

December 2023

It's the beginning of December and I'm starting to think about this year's newsletter. Currently, we are in St Martin/St Maarten and the temperature is about 30 degrees whilst at home we hear it is below freezing. The Christmas music is already playing and yesterday they switched on the Christmas tree lights (but only half worked). But we will be back home in time for Christmas.

Overall, it has been a relatively quiet time this year.

We celebrated our anniversary this year by spending a few days in Ledbury in a most amazing B & B, the owners having met in Germany, where the husband was based as one of the main design engineers for the Toyota Formula 1 cars. We had the privilege of being shown his classic car collection together with the chassis of a Formula 1 car hanging on the garage wall.

At the end of February, we attended a concert given by Jacqui Dankworth, the daughter of Cleo Laine and Johnnie Dankworth, it was very good. In June we went to hear Richard Durrant playing in Tunbridge Wells; we have attended many of his concerts over the years.

Caryl's niece, Katy, married Josh on 1st April at Hackney Town Hall, a wonderful art deco building. After the ceremony everyone was taken by (private) London double decker bus for a trip around parts of London whilst enjoying glasses of champagne en route to the main reception.

Caryl has enjoyed a few trips away, the first for 4 nights with both her sisters and her niece on a cruise to Amsterdam. Then in June, a cruise on the Douro with her sister Lisa. In September we went on a cruise on the Rhine and finished in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, despite taking so many precautions, we caught Covid at the last stage. It took both of us 2 weeks to clear and despite the government recommended 5 days quarantine we stayed at home the whole time.

There are regular 'sibling' Zoom meetings with Caryl's side of the family, and in October we had a meet-up at a hotel in Wrotham, Kent.

There have been no changes on Cliff's side of the family but there have been additional great nieces and nephews on Caryl's side. There are now 21 great nieces and nephews between us.

We've had some work done on the garden, but it was more maintenance than anything else. We had solar panels installed last October/November and just after that had been completed we found the central heating boiler needed placing. Cliff still does some woodworking in his workshop (that continues to fill up).

Family History research continues when there is time. Christopher Baughen in New Zealand is looking at the records around Great Rollright to see where the lines join in the early periods. It always helps to view through other's eyes. Cliff has taken an autosomal DNA test which is showing results on his mother's side. He's still looking for more results on the paternal side (Y DNA test taken many years back).

Cliff has been notified of a few births, marriages and deaths but please let him know of any you are aware of.

Cliff and Caryl