



Sloan Christmas Newsletter 2017



Finally it came - the year of the BIG ADVENTURE

Having been in my head since I was about 14, Keith & I set off to New Zealand on 16th Feb for a no-holds-barred trip of a lifetime! I think we will just gloss over travelling out there & back - just too far & too long!!

A must-go-to destination ... but whilst you're young! Oooh to have hiked / biked through various areas but hey ... it was as truly spectacular as everyone says & Keith was very patient with my must do list built up over 40 odd years!! Many of you I know followed the daily blog which I really enjoyed doing! Can I say what was the best bit? YES!! Just finally being there & seeing almost all of the things I really wanted to see.

For those who missed the blog at the time you can catch up at

February - <https://sloannz2017.wordpress.com/2017/02/>

March - <https://sloannz2017.wordpress.com/2017/03/>

For Keith, his must do day came very near to the end of our time with a 3.25hr glide from Omarama to Mt Cook & back

see <http://www.photobox.co.uk/creation/5033208535>

Followed later that day with a tour at the Mt John Observatory at Lake Tekapo observing the night sky. Even I was completely blown away by the number of stars above my head but sadly I do not have the right sort of eyes to see the colours up there - apparently!!

So the news in brief of our trip:-

Stopover in Singapore on way out & Singapore & Bintan on the way back

North Island - Auckland, Waitangi Treaty Grounds, vast kaori trees, Coromandel, Rotoroa, Hobbiton, Waioma Caves, Forgotten Highway, Wellington.

South Island - Malborough region with wineries & mussels, Christchurch, sadly no whale or train trips due to natural causes, Arthur's Pass, Helicopter flight to the Fox Glacier from Franz Joseph, Queenstown, Doubtful Sound, penguins, albatross, gliding, clay cliffs. Then back to Christchurch & finally returning to the UK on 6th April.

Thankfully for everyone's sanity, we've managed to cut down the 8000 photos to just 3 books, Singapore & Bintan, North Island & South Island. Unfortunately photobox changed their system and we cannot share via the internet, so you will just have to visit and view the actual books.

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Whilst still trying to work out which way was up & get the travel drone out of my head, we picked up Meg who had grown considerable in the 7 weeks we had been away. One forgets what a handful a new pup can be but the bonkers, off the wall, live-wire of a collie was & still is exhausting!! She is slowly getting to grips that she can't just roam anywhere & everywhere as she did on the farm & that there is usually a very good reason for us calling her. Let's just say there were quite a few occasions when "going back" & "get her out of here" were mentioned. She is an intelligent, sweet natured dog ... but with attitude! She's attending obedience training with Keith & foundation agility training with Kate & myself. Since Meg can run like the wind, I let the youth of the family deal with the agility unless Kate is busy!

On the home front I'm still playing tennis when my body allows with a Thursday foursome & coaching on a Sunday. Keith & I are still playing boules & have joined a Club at Basingstoke which plays league matches and, having floodlights, plays during the winter too. For my sins, I have also become the Advertising Manager for the local Itchen Valley News having been assured it was really only busy for about 3 months of the year at renewal time (which is now!!!)

Keith was 65 this year & it was great having his family & a few friends for a large BBQ in the garden. He is still painting and doing pottery. We both went on a cane toppers course in Nottingham which was great fun & whilst Keith was on a painting course in Staithes, Hannah, Meg & I toured around N Yorkshire from Saltburn on sea (where we were staying) to York & Robin Hood's Bay and most places in between!! The girls also gave us an unusual present of a live animals drawing workshop up near Hampstead Heath where one could sketch chameleon, snake, tortoise & gecko (OK I'll confess - I tried ... & then turned to the trusty camera to take photos!! They kept moving except the chameleon!!)

Our friend Bob has continued hedge laying in an attempt to keep the lively Meg from straying too far & this will continue in the New Year!

Tom proposed to Kate when they were on holiday in Egypt In April. The date is set for 2019 so they can save up. Subsequently, I was lucky enough to see the chosen venue with Kate when they first started hunting for a venue. I also had a great fun day out on Kate's birthday with both girls whilst they tried on wedding & bridesmaids dresses for styles !! Introduced us to a whole new use for bulldog clips!!

Hannah thoroughly enjoyed her first year in Norwich & the family went up to see the work at the end of May/beginning of June. In September, she moved into a house with 3 others from her First Year Halls and continues to play tennis at the local club. This November, she turned 21 & celebrated at Norwich on the day & came home the following week for a party with her friends from school, college & Weston. It was a chance for many of her friends to meet her boyfriend Jamie.

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In July we were able to reciprocate hospitality to an ex colleague from my days teaching in Westerham. Jill was a part time teacher who came in to help with the seniors PE options at

Churchill School. She & her husband Ivan emigrated to New Zealand the following year (I know ... I have that effect on people!!!) but we always stayed in touch with Christmas cards & letters. Some 40 years later, they welcomed us into their home in Hamilton during our NZ trip and it was amazing how we could just pick up after such a short time of knowing each other. This summer, they came back to the UK to meet up with family & friends & we were conveniently placed to break a long journey from east to west. We were even able to slot in a visit to the Jane Austen Museum for Ivan!!

In a drive for fitness and to keep up with Meg, we have invested in a fold up electric bike. If it all goes well & we end up fighting over it, we may well have to invest in another but time will tell! Hopefully it will arrive before Christmas!!

Julie is now very busy with being a Church Warden and is having to decide on which things to drop so she can have a life!! She's busy playing table-tennis, walking with the Trefoil Guild, travelling to a variety of places with friends, visiting us & Hannah in Norwich & hopefully she'll manage a newsletter this year to keep you all up to date!

Happy & Healthy Christmas & 2018
plus lots of Joy
From
Jenny, Keith, Hannah, Kate, Tom & Meg