

Beauty and the Bangle

What do you give a patient who has everything? I am sure I don't know. I do know what I can give a patient who has nothing (or virtually nothing). I can give her love, confidence, encouragement, and craft materials so she can make a pretty bead bangle for herself. I have given this 'gift' each time I have been in Ethiopia visiting the fistula patients.

Hi, I am Joanne and I first saw these bangles at a market stall 7 years ago. They were made by a teenage girl and I purchased one I liked for the grand sum of \$5. Then I realised it was something that the fistula patients could make and, as I was soon going to visit for my first time, I bought the required bits and pieces – small long nose pliers, small wire cutters, memory wire, and many small coloured beads. I then enjoyed making some sample bangles.

At the hospital I showed Dr Hamlin (my aunt), and she loved the idea. Soon there were many keen patients crowding into the small school room. A few months later the new large airy school room was finished and many more bangles have been happily crafted there since. The patients at Bahir Dar and Yigalem have also been able to enjoy this social activity. On my last trip about 25 girls even made their bangle sitting on the lawns enjoying the lovely sunshine. *(continued back page)*

Stuart Noel Abrahams *Eulogy*

STUART NOEL ABRAHAMS was born on 30th May 1927, at the family home in Artarmon. He was the youngest of the seven children.

He attended Warrawee Public School, then North Sydney Demonstration School and North Sydney Chatswood Technical High School.

The death of his father when he was only 11 years meant he had to leave school when he was 14 years old and help to provide income for the family.

He embarked on a series of studies at evening school while he was working in the family real estate business and eventually made a 'Fellow' of the Real Estate Institute of NSW and a qualified property valuer, and 'Associate' with the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers.

His working life can best be described as being in three distinct phases:

1. His career in Real Estate

Stuart joined the family real estate business, Arthur Abrahams & Co at Crow's Nest, North Sydney in 1943 when he was 14. His second eldest brother Clarence was the Managing Director of the Company and did an enormous amount to help and encourage Stuart. They were difficult years.

At the end of the World War people were reluctant to buy or sell real



Left to right: Stuart Noel Abrahams, Dr Catherine Hamlin and then Archbishop Peter Jensen.

estate. Finance was difficult to obtain or negotiate. However over a period of 18 years, Stuart worked through the 'system'. First as office boy – then as a rent collector – letting clerk – property Salesman – eventually becoming the Sales Manager and a Director of the family company.

In 1952 Stuart married Betty (Billie) Isabel Martin. They built a home on land that Stuart had previously bought on the headland at Mona Vale overlooking Bungan Beach.

They were involved with the local Anglican Church at Mona Vale under the ministry of Rev Ken Short who, with his wife Gloria, became close friends.

Stuart became the Sunday School Superintendent and Warden of the Church. There they had the first of their three children, Colin.

2. His Call to serve God in the Ordained Ministry

By 1959, two house moves and two more children (Jill and Wendy), Stuart believed he was being 'called by God' to commence theological studies with the intention of being ordained into the ministry of the Anglican Church. In those days it was a huge challenge for a married man with a wife and three children to embark on full-time study.

Stuart was ordained in St Andrew's

Cathedral, Sydney in 1960 and served in churches at Wollongong, Northbridge, Wahroonga and Nowra.

In 1984 Stuart accepted a management position within the central Diocesan offices in Sydney and was appointed by the Archbishop of Sydney as the Director of a Diocesan church expansion program, called 'Vision for Growth'. The program was very successful. Money was raised to buy land, build 11 new churches and a number of Rectories. Ministry was extended into new housing areas.

Stuart 'retired' in 1994 and began to work part-time, as an honorary assistant in his previous Parish at St Andrew's Wahroonga. He was appointed the Minister to the seniors, with the specific responsibility for the conduct of the early 8.00am Sunday Service and to exercise pastoral care for that congregation. They were very happy years working with old friends from St Andrew's Parish Church.

In 1997, for a short time he was appointed the Acting-Director of the Anglican Youth Department with the specific task of negotiating a merger of the Youth Department and the Anglican Board of Education. With some difficulty the merger was eventually accomplished and the new department became known as 'Youthworks'.



Billie Abrahams

“How precious is Thy steadfast love, O God!
The children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings.”

