



# Hamlin Fistula UK

Supporting the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia

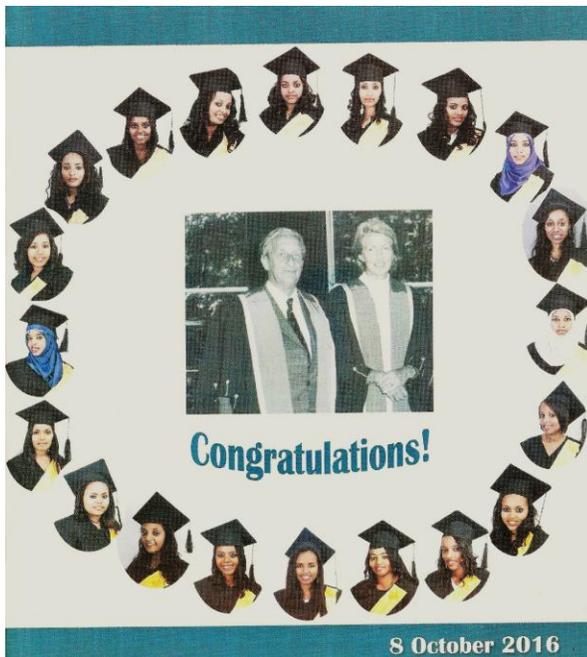
Charity  
Number:  
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## Newsletter January 2017

*(All patients' names are changed to protect their identity.)*

### Midwifery Graduation 2016

Two of our UK Trustees, Phillipa and Jean, were present at the recent graduation of Hamlin Midwives in Addis Ababa. They reported that it was a very happy and exciting occasion enjoyed by everyone in attendance.



The picture shows the new graduates surrounding an early photo of Drs Reginald and Catherine Hamlin wearing their graduation gowns.



Dr Hamlin, who will soon be 93 years old, stood to make a remarkable and endearing speech to the graduates. She spoke about the relief they must feel at having passed their final examinations and as they are now about to put into practice all their 4 years of training for their life's work she hoped that their enthusiasm would remain with them always.

The midwives will be working in pairs to support each other in remote areas and for night-time deliveries where there may be no electricity they are equipped with a solar light and torches.

They each have a mobile phone to enable them to phone for help should the need arise. The CEO, **Dr Tesfaye Yacob** congratulated the midwives and said that today they had joined one of the oldest medical professions in human history – a noble profession that has been a service to humanity since time immemorial.



He said they will be contributing in helping to eliminate the maternal mortality rate by half by the year 2020. The aspiration for each of the graduates is that they maintain the excellence of Hamlin Midwives renowned for their tender loving care with compassion, respect and dignity for mothers in their delivery.

**Sr. Marit**, the Vice-Dean of the college remarked on this special day as a transition from them being a student to a professional midwife.

She said, “Even though pregnancy is a normal phenomenon for a woman during her reproductive life, she needs someone special, like you, who will be beside her to care for her during this critical time”. Sr. Marit wished them every success to a future filled with happiness as they use their skills to help the women of their community and play their part in helping to eradicate obstetric fistula.



*Some moving comments from graduates that we thought you may like to read:-*

**“God always answers knee-mail”**

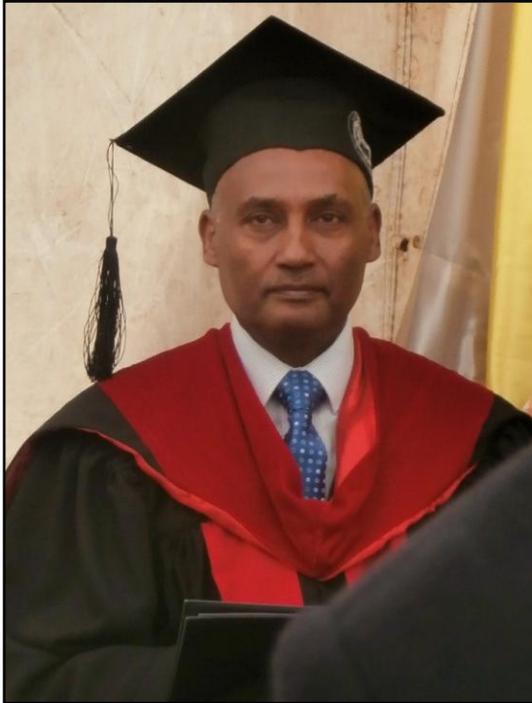
**“Dear Past, thank you for all the lessons. Dear Future, I am ready now”**

**“I still have a long way to go but I am far from where I used to be and I am proud of that. Thanks to God and my family”**

**“Don’t look back; you are not going that way”**

**“Thank you for my family”**

**“I will sing unto the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me. Thanks Dad and Mom”**



**Ato Zelalem**, Dean of the College, said that as usual their training has equipped them with all the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that are required to effectively discharge their duties and responsibilities to the needy people they will be helping. He said that although there is still a lot to do, in the last 5 years maternity and child health care services have been improved across thirty-two regional health centres. The ability to detect pregnancy related complications and take timely actions clearly shows the impact of the quality of the education. Zelalem congratulated them on their outstanding achievement and said that they can rest assured that the unreserved support of the College will go with them wherever they are.

