

# Duncalfes' Diaries

August 2017

- Medical checks, election results and long-haul flights
- PNG Notice Board
- General election update
- The next few months ... as far as we know
- The next couple of years ... as far as we know

## Medical checks, election results and long-haul flights

Both at work and at home, this year has landed some surprises on us!

The latest one was when a routine medical check while we were in the UK picked up something abnormal in Nicki's abdomen. It turned out to be an enlarged gall bladder, which needed removing before Nicki could return to PNG. So, while Nicki waited for a date for an op, Michael returned to PNG as planned at the end of June.

Michael landed in PNG on Wed June 28<sup>th</sup>, and the following day Nicki received a surgical appointment for the following Monday. The NHS were outstanding in giving appointments for her quickly. The surgery was routine, her recovery straightforward with care provided by good friends whom Nicki stayed with for a few days. The only problem was that Michael was in PNG, she was in England and not allowed to lift anything heavy for 4-6 weeks.

So ... Michael made an extra round trip to the UK to be her bag carrier. His departure from PNG coincided with the start of some civil unrest in Mount Hagen to do with the general election. The unrest resulted in Mount Hagen airport being closed for a week, and our return delayed by five days. A knock-on effect of all this is that our next trip in September, to meet our newest grandchild, has also been rearranged for a few days later.

All in all, it's meant a lot of long haul flights in quick succession and plenty of opportunity to practise getting over jet lag! But the most important thing is that Nicki has recovered extremely well and that we are back together in the same time zone.



*A British Airways Airbus A380, Michael's accommodation for 13 hours from Singapore to Heathrow and our joint accommodation for 11.5 hours from Heathrow to Hong Kong.*

*Port Moresby to Singapore, and Hong Kong to Port Moresby is roughly another 6 hour flight in an Air Niugini Boeing 767. Moresby to Hagen is another 1 hour in a small Fokker 100.*

*In total it's usually 20 hours flying time. Michael has no interest whatsoever in flying large jets!*

---

# PNG NOTICE BOARD

Both these photos show yet more building supplies being loaded or unloaded into a Twin Otter. Michael hasn't done a lot of operational flying recently, but these are two flights he did in July.

Yet more building supplies - so what? Well, the what is one community with a new school classroom, another with a health clinic.



On the left, for a rural health clinic. Unloaded at Simbai, 16 minutes flight time north-east of Hagen, that was the easy part. The local people then carried the supplies, over 1.5 tonnes of them, for a day over mountain

Above, for a Baptist Union of PNG education project at Lapalama, the airstrip closed for 16 years due to tribal warfare, reopened in 2010, and an entire generation losing their chance of education.

tracks to reach their final destination.



Twin Otter P2-MFT returned to PNG in the middle of July after an avionics upgrade was completed in Mareeba.

Weather radar and new touchscreen GPS units are part of the new equipment.

---

## General Election

The PNG General Election is over and the unrest, mostly confined to the highlands, is over, at least for the time being. The unrest was caused by concerns over reports of electoral fraud, and the declaration of some results before all the votes had been counted.

A new government has been formed, led again by Peter O'Neill, who was Prime Minister of the last government.

## Plans ... from now to December

Richard & Bekah have just had their first child, Ithaka Grace, our second granddaughter. We don't want to wait until next year before meeting her, so we will make a short trip to the UK in September. Nicki will travel ahead of Michael and visit Andrew and his family in America, whom we haven't seen since July last year.



Before then Michael has a considerable number of check flights to do with experienced pilots who are being trained as training and checking pilots. At the start of September he will run the Crew Resource Management module of a Twin Otter ground school.

Nicki has Safety Action Group meetings coming up. These take place every 2-3 months and need a lot of preparation beforehand as well as writing minutes and reports afterwards.

