

Welcome to the 9th Friends of Nixon newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about the developments at the Nixon Memorial Hospital, Segbwema, Sierra Leone and the projects that Friends of Nixon (FoN) have recently been supporting thanks to the generous donations to the charity.

In this newsletter...

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- Supporting Friends of Nixon



A visit from the President!

At the beginning of the year Nixon Hospital received a visit from the new President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Julius Maada Bio.

During his speech he explained that the Government would now be working with the Hospital Board and the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone to oversee the running of the hospital.

The exact details of the collaboration are yet to be finalised but Friends of Nixon looks forward to seeing the positive changes that may come from the partnership and to continue to be able to support the hospital and the population of Segbwema and its surrounds in a way that meets the needs of the hospital and its people.



What a load of rubbish!

One of several steps the hospital is taking to improve infection control and sanitation on the hospital site included a review of its waste management. The hospital made a successful application to FoN for support in relation to this.

As a result, 24 metal bins have been instated throughout the hospital site. The sturdy metal bins have a secure fastening at the bottom to release the waste. There is also a designated member of the grounds staff who takes a wheelbarrow around each day to empty the bins and dispose of the waste.



The hospital has also ensured that hand washing equipment is available throughout the hospital wards and in the Outpatients department.

They've got the power!

Solar power was installed at the hospital a few years ago through an EU funded project. This provided much needed electricity to not only light the hospital wards and other areas of the compound but also enabling life saving equipment to be available at any time day and night, for example the oxygen concentrators on the wards. Friends of Nixon have worked with the hospital management to support the maintenance of the solar power system, including sourcing and shipping a new solar inverter to replace a faulty one in the system. This type of support illustrates the benefits of our long term partnership and how we can ensure the long term value of larger infrastructure projects continues to be realised.

Photos: Solar panels and solar power system building with inverters, air conditioning unit and electrician Alpha.



Essential Medicines for patients

The partnership between Friends of Nixon and the hospital to ensure continual access to essential medicines is now in its final year of the initial commitment. Together with the hospital management, the trustees will evaluate the impact of this provision of vital medicines over the past four years and consider the next phase of support for the hospital in this critical area in the context of current developments the hospital.



Developments at the lab...

After numerous failed attempts to fix the Hemocue – a piece of equipment that measures haemoglobin in blood, a vital test for unwell patients, Friends of Nixon sourced and shipped and new Hemocue for the lab. This will ensure that blood transfusion, a potentially life saving but not risk-free treatment, can be used appropriately in both children and adults. It will also help the clinical team diagnose, manage and assess patients' response to treatment.



Phillip Fofana (photo above) was previously supported by Friends of Nixon to complete further training in technical laboratory skills. He, along with the rest of his team are integral in the work that takes place in the laboratory to support patient care.

Earlier this year the laboratory team were joined for a couple of months by a Biomedical Sciences student from the UK. A great learning opportunity for all!

Staff Training and Development

Friends of Nixon is currently supporting one nurse at the hospital to further her expertise by gaining the 'State-registered Nurse' qualification. Rachael Koroma is in her final year and near to completing her training. The hospital looks forward to welcoming Rachael and her new skills back on to the wards at the hospital.

Over the last year, several of the current staff have chosen to sit or re-sit their WASSCE (West African Senior School Certificate Examination) in order to gain the qualifications they require to apply for further or higher education courses. We look forward to hearing from those staff in the next few years with applications and aspiration for further training that will improve the skill mix at the hospital.

A Family Visit to Nixon

In February of this year Rob (Chair of FoN) and Janna (Trustee of FoN) visited Nixon Methodist Memorial Hospital. Having lived and worked there for a year in 2013/14 they were keen to get back for a visit to see the developments of the hospital, take a look at what FoN have supported and catch up with old friends. Only this time they were not travelling alone, Benjamin (3.5 years) and Theo (13 months) joined them; their first African adventure.

Janna shares some thoughts on their visit...

'You're off on holiday? Anywhere nice?'

'Yes, Sierra Leone!'

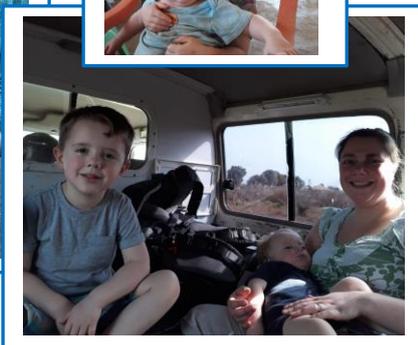
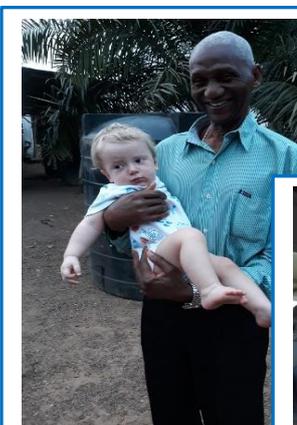
What, with the children?!