### **Obstetric Fistula - The Final Battle in Ethiopia.**

Drs Reginald and Catherine Hamlin started the fistula repair work more than 50 years ago. Today about 50,000 patients have been relieved from this awful situation and many are living a relatively good life. There are still many more women suffering from fistula injuries, but as well as these, there are many more suffering from untreated urinary incontinence problems which could be Pelvic Organ Prolapse. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has already started to look into this problem. The Fistula Hospital used to manage POP cases some years ago but this was discontinued because of the overwhelming number of obstetric fistula cases. It is hoped that eventually the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital will be transformed into a Maternity and Reproductive Health Teaching Hospital and the five outreach Fistula Centres into Maternity Hospitals.

**Staff Profiles: Ato Asfaw Nigussie.**



I am a qualified Accountant (ACCA) and I joined Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia in January 2009 as the Financial Planning Manager. In November 2012 I was promoted to Finance Manager. I am very happy while doing my job here at the Hamlin Fistula Hospital and I fully support all of my sister-patients who are suffering this fistula tragedy.

In May 2015 I was married to a lady called Hiwot Belayneh who is a pharmacist by profession. The wedding was at an Ethiopian Orthodox church, **Saint Egziabher Ab Church** in Addis Ababa, where I have attended since my Sunday school days.



The red clothing symbolises the blood of Christ and the white doves symbolise the Holy Spirit resting on the married couple.



*Thank you, Asfaw, for allowing us to print these lovely photos of your Wedding Day.*



**Tigist, Head Stoma Nurse**

My name is Tigist Debebe and I have always lived in Addis Ababa. I have a handsome husband and two lovely children. The firstborn is Abigail Mulugeta who is 4 years old and Noah Mulugeta who is 2 years old.

I am a nurse by profession and have a Bachelor's Degree in clinical nursing. I have worked in different hospitals and organisations. Since 2009 I have been working here at the Hamlin Fistula Hospital as a stoma nurse. I love working here and the hospital gives free holistic care to all patients. Over a long period of time I have come to know many trustees who continue to support these patients in every aspect of their need with passion and dedication.

My work here involves giving pre-operative counselling and training for patients who need diversion surgery. These patients have severe damage to their bladder and sometimes kidney failure due to the obstetric fistula.

Here I am wearing my anatomy apron which helps me to explain to my patients what is going on inside their abdominal area and what will happen when they have had their surgery.

These patients are severely traumatised physically, psychologically, spiritually and socially.

Post operatively I do follow-ups on stoma care and management. I also manage the distribution of stoma appliances for each of the patients according to their needs. I am responsible for 248 patients who have had ileal conduit operations, approximately 63 with Mainz II pouch operations, 10 patients with bladder augmentation and 7 who have had Mitrofanoff surgery.



As you can imagine, I need to keep copious records in my very big record book!

*(This is a picture of me with my very big record book)*

I have visited the Hollister Company in Ireland and participated in a two-day seminar. I followed the complete process of how urostomy bags are made. Afterwards I was able to visit my UK family, Malcolm Hewitt (UK Trust) and his wife where I spent an unforgettable time with them. I love them very much and say 'God bless them'.

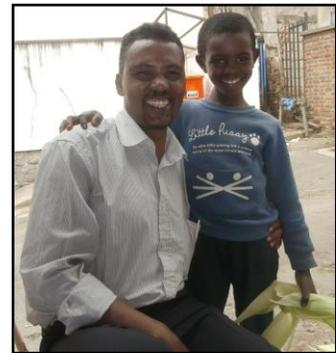
## Patient's Story

My name is Yetemwork Haile and I am 27 years old. My home was in a small village called Growa but I now live in Addis Ababa in a rental house with my young nephew who is 8 years old. I have no money to send him to school so he helps me here each day at the Fistula Hospital.



I suffered a fistula injury in 2008 and my injury was so severe I needed an ileal conduit operation and Hamlin Fistula continues to supply me with stoma bags. I earn my living by running a small business on the Hamlin Fistula compound.

*Chaplain Zenebe  
with Yetemwork's nephew.)*



Dr Hamlin has allowed me to have a small hut here which is my shop and I sell coffee, soft drinks, popcorn, boiled and

roasted maize, (our sweetcorn) as well as Vaseline, combs, ear-rings and traditional Kolo. My customers are kind hospital staff and patients. I am very happy working here.

*Jean and Phillipa with Tigist.  
On two days we bought coffee and maize  
and sat with Yetemwork and her nephew.*



We send out from UK consignments of supplies from time to time and we have often wondered what condition they are in when they arrive.

A consignment arrived while we were there; we thought they had travelled well.