During the last week of October it's time for the annual pilots' meetings again. A lot of preparation will need to be squeezed in between our arrival back in PNG towards the end of September and when the meetings start! Nicki will also be busy with the orientation and training of some new staff who are arriving, including our new Country Director (previously called the Programme Manager), Todd Aebischer and his wife, Connie Lou.

During the final quarter of this year Michael will also be handing over his duties as Flight Operations Manager to colleague Brad Venter. This plan has been in place for a while now as normal succession planning.

## Plans ... from December onwards

We wrote the following in our August monthly News from the Duncalfes:

For at least two years we have been wondering what our long-term plans should be, and quite a few friends have asked us the same question. Although we'd had some general discussions with our Programme Manager here in PNG, and with HR in MAF UK, we'd not felt it was time to make definite plans. However, we have felt it increasingly difficult to bridge the gap between the desire to have more time and involvement with our family, and our commitment to MAF and PNG.

Earlier this year we thought the time had arrived when we should explore what lies ahead more actively. We asked some friends to pray with us about this, including some who prayed with us as to whether we should consider working with MAF in the first place 30 years ago.

The outcome of this is that we are planning to complete our time with MAF PNG at the end of 2018, or early January 2019. If we stay until mid-January 2019 that will make our 25th anniversary of arriving in PNG, which does seem a nice point to conclude.

Plans are already in place for colleague Brad Venter to take over my Flight Ops Manager role at the end of this year. This was part of ongoing succession planning and so fits well with what we're thinking.

Probably early in March 2018 we will return to the UK for about 4 months. During this time we would like to visit all our supporting churches and catch up with as many of you, who have prayed for us and given towards our support, as time will allow. We genuinely feel amazed and grateful for the way the Lord has enabled us to work here through your faithfulness over such a long time.

Brad and his family will return to South Africa for furlough during the second half of 2018, so we will return to PNG for Michael to cover the FOM role while he's away. Once Brad returns towards the end of 2018, we will complete our packing up for the last time.

After that? We don't know. We are open to returning to PNG for short periods to provide support, if that's wanted by the programme. Or maybe we can provide some technical support from a distance, either to MAF PNG or in other programmes. Or maybe it will be something entirely different and outside of MAF altogether. The Lord has been faithful in directing and providing for us before, so we know he will be faithful in directing and providing for us in the future. In the meantime, it is somewhat unnerving and feels strange to look at planning that no longer has our names included.

Looking ahead to next year, we'd really like to visit all the churches who have been just as much a part of our work through MAF as we have been. Dates haven't been fixed yet, but Sundays from March 18th to May 27th will most likely be available. If you'd like a fuller and more interactive time with us than is possible in a Sunday service, then there are more weekdays available than there are Sundays!

Let us know what you'd like and some possible dates.

There isn't space to add our usual Points for Prayer and Praise, but hopefully they can be easily gleaned from what we've written.

Thank you, as always, for your interest, support and prayers.

Michael Nichi



**PNG address:** MAF, PO Box 273, Mount Hagen, WHP281, Papua New Guinea

**Telephone:** 675 5421409; **Mobiles (M)** 675 72549469 **(N)** 675 72491351

**Website:** [www.duncalfes.com](http://www.duncalfes.com) **Email:** [duncalfes@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:duncalfes@yahoo.co.uk)

**Facebook:** [30 Second Prayer Shot](#)

**UK telephone:** 01252 871159; **Mobiles (M)** 07972 405835 **(N)** 07890 440991

**Monthly prayer update:** **News from the Duncalfes.** Contact us if you would like to receive this.

**Duncalfes' Diaries:** MAF-UK posts these for us in the UK. For information on how to support us, to advise a change of address, or to be added or removed from the mailing list, please contact MAF-UK.

**MAF-UK:** Castle House, Castle Hill Avenue, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 2TN

**Tel:** 01303-850950

**Website:** [www.maf-uk.org](http://www.maf-uk.org) **Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/flying4life> **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/MAFUK](http://www.facebook.com/MAFUK)