

Garden



This year's raised vegetable beds have had mixed results. We did have the best pea and sweet corn crops ever. Even in December we are still harvesting celeriac, leeks and sprouts. The courgettes started well, but in the end they were disastrous. Fruit trees and bushes did moderately well, although the ripe apples were decimated by high winds in September.

Family

Mark started a new job with Leyland Motors in the summer. So he is living in Formby again. The house in Uttoxeter has been sold. Jill is having a more normal family life again and now she has someone to cook for in her new kitchen.

At the end of September, we attended our great-grandson Henry's baptism in Tunbridge Wells. It was a double event, shared with his cousin who is a similar age.

After the Baptism we moved on to Bexley-Heath, Annes' home town.



We took the opportunity to visit two very dear old friends, Roger and Julie Knight. We also visited Danson Park and Hall Place Gardens, created by Anne's father. We were sorry to see how neglected they are, although the tree planted in memory of Anne's

father, is thriving.

Sarah is still working at Bangor University and attending Penrallt Baptist Church. She usually comes for lunch on Sunday and always phones us around teatime, "to make sure you are still alive" as she delicately puts it.



Family Visits



We have been blessed by visits from our family. What a delight it was in May to see Joe and Sarah with Henry, our great-grandson. We enjoyed a sunny day and spent most of it in the garden with Henry learning to crawl on the grass.

We also had a surprise visit in October from Howard's cousin Ian with his wife Julie, daughter Louise, son-in-law Jake and grandson and Felix. They live near Oxford, so it was a real treat for us.

Good news

This year has seen a steady improvement in Howard's health and well-being. He is managing his high-maintenance tracheotomy well. He has had two biopsies, which showed the cancer had cleared completely. He is now having monthly reviews by the ENT team.

Other Activities

Anne is still preaching in the Circuit three times a quarter. We are both writing some of the weekly printed service sheets that are posted to housebound members across the Circuit with no Internet access. Howard helps with the AV system by preparing some of the weekly PowerPoint slide sequences.

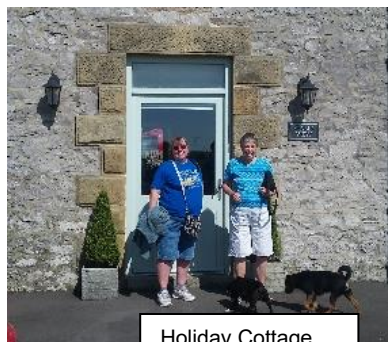
Both of us have been keeping healthy by walking, mainly locally, whenever the weather is suitable. This high rainfall this autumn has not helped. After lunch on Sundays, we usually take Sarah walking for an hour or more along Llanddona beach, in summer after an ice cream at the beach kiosk.



We are delighted that Open the Book at Ysgol Maesgeirchen is going well. Anne is a storyteller and “wardrobe mistress”. Howard is limited by his inability to speak clearly but takes non-speaking parts and looks after some of the cardboard props.

Holidays

In May, we stayed in Tideswell along with Sarah and explored some of the nearby dales. We visited Chatsworth House and Haddon Hall, close by. That brought back some fond memories.



Holiday Cottage



Porth Nefyn

In July, we and Sarah hired a bungalow not far from home, in Nefyn. We visited the far end of the Lleyn Peninsula, taking in Aberdaron and Plas-yn-Rhiw.

In September, we had a week’s holiday in Scargill House, near Kettlewell. The mornings were taken up by a conference entitled “At Your Age ...” Bishop John Finney, aged 91, ably assisted by Felicity Lawson aged 79, encouraged us to resist being put down on account of our age. It was very amusing, but a very realistic approach to growing old disgracefully. We have been pushing the boundaries ever since!

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Happy Christmas Nadolig Llawen

Wooden Nativity from Bethlehem



While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for their baby to be born. Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no spare room available for them. Luke 2:6-8