,000 people heard gospel presentations. The evangelism team Crosstide performed dramas, puppets and music, while counsellors worked with the patients and alongside the teams in the villages to help individuals with other needs. Mercy Ministry teams of crew giving time in their time off, visited and assisted in 25 different locations - orphanages, prisons and hospitals, befriending children and adults, painting and cleaning, showing God's love in action.

