



Nicci Maxwell

Link Letter no. 19 | August 2023

Contact details:

drniccimaxwell@gmail.com

Blog: niccimaxwell.wordpress.com



Location: Kisoro, Uganda



What I do: Providing paediatric and neonatal medical care to the community, and providing training, mentorship and support to local healthcare workers.

Dear friends,

Hello from Oxford! I've been back for a few weeks and I am gradually adjusting to life in the UK again. I am really missing my Ugandan friends and colleagues, but it's been a joy to receive a WhatsApp message from someone in Kisoro almost every day since I've been away from them.

My final few months in Kisoro were filled with all the usual activities including work at Potter's Village, the Catholic hospital and in the Batwa community. It was quite a busy time and I was finding I needed to rest even more than usual to enable me to function and get things done, especially after having another episode of pneumonia in May that confined me to bed for nearly a week. At work I was concentrating hard on ensuring all the teams I had been working with really knew that they were competent to continue without me. I feel sure that they will all manage well but do pray that they will have confidence in their abilities and continue to do great work in my absence.

One of the highlights of the last few weeks in Kisoro was the wedding of two of our Potter's Village staff – Davis, our senior clinical officer, and Esther, one of our nurses. The day before the wedding, the bride's family usually host a giveaway ceremony with lots of food, entertainment, speeches, prayers and gift giving. During the giveaway the bride-to-be is formally given to her future husband and his family and the dowry is handed over. The wedding and reception are then hosted by the groom's family. Both were wonderful occasions and we'd arranged our work in the medical centre to allow every member of staff to attend at least one of the celebrations. Please pray for Davis and Esther, two of our key staff in the medical centre, as they begin their married life.

My departure was an excuse for even more parties! I had dinners and coffees with so many friends at their homes or out in town. My colleagues at the Catholic hospital put on a wonderful meal, topped off with a fantastic pink cake made by one of the staff. The biggest event was probably my farewell from Potter's Village. Almost every one of our 60+ staff was there as well as some of the clergy from the diocese, and even some former patients and their families. Tents were put up in the Potter's compound and dozens of chairs



The amazing clinical officers who will continue the work at Potter's Village: (L-R) Davis, Rodgers and Hyloy.

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were set out for all the guests. We had food and drink, speeches, a brilliant “stethoscope” cake, more speeches (no Ugandan party is complete without speeches), lots of photos and many, many tearful farewells. I also received an almost overwhelming number of gifts including original paintings by a local artist, ornaments, wall hangings and lots of beautiful pieces of fabric.

It was great to arrive in the UK, with all my baggage, to some lovely warm weather – one less shock to the system! I have been getting used to large and well-stocked supermarkets, speed limits and road rules that are limits (rather than challenges to be overcome!), and the fact that no one seems to use cash anymore. I have spent time in Oxford, South Wales and the South West and North West of England so far and I have several weeks of

travelling still to go. Despite the limitations of fatigue and illness, it has been wonderful to see friends and visit some of my link churches. I've managed a trip to the beach, a friend's wedding, some scenic short walks, some lovely drives, an evening at the Keswick Convention, a few days at the CMS People in Mission conference and plenty of catch ups over meals or cups of coffee.

The NHS, despite all the negative press it regularly receives, is being very helpful in trying to get to the bottom of my persistent fatigue and other symptoms. I've had an appointment with an excellent and sympathetic GP and I'm having a series of investigations too. Please pray that I will have the energy I need to achieve all that I need to and also that I will soon have a diagnosis and a plan to return to full strength again.

In September I will be moving to Liverpool to embark on three months of formal study in tropical medicine. I have found accommodation that is only a short commute from the School of Tropical Medicine and within budget (nothing short of a miracle!). I'm really looking forward to consolidating my existing knowledge as well as learning lots of new things. I hope this will be good preparation for whatever and wherever my next assignment will be. Please pray that I will make the most of the study opportunity and then recognise the right opportunity at the right time for the next adventure that God has planned for me.

Thank you for your continued support for me through CMS and in prayer.

With much love,

Nicci



Photos from top to bottom: The marvellous stethoscope cake; Potter's Village team photo taken at my farewell; Outside the church with Davis and Esther at their wedding; With Allen in our traditional outfits at Esther's giveaway.



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