

INDIA 2012 TRIP

Elizabeth Callendar writes: *It's hard to believe that after all the planning the UK medical team has returned from their trip to IREF in India. Thank you so much for your prayer support – it meant so much to the Team to know that we were being supported in prayer during our time in India. January 28th saw eight people from Scotland fly out to India as the UK Medical Team.*



*Jason Leitch – team leader, on his 8th trip
 Jim Leitch (Jason's father) on his 1st trip
 Elizabeth Callander – nurse
 Shieleen Bremner – nurse
 Aileen Bell – dentist
 Stuart Bell – nurse
 Gordon Elliot – nurse
 Stewart Shaw – optician*

We had a couple of days in Chennai, where we met up with the 17-strong USA team, before travelling onto Repalle. It was good to be back in India, though Jim did take time to adjust to the change of culture, food, and humidity - but, adjust he did!



An IREF Welcome

Arriving in Repalle is always something of a highlight for the welcome we are given. Loudspeakers blasting your name in welcome; banners overhead, proclaiming names for all to see;

fireworks, flower petals and floral garlands; smiling children lined up to greet us as we arrive – it's quite an experience to put it mildly!

A visit to IREF is about meeting old friends in Emmanuel, Dee and other members of the Rebba family, as well as trying to recognise children (and remember their names!) whom we've cared for in previous years. They are now a little older and taller, but just as welcoming as ever.



Medical Clinic

Rest and relaxation – forget it! Two hours after arriving in Repalle, the medical team was on the move, setting up the clinic in readiness for seeing the first children later that day.

As in previous years, some of the nursing students were allocated to work with us in the clinic. The BSc Nursing programme has around 50 girls in training. It was a pleasure to have a number of the 3rd and 4th year students working alongside the team throughout our trip. Some of them translated for us very competently, with the additional advantage of clinical understanding. Professionally, we were delighted to have an opportunity to share our knowledge with the students and use learning opportunities when they arose.



Over the course of the week around 700 children, students and adults came through the clinic. The general health of the children was fairly good,

though the challenge of skin and gastric infections is ever present.

Overcrowding, especially in the girls' home, has always been a concern. It was therefore encouraging to see significant improvements here with now around 20, rather than 40, younger girls sharing each room. For the older girls, there are 10-15 per room.



As previously, the busiest section of the clinic was the dental corner with Jason screening the children, Jim on sterilisation of equipment, and Aileen (the hardest worked person in the team) supported by Shieleen, as they treated the children who required dental extractions.

Generally the clinic is a noisy place, full of laughter and chat. While some of the children can be a little frightened of the unknown, most of them are just plain curious - especially of what is going on around them!



OPTICIAN STEWART

Optician extraordinaire, Stewart Shaw, worked quietly away in another room, and reports: *'I felt the trip went well. From an optical perspective, I saw over 400 people, gave out around 450 pairs of 'ready-readers', and have around 70 pairs of specs to make up at home to send out. The clinics seemed to run more smoothly and were more organised, which helped. Clinics with village people and Bible ladies were the most challenging !*



A NEW EXPERIENCE and A LASTING MEMORY

The last word from the Medical Team comes from Jim Leitch, a retired college lecturer, who has lived with a good working knowledge of IREF since Airdrie Baptist Church first became involved in 1998:

'This was my first visit to India and the orphanage at Repalle. It was a visit full of memories and events that I will never forget. A few memories I take from my visit are:

- *The initial culture shock and the poverty.*
- *The crowded streets, full of people and vehicles.*
- *The example of the Christian workers and Gospel meetings.*
- *The graciousness of the children.*
- *The closeness of the UK and USA teams*
- *The enthusiasm of the medical team.*

Perhaps the thing I will remember most is the love shown to us by the children - they had very little but helped in any way they could. We did very little but 'little is much when God is in it'.



" The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

[Matthew 25:40]

Thank you Liz, for compiling this report; and a big thank you to all our readers for your ongoing prayerful support for IREF.

David Hunt