



Chris and Vicki's Newsletter

From the Anastasis in Rotterdam
October 2001



Since leaving Benin we have travelled around Europe with the ship sharing with people about our time in Africa and re-stocking the ship with supplies for the next outreach. Repair work on the ageing Anastasis was completed during 2 months in shipyard in Spain and we were both part of the crew selected for training to fulfil maritime safety regulations. It's been a very busy time – we've been to Spain, Germany, Norway, Scotland and Holland. Next stop Sierra Leone!



Chris has been working long hours to get everything ready on the ship for another 8 months in Africa. This picture shows him working on installing the ship's phonedines – a new responsibility he has taken on in addition to overseeing the computers and email system on the ship. He is also installing a satellite system so that we can have reliable phone and email communication in Sierra Leone.

Chris has also recently been elected onto the ship's 'Management Team' which means that he has some say in the decisions that are made on the Anastasis. This is a real honour and he is enjoying having some input into the policies made by the ship leadership.

Firefighting, lifeboat training and crowd management and crisis control!

Vicki has been given some rather different training this summer for her role on the Anastasis emergency teams. The Basic Safety Maritime Training had her launching lifeboats, manoeuvring fast rescue boats and rescuing a man overboard, practicing survival at sea, simulating a helicopter rescue and getting into a liferaft. She also learnt to use breathing apparatus and rescue a body from a smoke filled tunnel as well as extinguish fires with big water hoses, CO₂, powder and foam. It was a challenge but great fun! Not the sort of thing most nurses get to do in their jobs. We feel pretty safe now in our little cabin on C deck as she knows how to react in all sorts of emergencies!



SIERRA LEONE

As you are no doubt aware – Sierra Leone is a war torn country with much sadness and betrayal. Fighting has now stopped due to the presence of West African and UN peacekeeping forces but this does not really mean peace – just an absence of war. Many houses and villages have been torched by the rebels so there is a large amount of internally displaced people (about 60% of the population) some living in camps. There are many that have been physically mutilated and emotionally scarred by the things they have lived through.

Although Sierra Leone is rich in mineral resources, the conflict has resulted in it being ranked as one of the world's poorest countries. This is reflected in the state of the health of the nation. The life expectancy is just **45** and infant mortality is **149 deaths per 1000 births** (the highest in Africa). In addition, only 31% of adults can read or write and 6% of the population are disabled through polio and war-related injuries. Sierra Leone is predominately an Islamic country but thankfully, there is not the religious fundamentalism that is seen in Nigeria or Arab nations.

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Following our time in Sierra Leone we will be sailing directly to the Gambia for another 4 month outreach. We are hoping that a team from Guernsey will come and visit for 2 weeks to work alongside the ship whilst we are there. We're excited by all that's ahead!

