

# MalawiLink

## The Cashman Family in Malawi

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

We will be staying in Malawi beyond our originally planned 2 years

John is busy training on his bike to raise money for new surgical and physiotherapy facilities

The family is well, but our community is struggling with hunger pending



One of John's patients celebrating Christmas day

## Happy Christmas !

It hardly seems any time at all since we were in the UK in the summer and now we are writing a message with our Christmas greetings..

Yet a lot has happened:

- The world economies seem to be crumbling
- We have committed to stay in Malawi beyond our originally intended 2 years.
- With our decision comes a step of faith in resigning John's UK NHS job, suspending pensions etc amid no promise of indefinite financial support given financial difficulties for CURE's international donors.
- Rachel is starting to sleep at night - which actually seems to eclipse all else

It has thus been an eventful few weeks. I suppose the single greatest milestone was passed in the week leading up to Christmas, when, after much heart searching and prayer, we resolved to commit to stay working in Malawi with CURE beyond October 2009. This has meant resigning from John's NHS consultant post in Bristol and Bath—a job he enjoyed a great deal.

The decision has however focussed our minds and made us realise that the very hardest part was reconciling ourselves to the fact that in the near future we would not be seeing so many of our friends back home as much as we would have liked. Snipping another thread of worldly security came much easier than accepting the thought of seeing our friends less and missing them more. We do value you



Rachel enjoying Christmas lunch

all so much and are so grateful for all the love and support you have shown us over the last 15 months. We can only hope that our resolve to stay on means that these will not fade in any way and numbers of friends visiting Malawi will increase.

## An Uneasy Truth

We write on Christmas day, having enjoyed a lovely time together in a rather more simple style than we might have done at home in Bath. Despite this there are constant reminders everywhere that while we celebrate, many scrape for enough food to keep themselves alive. Whilst the "Credit Crunch" bites at home, it is such an abstract

concept to most Malawians wondering if all if their family will make it through to the next harvest. Sometimes it is tempting to get frustrated with the continual daily requests for money that beset daily life here. Yet in truth it is not the requests that are wrong, but the feelings of inadequacy and fatigue that they illicit within us. The

need to be daily replenished with God's love and compassion is acutely obvious, as is the hardening of our hearts when we over-busy ourselves to allow this to happen.

**It has been estimated that 25% of Malawians earn less than 10p per day**



Hannah opening her Christmas presents



### *A Desperate Need*



**A small donated matchbox toy is almost certainly the most expensive Christmas present this young patient has ever had**



**Deformities caused by poorly administered injection of malarial treatment. A tragically avoidable reason for surgery**

Sadly, as we do more and more operating at CURE, we are noticing:

- A lack of operating theatre capacity
- The great lack of physiotherapy space and facilities.

So often surgery is only the start of the cure for disabled children. Many will not have walked or use their limbs properly for a considerable time and need intensive physiotherapy and assistance. At the moment we have very little space and facilities available to use and thus some patients never gain their full potential.

In order to address this, we are embarking this year on building project to extend the hospital to build a third operating theatre and a dedicated children's physiotherapy facility. The cost of this project (which includes upgrading some of the security fencing) is £100,000 pounds. This is a tiny proportion of what similar construction would cost in the UK. We have already raised half this amount and now need to raise the final £50,000. It is a difficult time to be asking for money, but to try and help with this, John and one of the junior surgeons visiting from the UK (Paul Harnett) are competing in the "Cape Epic" Mountain Bike race in South Africa in March. Widely acclaimed as the most challenging staged mountain bike race in the world, the 1,200 riders cover nearly 1000km of track and climb nearly twice the height of Everest (16,000m) in 8 days.

Training is hard work and often means getting up several days per week for 2 hour pre-dawn training sessions, with longer rides at the weekend.

Please consider sponsoring this worthwhile cause at :

[www.justgiving.com/cure\\_cape-epic](http://www.justgiving.com/cure_cape-epic)

Alternatively donations and Cheques payable to "Cure International" can be sent to Paul Nicholson at the address in the blue box below. CURE is a registered charity in the UK (no 1094705) and thus all donations are tax deductible. Even the smallest donation would be most gratefully received and used effectively,

We will also be asking for sponsorship posters to go up in the hospitals at Bristol and Bath and in one or two local GP surgeries and Dentist Surgeries around Bath. If you can assist with putting up a poster—do ask Paul Nicholson for further information.

Well, as we approach 2009 we wish you all a Peaceful and Happy New Year. We do hope that we will be able to welcome many of you as visitors to Malawi in the coming year and look forward to hearing your news—do please keep in touch.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support for CURE and our work here.

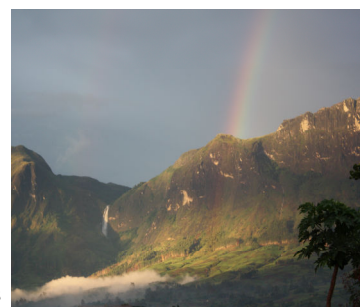
With our love, thanks and very best wishes,

*John, Robyn, Hannah and Rachel*

Patients waiting on Christmas day for much needed physiotherapy- currently lack of space and facilities prejudice children's recovery from surgery



**Rachel dressing up on Christmas morning**



**A rainbow over Mulanje mountain on Robyn's 40th birthday**

If you would like to receive this by email or post, or if you require any further information, then please contact::

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