I won't deny there weren't aspects of taking two small children to rural Sierra Leone that worried us a little but with a bit of careful planning and experience of having lived there pre-children, we were mostly excited about the adventure and being able to, as now a family of 4, return to a place so close to our hearts, see old friends and introduce our boys to those we speak of so frequently at home.

Although a flying visit (this time!), in-country for 9 days and at the hospital for 5, the children got a true flavour of life in Sierra Leone. As usual the hospital accommodated us wonderfully and were so welcoming to us, the boys and Rob's mum Hazel, who came with us to help out with the children.

Whilst at the hospital Rob and I were able to meet with staff, visit wards, discuss the developing situation at the hospital as well as see, in situ, all the projects that have been supported by Friends of Nixon over the last few years. From functioning solar power to purified water on site to a new classroom, much progress had been made since I was last there in 2014. The pharmacy was well-stocked, the mapping project overseen well and it became a family game to see how many bright blue metal bins we could spot around the compound – 24 of which were recently installed as part of their waste management programme.

It was a delight to see familiar faces of staff, looking healthy and happy in their work. The introduction of the Government Free Healthcare Scheme meant wards were fuller than they had been for a while and what a joy to see 'Mama Kabba' (Cecelia) thriving on the maternity ward, having completed training to be a midwife two years ago, support by Friends of Nixon.



And, as for the children, Benjamin loved playing with toy cars with his new found friends outside the house we stayed at in the compound. Theo loved getting filthy in the dust the dry season brings and for the first time in 13 months slept right through the night, making for a very happy Mummy and Daddy!

Benjamin looks for Sierra Leone on the World Map on his bedroom wall every night before bed and asks when we are going back.

So, in answer to 'What, with the children?!'

Yes! Absolutely with the children. It was wonderful, they loved it and are still talking about it and hopefully we'll be back there again in the not too distant future!

A busy maternity ward!

With the introduction of the Free Government Healthcare Scheme at the hospital (which includes pregnant women and lactating mothers), the maternity ward has had an increase in numbers, keeping “Friends of Nixon-trained” Cecelia & Fatmata and the other midwives very busy! In applying the knowledge learnt over 2 years at the University of Makeni, they are proudly caring for women with a range of complications before, during and after child birth, aiming to keeping mothers and their babies as safe as possible.

Cecelia made a request to Friends of Nixon for some further teaching equipment for the maternity team. As a result, a model pelvis and foetus, gestational dating wheels as well as a kind donation of newborn cardigans have recently been shipped to the hospital.



Cecelia with her patient Kadiatu and her new born on maternity ward. Kadiatu was able to have her Caesarean section for an obstructed labour free of charge due to the ‘Free’ healthcare scheme, preventing long term complications for her and her baby.

(Photo taken and used with Kadiatu’s permission)



Midwife Cecelia Kabba with Nurse Betty on the maternity ward.

The Next Generation

The final cohort of nursing students studying the State Enrolled Community Health Nursing (SECHN) course at Nixon at their morning worship in the chapel.



The Government announced that the SECHN course will cease to be offered at the end of this academic year. The Government are making changes to the healthcare training courses that can be offered countrywide. The Nixon Nursing School, with the Government are still considering their options about which other course may be offered through the hospital.

Water purification system and distribution

Last year Friends of Nixon funded the purchase and installation of a water purification system. The enterprise ensures clean, purified water is available on the hospital site and has gone from strength to strength. The hospital takes packet water out to be sold in the villages. With demand increasing and with profits over the year they have been able to purchase a larger truck to distribute the water. There are now several young people from the village working to process, package and distribute the water; providing an employment opportunity for local people.



Come and join us!

Do you know anyone looking for a new challenge?

Friends of Nixon continues to look for voluntary medics to spend time at the hospital.

See the advertisement on the final page.

If you know anyone that might be interested or are able to display the advertisement please get in contact!

For further details contact Robert Burnie

Robert.burnie@doctors.org.uk

Potential Future Projects...

The hospital is in the process of undertaking a review of **water management** at the hospital to facilitate medium to long term water supply security. There is a network of storage tanks and pipes that are many years old throughout the hospital; once rehabilitated, these may be a useful component to meet the hospitals water needs, possibly with the addition of further bore hole wells. Once the review has taken place and priorities identified, Friends of Nixon will welcome an application to support this work.

Following the success of the community latrine building programme, we have recently approved funds to improve the **latrine facilities on the hospital site**, facilitating safe sanitation together with comfort and privacy for patients, staff, and visitors.

We are also exploring with the hospital how best to provide support to upgrade the autoclave sterilisation system used in the operating theatre to **ensure safe surgical practice**.

The hospital management and signatories from FoN presenting the donations to family members.



