

Isabeau Walker

At first sight, Isabeau's career had a false start when her application to Cambridge was not successful, but she **was** accepted by Kings College London, where she did her pre-clinical training. She then applied to undertake her clinical training at Addenbrookes Hospital and consequently ended up with a medical degree fromCambridge. This, I think, is an early indication of the determination which defines both her and her career. It is also worth mentioning that her son Sam was born 2 weeks after her finals and so Isabeau started her house jobs in Canterbury as the proud mother of an infant boy. She stayed in Canterbury for her early anaesthesia training but had decided to sub-specialise in paediatric anaesthesia and duly got an SR post at St Thomas' Hospital rotating to GOS. She later took an out-of-programme specialist PICU post there as well.

She started her Consultant life at Lewisham but after 3 years Angela Mackersie, well known as a talent spotter, managed to persuade her to return to GOS where she took a post which included cardiac and cleft lip and palate lists.

Her early time at GOS was comparatively quiet (if you consider being College Tutor and Leading the Thames Paediatric Anaesthesia Group quiet) but in 2005 she went to rural Uganda with a cleft surgeon. There she became aware of the terrible effect that poor resources, lack of training and absence of structure had on outcomes in low-income countries, where anaesthesia mortality was between 100 and 1000 time greater than that in the developed world. She also noticed that lack of structure was also possible in less resource poor areas such as GOS!

She realised that the newly introduced WHO Surgical Safety Checklist would be a way of introducing a suitable structure to address this and set about making GOS an early adopter in the UK and facilitating its roll out in Uganda and then in other African countries.

Although the application of a pulse oximeter is part of the Sign-In on the check list, 78,000 operating theatres worldwide did not have access to one in 2010. Isabeau's next task was therefore to join the Global Oximetry project of the Association of Anaesthetists and the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesia. This project has famous names such as Atul Gawande and Iain Wilson associated with it, but I can assure you that Isabeau was the person doing most of the leg work. This project has been responsible for the commissioning of a cheap, simple, and robust pulse oximeter - the Lifebox - and the successful introduction of oximetry into countless operating rooms in the developing world.

The third problem that she'd identified was the absence of structured training. She therefore set about developing and co-editing the Safer Anaesthesia From Education - or SAFE - courses. She started with SAFE Obstetrics and moved on to SAFE Paediatrics with Michelle White and then SAFE Operating Room. These courses have now been rolled out in sub-Saharan Africa and over 45 low and middle-income countries throughout the world and, suitably modified, the paediatric course is also being taught in the UK.

During this period, she was an elected member of the AAGBI Council becoming Membership Secretary, Co-opted APAGBI link person and finally Vice President.

In her clearly copious spare time, she has written papers and chapters on fluid balance in children, the AAGBI's guidance on the management of anaesthesia in sickle cell patients and, with Ian James, the book 'Core Topics in Paediatric Anaesthesia'.

Isabeau has now retired and moved to Devon but it's no surprise that it's not for a quiet life as she's involved in the local conservation society and is a village hall trustee. She has a

grandson - Reuben, 2 dogs and has just taken in a Ukrainian family comprising a mother and 2 teenage boys!

For these services to paediatric anaesthesia and other reasons too numerous to mention, it is a great pleasure to propose Isabeau Walker for Honorary Membership of the Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland.

Bob Bingham
Past President APAGBI