When we visit our hospitals in Ethiopia we hear of so much sadness and heartache in the lives of the patients. We hear stories from young women who have lost everything they ever dreamed about. Their lives have truly been devastated and for many, healing in body, mind and spirit will take a long time. The memory of hearing the patients' stories will never leave us. We can't imagine what it must be like to live for many years as they have lived. And there is no better reason for us to do all we can to promote our charity – Hamlin Fistula UK. The funds we raise are to rebuild the patients' lives to enable them to return home and be reintegrated into their society again from where they were once abandoned because of their humiliating illness and shame. With your support, you can help us to show them that we believe in them and want to help them back to a new life. They are always in our hearts. Please help us to continue this work.

### **Mamitu – from patient to surgeon.**



Our own surgeon, Mamitu Gashe, came to the Princess Tsehai Hospital in Addis Ababa because her labour had gone horribly wrong. Mamitu came from a remote Ethiopian village called Shoa, and was married at the age of 14. At the age of 16, she became pregnant and after four days of labour she eventually delivered a stillborn baby. She suffered severe damage internally and had to undergo several operations. Drs. Reginald and Catherine

Hamlin saw great potential in Mamitu and took her on as a nurse-aide when their own Fistula Hospital was opened in Addis Ababa. She began changing bed linen and started helping out during surgeries. Mamitu was soon helping Dr Reg. Hamlin as his theatre assistant.

One day he said to her, “Would you like to operate and I will be your assistant today?” She proved to be a natural leader and soon started routinely performing fistula repair surgery.

Now Mamitu is one of the world's most experienced fistula surgeons and regularly trains other doctors who visit from around the world. She, along with the Doctors Hamlin, was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal College of Surgeons in England.

Surgery is a lonely and sometimes frightening time for all of the patients, nearly all of whom are poor country girls who are a long way from their families. Some of them feel isolated by

language differences. (There are 80 different languages in Ethiopia.)

All fistula patients, regardless of religion or tribe, are treated free of charge. For those without complications, recovery is quite quick with most of them out of bed within a few days and discharged within a couple of weeks. The nurse-aides were once fistula patients and they provide the extra love and empathy that the patients need. Our fistula surgeons work with dedication, they surely are our heroes.

Dr Hamlin loves all of the staff. She once said, “They have been a wonderful support to me and I love them like family”.

And finally, from Dr Hamlin:-

*“Our Minister of Health is behind all our work and he is confident that we will be able to eradicate fistula. He predicts a far earlier date than I do! I am encouraged by the many wonderful and dedicated people with whom we work. They are all so keen and working very hard to make positive change possible”.*

**We at HFUK thank you for your continuing support.**

**Dr Hamlin and her staff are appreciative of all we do and she says, “Treating a woman with fistula gives back a life and also a mother, a wife, a daughter and a productive member of society. Life with fistula is not much of a life at all”.**

**In their first hospital Dr Hamlin would often say, “When fistula patients turned up at out-patients they would be pushed to the end of the line. My husband, Reg would go to them, put his arms around them and say, “You are the most important to me today. I will see you first”.**

*John Chassar Moir was a professor of obstetrics and gynaecology in Oxford who achieved distinction for his repair of vesico-vaginal fistulae. He wrote: No branch of surgery calls for greater resource, never is patience so sorely tried and never is success more dependent on the exercise of constant care both during operation and even more perhaps, during the anxious days of convalescence. But never is the reward greater.*

The Hamlins first came to Birmingham in 1967 on a fundraising tour. Dr Reginald Hamlin lectured at the University of Birmingham, which has a Medical School with

an outstanding record as a teaching hospital. The Charity was formed immediately after this visit to support them in their wonderful healing work.

**There are many ways you can support us.**

A direct gift of cash

A regular gift by 'standing order'

A gift by CAF cheque

Payroll giving

A CAF Card or Credit Card through our secure website– just click on 'Ways of Giving'. There are special arrangements to give relief from Inheritance Tax on bequests, and from Capital Gains Tax on gifts of shares.

**If you wish your contribution to be a Gift Aid donation, please complete and sign the form below and return it to the Company Secretary**

Mr Laurence Parkes,  
Hamlin Fistula UK,  
4 Nimmings Road,  
Halesowen,  
West Midlands, B62 9JJ

Please accept the enclosed donation for the work of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital through the Charity **Hamlin Fistula UK**.

Cheque attached £.....

Title..... Forename(s).....

Surname.....

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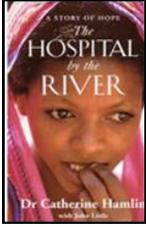
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**(See pages below)**

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**Orders by post will be despatched on receipt of payment**



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Qty: .....Book(s) @ £8.00 (within UK) £ .....



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**“Two for One”**

This 16 page soft cover A5 book tells the story of the life of a fistula patient. £1 each or by post -4 copies for £5

Qty: ..... X 4copies @ £5



**Bookmarks**

£1 each or by post – up to 15 bookmarks please add £1

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