



Mike and Fiona's Christmas Newsletter 9th Dec 2019



Dear Friends and Family,

We wish you all a very happy Christmas wherever you are.

This Christmas we are in Nepal and there is plenty of time to reflect on Advent and the birth of Jesus. As my late Aunt Louise once wrote in a Christmas card, "Emmanuel, God with us.....and that makes all the difference."

Our church is expecting over 1200 on Christmas day and we will be using an outdoor venue. There will be drama, carol singing, dancing AND a huge bhoj (feast) served by the didi/bahinis (ladies), which will be delicious as always!

Mike and I were home in the summer for several months and visited our mothers who are doing very well at 91 and 93 despite various health challenges. It is hard to leave them, as they both live on their own, although they have help from carers and friends.

Luke and Fran visited the UK for 3 weeks from Australia and we all had a wonderful family weekend together celebrating Lydia's birthday. On the hottest day of the year we canoed down the river near Hay-on Wye, went swimming and had a picnic while Fiona's mum sat under a tree in the shade watching the fun!

Fiona had a couple of health issues, including glaucoma, which thankfully is now well controlled.

It was good to spend time with friends and family and go to our church in Bodenham but we are sorry we didn't get to see everyone this time.

We were invited to Putson church where Fiona loved telling the ladies group about life in Nepal. They faithfully raise money for the old people's home at Naya Gaon church.

The Ear Hospital is going from strength to strength. Patient numbers rise each month and the current three Nepali surgeons are all making good progress. One (pictured) was recently very pleased when he completed his first mastoid procedure without Mike having to step in. We are about to start an important research project linked with a university in England and have recruited a Master's degree Nepali audiologist to lead that at our end. We are also about to employ and train several more paramedics and nurses to go out and do primary ear health camps and screening. There is a constant stream of patients for surgery and many stories could be told about their experiences. We are hoping to start doing cochlear implants soon. These are very expensive but



make a massive change in a deaf person's life. We have a couple of suitable people in mind to help.



Green Pastures Hospital overall is growing, with more services offered and recent opening of a big chapel/teaching facility. We have lots of staff events, usually ending with dancing! Quite a few visitors and volunteers come through, which is always a help. Right now, we have a group of Australian

nurses and some are helping Mike to research outcomes of operations. Every day brings its small challenges, so it is never dull. But we also see so many grateful people that it is all worth it.



Mike recently presented at a conference about ear disease and hearing loss around the world in Arizona USA; and took a couple of extra days to visit the amazing Grand Canyon.

Mike has also just completed his detailed radio control model boat, for relaxation in the evenings!



We will be coming home in February, Mike for a month and Fiona for longer as we begin to transition gradually back to the UK.

Finding a lead surgeon for the hospital in Nepal is a priority.

There are some new doors opening for Fiona, one of which is becoming a volunteer for Compassionate Communities (Co-Co) in Herefordshire, an initiative for befriending and supporting people who are isolated and often lonely.

We are also looking forward to some holiday time and for Mike with his new sailing boat, "Still Waters" (although I'm not sure the waters will always be so!)

Since I returned to Pokhara in November I've been busy catching up with friends, attending prayer meetings at the hospital and church and organizing a party for the ladies who work for us in INF (more dancing!). We have also been using our landlord's old motorbike occasionally!



In July Fiona went to the British Guiding Overseas camp at Litchfield, with my Lone Brownie from Pokhara. It was good fun and a great opportunity to meet Brownies and Guides from all over the world.



Thank you to all who support us and the work through INF and EAN, we really appreciate it.

We are so grateful to our wonderful 'kids' Luke, Lydia and Abigail and their partners Fran, Jason and Jack for their positivity and encouragement. We are always excited to hear about their latest experiences, jobs and amazing lives.

We wish you every blessing in the coming year.

With love from,
Fiona and Mike

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