

## 2016 – Interesting Times

Well, apparently we're now entering the "post-truth" era, in the wake of the fiascos that passed for the EU Referendum and the US Presidential Election, so I can tell you anything I feel like... I'll leave you to pick out the shreds of truth from the following account of our 2016.

Early in the New Year Peter & Emily took off on their winter travels again; this time to Germany. Their destination was Cologne, where they spent a few weeks on a *Help Exchange* renovating a house. The people they were helping were very hospitable to them and made them feel part of the family. On their way back they spent a couple of days exploring Hamburg.

As planned, our daughter-in-law, Heather, had bowel surgery in February when the primary bowel tumour was successfully removed. Around this time scans showed some small spots of cancer in her lungs so she had to go back on chemo six weeks after the surgery. She continues on chemo and we are waiting for a scan result. The medics are hoping to treat the tumour spread using ablation (a type of radiation given through a needle). Despite all this she continues positive and active, enjoying life to the full.



In March Peter and Emily returned to Dol de Bretagne for another season with Eurocamp in France, and our house was empty again. Heath had his second birthday and started Playgroup, which he loves.

In April Lynne enjoyed Susie's Sheffield Hen Do when they all had a restful morning at a Spa, followed by lunch, then a trip to the Escape Rooms where they successfully broke out of Alcatraz. The Mums then left the girls to carry on celebrating. Ian declined his invitation to the stag weekend in Dublin after some persuasion from Lynne; shame [*I'm getting too old for that kind of thing – Ed.*]

In May, Susie had her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and Adia her 4<sup>th</sup>, shortly followed by Liam and Susie's wedding which was a wonderful get-together and celebration. After which, Susie moved to a new job with a firm of solicitors in Sheffield which she is enjoying very much.

We rediscovered the benefit of holidays when we went to Tuscany for a week in July, visiting Lucca, Sienna and Volterra. We stayed with friends at their apartment and felt much better for the break. This prompted us to take part ownership in a holiday narrow boat with Ben and Heather, which is now moored nearby in Rufford, ready for some more warm weather and dawdling along canals.





In September Adia started school, which she enjoys and seems to prefer to Nursery. She's clearly made an impression on the teacher as she was chosen to be Mary in the Nativity Play. We're looking forward to seeing her interpretation of the role! Later that month Lynne had an enforced rest and a few tests after a TIA (mini stroke). She's now on tablets to lower blood pressure. Although confining, it did provide an opportunity to be chauffer driven and to lend out her car which both Ben and Peter appreciated.

During all this Liam and Susie were enjoying their belated honeymoon in Hawaii. They returned to hear Lynne wasn't well (the TIA) and that Susie's job was at risk as the company she works for is merging with two others. We were kept in the dark about the latter until she had some positive feedback about her role next year, which now seems secure.

After all that our October holiday in Madeira seemed very timely! As always, the island was beautiful and warm, though we returned to freezing temperatures in early November. Peter and Emily were back from France, this time with their new dog, Hinault (pronounced Eno) who is a Labrador-Retriever cross. He came from a re-homing centre and is very placid - and seems to understand English!

Their return was well timed as it was all hands on deck helping Ben and Heather move house to Rufford later in the month. They now have a small cottage, which they intend to extend and refurbish, with half an acre of land whilst keeping chickens, rabbits, ducks and maybe a pig or two! Peter and Emily, on the other hand, wonder if they'll ever be able to own a property!



In December Ben had his PhD viva, and we now have two Dr Rodgers' in the family (though I know which one I'd go to if I had unexpected chest pain!). His supervisor and his sponsors have been pleased with his work and he's been given a 12 month research contract to continue it.

Ian is preparing to drop to a three day week in January and hoping his various pensions pay up to facilitate this. Maybe it's time to get that greenhouse now.

At 96, Lynne's Mum continues content in her care home, much happier since her care plan was revised and she is nursed in bed in her room, which has a lovely view of the garden.

So life is busy, but we feel blessed. There is so much to be thankful for especially when we consider what's going on in other parts of the world or even on our doorstep.

We wish you a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to hearing your news.

With our love

Ian & Lynne