Following the Ebola epidemic across Sierra Leone money was donated to Friends of Nixon specifically to support the Ebola relief effort. Initially some of the funds were used to support immediate needs at the hospital e.g. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and then to fund informative healthcare workshops for local village leaders and a programme used to map the spread of diseases within the area. Friends of Nixon had a small amount of donation money remaining which it was agreed would be given as a one off donation to each of the families of the members of hospital staff who lost their lives to Ebola to help meet some of the family welfare needs following the loss of the main wage earner.

Thank you for your continued support!

We are immensely grateful for the generous support we receive from individuals, trusts, groups and churches. We could not continue to support the hospital without you!

If you wish to donate either on a regular basis by **standing order** or a **one off donation** please contact our treasurer Robert Dixon *11a Denbigh Road, London, W11 2SJ*/Robert.dixon@hotmail.com

OR

donate directly to Friend of Nixon Memorial Hospital, Lloyds Bank Sort code 30-97-41 Acc. No. 02687413

See also details about **online donation** through **wonderful.org** below and please remember to **Gift Aid** if you are eligible (see form below).

For general enquiries or to discuss the possibility of a trustee speaking on the charity's work please contact our Chair Dr Robert Burnie - Robert.burnie@doctors.org.uk

wonderful

It's 'Wonderful'!

Due to BT MyDonate ceasing business we have moved our online donation provider to wonderful.org. For those who wish to make one off donations to the charity please follow the link below:

<https://www.wonderful.org/charity/friendsofnixonmemorialhospitalsegbwemaSierraleone>



SINGLE GIFT AID DECLARATION

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and authorise *Friends of Nixon Memorial Hospital* to reclaim the tax through Gift Aid on my donation of £.....

Title:..... Surname:.....

Forename(s).....

Address:.....

.....

..... Post Code:.....

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

To qualify for Gift Aid what you pay in Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax must be at least equal to the amount that will be reclaimed this tax year.

Email: Robert.dixon@hotmail.com

Post: Friends of Nixon Attn. R. Dixon, 11a Denbigh Road London W11 2SJ

Nixon Memorial Hospital, Segbwema, Sierra Leone

Medical Opportunity Advertisement: Medical Doctor

Applications are sought for the post of a Medical Doctor at Nixon Memorial Hospital, Segbwema, Sierra Leone. A minimum of 2 years post-graduate medical experience is required (Completion of UK foundation Programme or equivalent) together with full registration with the GMC or equivalent. Experience in obstetrics, paediatrics and emergency medicine is desirable as is some experience of working in a low resource setting or an insight into tropical medicine.

About the hospital: Nixon Memorial Hospital is a mission hospital in rural eastern Sierra Leone, approximately 330km from Freetown. It serves an estimated population of 30,000 providing daily outpatient and 24 hour inpatient care across 5 wards including paediatrics and maternity. It has a functioning operating theatre and laboratory offering basic investigations. It continues on a programme of rehabilitation and progress after its destruction during the Sierra Leone civil conflict which ended in 2002. It was briefly closed during the Ebola Epidemic which impacted significantly upon the hospital, as it did all health services in Sierra Leone. However since the end of the epidemic the hospital has continued to make progress in providing much needed care to its local population and has benefited from a solar project giving the hospital 24 hour electricity. It is currently staffed by one Sierra Leonean doctor and a Community Health Officer supported by a small nursing team voluntary overseas medics. Nixon Memorial Nursing school is attached to hospital and students undertake their clinical experience at the hospital.

The role: Will include provision of inpatient and outpatient clinical care across medical specialities, although there is scope for the successful applicant to additionally focus and potentially lead care on an area of particular interest.

The opportunity will enable the successful candidate to:

- Gain exposure to, and develop skills in managing, common tropical diseases.
- Improve clinical skills and decision making in a low resource setting with minimal laboratory investigations or imaging support.
- Gain leadership skills and management skills through working with a multi-disciplinary team of nurses, midwives and students and being part of the hospital's management team, overseeing the day to day running of the hospital and its strategic development.
- Develop teaching skills and experience through working alongside the attached Nixon Memorial Nursing School.
- Develop clinical improvement processes, protocol or guidelines in their area of interest.
- Play a role in guiding and assisting the re-development of the hospital to meet the needs of its community.

Remuneration: The post is voluntary. A bursary of up to £3000 can be awarded to the successful candidate to contribute towards flights and living costs. Accommodation is provided free of charge as is transport from Freetown to the hospital on arrival.

Registration with the Medical and Dental Council of Sierra Leone is required and can be organized on arrival in country on production of original medical qualifications.

Duration: Applicants should be able to commit for a minimum of 6 months.

Start date: Flexible

Opportunities may also be available for nursing and midwifery professionals, especially those with an interest in education or management.

To apply or for further information please contact Dr Robert Burnie

Email: Robert.burnie@doctors.org.uk Mobile: (+44) 07742765819

(Chair, Friends of Nixon Memorial Hospital, Segbwema, Sierra Leone (UK registered charity no.1145455)