

# BRYN BUTTON

*Bryn Button is sadly no longer with us. This is not strictly a profile, but it is an extremely interesting letter about his latter life experiences overseas.*

Apologies for not contacting lately - simply because it was not possible here, out in the middle of Highlands in Papua New Guinea.

I got sent out here for Medecins sans Frontieres early July. It is a strange mission compared with the others I have been on since 1999 ! Most other missions have been conflict, rebellious etc. as you can probably imagine/remember Kosovo, South Sudan during the split with the SPLA and Khartoum Gov't., then Darfur when the problems started beginning of 2004. After that Uganda - problems with the LRA, Armenia - problems with Azerbaijan (10 year fight) then a huge earthquake killing 50,000 people.

After that I went to Malawi again August 2006 to June last year. (That was a different mission, it started in 1997 for research into HIV/AIDS). It's been a wonderful set up - in 2002 when I first went there we had 8 people in our, Thyolo, district on the original ARV treatment drugs, it worked but was about US\$ 1,700 per patient per year and the drugs gave them a life expectancy of 5-6 years after being put on ARV. When I left last year, the drugs had been made a lot less tablets per day, (2 instead of 11) and costs about 170 Euro per year for drugs and consultations, plus a life expectancy of 30 years after being put on ARV now. June last year we had 16,642 people on the ARV and it is working well. MUCH BETTER!!

Now Papua is totally different to all the other places I have been to! Tribal warfare back in 2008 caused so many attacks on people that the medics all left the hospital here in Tari, way out in the hills. Only way to get here from the Port of Moresby where we fly into from UK via Tokyo, is again by air to the dirt strip here

in Tari. Incredibly there are approx. 800 tribes, 800 languages and about 100 people per tribe. The major number of serious patients seem to be involved in ridiculous arguments with someone else which nearly all finish up with them attacking each other with 'Machetes' similar to the old fashioned 3'-0" swords we used to have in the UK. The number of men attacking their wives and children is incredible. As an example, one of my Log Assistants tried to murder his wife a couple of weeks ago, knifed her in bed, all over, arms, head and back. She got brought into the hospital and saved, luckily. But we terminated her husband's contract and kicked him out. However, shows how strange and common this behaviour is here - the Police have not arrested him, or attempted to prosecute him because it is a common thing !!

Anyway I expect to be back in Wales for a few days in April next year when I finish here. After that back to Malawi and hopefully finish getting the bungalow finished that Zione and I are having built in Zomba - Maybe then I will retire.

How are you getting on now? Did you have a good Mediterranean holiday?

I hope you are all ok, please remember me to your brothers and sister (If I remember correctly.) and any of our old school pals from Harlow.

Cheers,

Bryn Button

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