Psalm 36:7

3. His retirement career running a Charity for a Hospital in Ethiopia

When Stuart was at the point of retiring in 1994, he was requested to assist the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital by banking and then transferring gift/monies received, to the Hospital as they needed it.

This led him to establish a registered charitable organisation, the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund and to actively raise monies to assist the work of the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The charity work expanded – monetary assistance was sought from the Australian public and from the Australian Government, to assist in the building of a number of major projects.

It became necessary for him to reduce the time he spent on other Church work.

The monies raised enabled:

- the old original Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to be completely rebuilt,

- for a village on a 60-acre rural property to be built to rehabilitate up to 100 patients, and
- then for a branch hospital to be built and staffed at Mekelle,
- At a later date the Australian Fistula Fund helped to finance the building and the running costs of the Hamlin College to train midwives.

He worked for the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund in a voluntary capacity for 14 years and travelled to Ethiopia on a number of occasions in relation to the various building projects.

For his work, in this regard and within the Anglican Church Stuart was awarded an AM, a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2008 Australia Day Honours and received this award in May 2009.

In 2008 Stuart and Billie purchased their ‘retirement’ home in Windsor and Stuart took on a voluntary role at the local St Matthew’s Anglican Church. He became an assistant minister with special pastoral care of the older



Stuart – about 1998

members of the congregation.

Stuart understood that whatever had been achieved in his life was due solely to God’s gracious hand upon him. At a young age he committed his life to follow Jesus Christ, he believed in the sovereign power of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

On the human level, he had the capacity to concentrate on the task in hand and to get things done. One of his friends simply said that he had ‘a dogged persistence’.

Stuart died on 20 August 2015. We thank God for his life and faith.

Response to Quilts for the Midwives

We had a great response to the article in our Autumn newsletter on Judy McMonagle’s team who have been making quilts as gifts for the young graduates of the midwifery college at Desta Mender. A number of quilting groups contacted Judy and, with their contributions, 22 quilts were sent to Addis Ababa for the Midwives of the Graduating Class of 2015.

In this issue of our newsletter we have another craft inspired article. One of our long-term supporters, Joanne

Millar (who is Dr Catherine Hamlin’s niece), has sent us an article about making bangles with the patients of the hospital on her recent visit. We hope you enjoy reading it.

As the year draws to a close, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued interest in raising awareness of the issue of obstetric fistula and of the work of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. In Australia, we are fortunate that we can start to prepare for spending time with family and friends over the Christmas break.

In other parts of the world there are still many women who are injured simply trying to deliver a baby.

The Directors and Staff of Hamlin Fistula Australia Limited thank you for your continued interest and generous support in 2015 and wish you a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

The Fund’s office in Hornsby will close for the Christmas break on Tuesday 22nd December 2015 and will re-open again on Tuesday 19th January 2016.





I ask the patients to put their forearms together (like wheel spokes) and I take a photo to capture their creations and on seeing this they beam with pride. Each trip I have ensured that I have enough beads and wire to leave with the teachers for future patients. The beauty of this craft is its simplicity and do-ability so each patient, regardless of age or capabilities, can have the pleasure of joining in.

If only that first industrious young lady could know that she was the inspiration for this activity. I wish she could see the smiles, gratitude, and creativity that I see, which spurs me on to provide the craft materials each time I visit. Many thanks also to my generous friends who have plied me with beads to take. They too share the blessing of aiding the poor with this 'little gift' of love. Sometimes it is not the size of your gift but the size of your heart that matters most.

Joanne Millar
Brisbane



In Memoriam Stuart Abrahams

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION was passed unanimously at the 2015 Annual General Meeting of the members of Hamlin Fistula Australia Limited:

The members of the company note with sadness the death of the Rev Stuart Noel Abrahams AM and recognise the invaluable contribution he made to support the work of Dr Catherine Hamlin by establishing this company and serving as the initial Company Secretary and Executive Officer.

On pages 2-3 is the eulogy which was delivered at St James' Church Turramurra on 28 August 2015.



Reply Slip

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Thank you for supporting of the work of Dr Catherine Hamlin through the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund and Hamlin Fistula Australia Limited. Alternatively you may decide to donate to Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (Australia) Limited.



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