



Sloan Christmas Newsletter 2016



So 2016 has rolled around and having looked at the calendar, it's been a busy and exciting year in many ways !

At the start of the year, Hannah was faced with 5 interviews for prospective universities for her BA in Graphics Design. The tour took her to Epsom, Weston-super-Mare, Bath, Norwich & Kingston. Having been offered an unconditional place at her 2nd choice of Bath Spa immediately after her interview, she was on a high, topped only by securing a place at Norwich (her 1st choice) as long as she could obtain a Merit from her Foundation Course. In the end, she received offers from all 5 Unis! To cut a long story short, she gained a Distinction and those of us who went to see her work, although possibly biased, felt her work to be the best on show with detailed books of the processes by which she reached her final display.

She is now loving being at Norwich and we have been humoured by her booklet about Great Yarmouth! She even has her keyboard with her and is back playing tennis at a local club. She has also applied for a paid student internship to develop a logo & website front page for the Broads Landscape Project. Our fingers are crossed as she battles against 5 others for the post. If nothing else, it will give her a real sense of what life as a Graphics Designer involves – such valuable experience.

This year has seen us participating in a number of IBM Retirees' trips. Exeter to Exmouth on the Exeter Ship Canal (no we didn't know there was a Ship Canal there either !!)



We've toured the BBC in London, been to the Carole King Musical which was excellent, Lacock Abbey in the rain, The Mikado (the jury's out on that one!), and The Good Food Show at Olympia!

In addition, Keith has had a 2nd trip to Bletchley Park, visited the Fleet Air Arm & took our friend Rob to Bristol Harbour.

Julie & I went off to Bristol following the degree show in Weston to revisit the SS Great Britain to find the bits we missed previously. In August we also went to Countryfile Live at Blenheim Palace it was so big, there was no way one could do it all!! At the end of November, we went to Blenheim again, this time to see the Palace dressed for Christmas before Christmas shopping in Bedford and then moving over to visit Hannah in Norwich.

Kate has finally been able to have a new bathroom put in to replace the out dated version she inherited. With a large boarded area removed as new pipes went under the floorboards, they have more space and have exchanged an old radiator with a heated towel rail. Both she & Tom are delighted with the results and now they have a shower, they're happy chappies!! In the garden, they successfully experimented with growing veg in the raised bed that Tom had made and along with the many plants they bought for little money at the Martyr Worthy Plant Sale, a war began between Tom & the slugs! It's turning into a pretty garden and hopefully a new mower with a grass box will help the lawn look better!

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Holiday wise, Keith and I spent a few days in the Lake District before going up to Oban to pick up a 1904 ketch "Bessie Ellen" to sail in the



Hebrides. Unfortunately the coldest & wettest weather accompanied by Force 8 gales engulfed us forcing ferries to be cancelled and we were restricted to the Sound of Mull. I was completely frustrated by the inability to get very far due to sailing into a northerly wind going north & a southerly wind going south but Tobermoray was pretty when we did finally get there!! Probably best if Keith describes the holiday not me!!



We revisited the Lakes again in early September to give Hannah a holiday following her brilliant results and ahead of the start of Uni. It was a pity we were quite so far out of Keswick but the resident red squirrels made up for that. Kate &

Tom were also holidaying in Keswick at the same time so I braved a last ramble up Cat Bells flanked by my 3 escorts to make sure I survived!!



Yes it was tough and particularly going down but the views from the top were breathtakingly beautiful !!

Keith & I went on a one day painting course in Derbyshire which was quite exhausting for me as a novice. However, with the guidance given, I was at least able to achieve something similar to Keith's picture! We both also attended a watercolour pencil workshop which I really enjoyed !

Keith & I went on a Thames cruise that Kate had bought him as a Christmas present. It took us up to the Oxford Uni boathouses which were quite fascinating.

We've had some overhanging branches cut back around our lawn and let some sun back in. Our friends Gill & Bob visited us enabling Bob to let rip with his newly acquired hedge laying skills! This opened up a new viewpoint across from our summerhouse over the open fields and brought more light to the pond area.

Following on from that success, another hedge laying session has been booked in for January - weather permitting!!

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Due to the kitchen extension encroaching into the kitchen garden, we set about redesigning it and in September a couple of landscapers turned the design into reality.



So looking forward to being able to use the raised beds for veg etc although things maybe thwarted in 2017 with us being in NZ Feb to April !!

After friends had been talking through their South American trip, they recommended using Trailfinders for our proposed trip to New Zealand. A visit to the shop in Guildford and we were booked in for a 7 week holiday, 3 nights in Singapore on the way out, 2 nights in Bintan and 1 in Singapore for the way back and the rest touring the North & South Islands of NZ. We will be using a combination of car & hotels and use of a motorhome to explore New Zealand with many of our wish list activities already booked in advance. It's so exciting but we're trying to keep focussed on Christmas for now !!!!

I met up with some college friends in July as we celebrated our 40th year of becoming teachers – so scary where that time has gone! We had a lovely day in Chichester taking a cruise up some of the restored Ship Canal. (Yes there's one there too!)

It's been great meeting up with old friends as they've come to stay for a few days. It's such a good excuse to get out and explore this beautiful county in all its glory. The autumnal colours have been amazing this year. If you haven't yet been, try and get to see us in 2017 – Hampshire has lots to offer!!

We had a Sloan family BBQ in August – so good to catch up with all the youngsters who are growing fast !!

We are still involved in bowls & boules, tennis & badminton.

So with December coming at us fast, Julie had an operation to remove a bone from her right wrist on the 9th, Hannah will pitch her work to the Broads Landscape Project on the 12th and Kate is due to start her new job in paediatrics on 14th. We will host Christmas with the 2 girls, Julie and Liz joining us, the Sloan Boxing Day get together will be at Brian's and then we prepare for 2017 and everything that that may hold for us all !!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year