

*Christmas
2016*

2016 has been a much better year for the Derbyshire branch of the Chisman family. Much travelling has been done, relationships have developed and moved on, and the general level of happiness has been raised.

So a good year for us, and we hope yours was too. A *Merry Christmas*, and a happy and prosperous New Year to us, and to all our readers.

The Ruck.

The dining room at Knowle Farm had a carpet with a ruck in it. It has been there as long as I can remember. Liz and I loved our ruck. It was our ruck, and we nurtured it over the years. We didn't try to do anything with the ruck because the man from the carpet shop said that it would always return as it was caused by opening and closing our large Victorian dining table.

However, Henrietta didn't like the ruck, declaring it to be persona non grata and suggesting that we do something about getting it stretched out. I suggested that it would just come back when we open the table, but that cut no ice as we weren't planning on doing the level of entertaining that the table had been used for in the past. So, in came the carpet man again. Bad news - the carpet was too old and the ruck was caused by the backing separating. The only answer was a new carpet. So it was - in due course a new carpet was fitted and it now looks wonderful and ruck free.

However, when we recently went to France for the funeral of my old friend Phil, Henrietta met up with Phil's wife Anne, and my old friends Colin and Lynn. Both Anne and Lynn expressed surprise and admiration for Henrietta's achievement - they both actually remembered the ruck - and the last time either of them was here was in the late 90s.

The Knowle Farm Newsletter

2016 Has Been a Very Good Year.

It's been a good year for me, much, much better than the previous two. Though it hurts to say it, Liz is becoming more and more part of my past as Henrietta becomes more and more part of my future.

Those people who helped talk me through the loss of Liz all said that the first two years are the worst, and so it has proved. I noted that after the second anniversary of her death, I was thinking of her as part of my past, rather than part of a present that I had lost. Letting go of the guilt wasn't easy - still isn't - but it does get easier.

Henrietta and I started the year having only been seeing each other for a few months, but day by day, week by week the relationship grew ever closer. We have been away together for several holidays in the year - two weeks in Lanzarote, a week in Ireland to meet some of her nine siblings, two weeks in the caravan (and any relationship that can stand a fortnight closeted together in a caravan is probably going to last), a week in the Lake District (of which more later), and other sundry days, and



weekends. In all that time there has never been a cross word (although there were plenty of crosswords) and we have slowly adjusted to each others foibles. (Well, I say foibles, it turns out that where I have foibles Henrietta has idiosyncrasies - see the back page.) We have met, and got on well with, each other's families and friends, and things seem to be going well. We both hope so. At this point, I must apologise again for my general lack of communications. As I have said before, Liz was an extremely

good keeper-up with friends and after she died I simply didn't have time to do all the day to day tasks that she used to do, all the day to day tasks that I still do, AND keep up her level of communication. This is made worse by the fact that Henrietta and I now spend a lot of our time together - sometimes in Ashby, sometimes in Hazelwood - so my double work load now has to be done in half a week. A recipe for fraughtness. Please don't think I have forgotten you, it is simply that 24 hours in a day just isn't enough.

A week in Ireland.

We went to Ireland for a week, and one of the reasons was for me to meet some of Henrietta's family (of whom there are many - she is one of 10 children). We had a great week, starting with a night in Dublin a then two nights in Mountmellick where she was

brought up. I met three of her brothers and one of her sisters - all lovely - and we finished our time there with - guess what - an evening in the pub drinking Guinness. A memorable few days.

We then traveled across to the River Shannon to visit another sister, and then on up the coast to Spanish Point (wonderful hotel overlooking to sea), the Cliffs of Moher (great music night), and

Galway. I planned the trip with hotels and restaurants booked entirely on the basis of Trip Advisor "top picks", and hugely successful that was.

We stayed in some lovely places, I met some lovely people, we had some memorable seafood meals, and we heard a lot of Irish music. Some of us even managed to enjoy the odd pint of the black stuff.

New Memories are made in Langdale

I have a timeshare in Langdale, in the Lake District which Liz and I bought many years ago. Liz's parents bought the week before us, so we used to go up there every year and while we each had our week, we would overlap at the weekend and enjoy being together. When her parents died we continued to visit, often with friends, and we both had many happy memories of our lodge.

While Liz was poorly we didn't go for a few years, and we missed it, but in early 2013, when the transplant had gone well, and Liz was recovering, we rented another week and went back. Again, we loved it. Then in the March as Liz was starting to walk properly again, we went up again. One of the most poignant

memories for me is from the journey back. We had pulled in to one of the motorway services to go to the loo, and I sat in the car and watched Liz walk back from the services, and I remember thinking that, if you didn't know her, you would think she was walking normally. That was only a week or so before the sky fell in.

So, Langdale is a place steeped in memories, some good, some bitter sweet, and I was always going to find it difficult to go back. So, when this year Henrietta said she would like to go, and Vicki agreed to come up with the girls, we went with the aim of making new memories, and we did. My two granddaughters and I played in the river behind the lodge, just as I had played with their mum 30 years before. Life was so hectic with them all around that I had no time to dwell, and we had a lovely week.

There was the odd moment, as there was always going to be, but on the whole new memories have been made and I hope we'll be going back for many years.



Beards.

Beards are currently fashionable - and I will leave it up to you to decide exactly what that says about me - but comparing these photos of George Cluney, without being

able to comment on the overall attractiveness of either image, I think the one with the beard looks more commanding. The guy you want flying the plane in an emergency, the surgeon you want doing that critical operation.

What do you think?



Memory

In my early 20s I worked in Switzerland for a time and I bought myself a fairly expensive Omega watch which I hoped would last a lifetime. So far it has lasted well, but recently I took it in for a service, and nowadays it has to go back to

Switzerland which takes a little time. Eventually I got a phone call to say it was ready, but for the life of me I couldn't remember which shop I had taken it to. Fortunately there are only two Omega dealers in Derby (and of course I went to the wrong one first) so I did get my watch back. But hey ho!

Comings (but no goings)

There has been very little recently to report in the "Comings and Goings" section of the newsletter, but this year we may be able to report some new "Comings".

When Henrietta and I were in Ireland this year, at one point we spotted a bug hotel created by a local scout group. This was ingeniously simple - just a pile of pallets with all sorts of stuff in between to make it attractive to various sorts of insects.

Now, I have a great many pallets around the farm and two young granddaughters for whom this could be an interesting challenge, so, on a weekend when they were here (together with two young friends, also two twins, also 7 years

old, who we met when we went to see father Christmas) we decided to build something similar.

We first had a competition to see who could find the most pallets, then selected a suitable spot for the hotel, and then put the first pallet in place. Great fun was then had running round the place looking for suitable "stuffing". Stones, old bits of rotting timber, twigs and branches, grass cuttings - all were grist to the children's mill.

Eventually we finished up with a splendid 3 storey hotel that any bug would be only too happy to visit - see photo.

This was in August, and I am frequently asked if there are any resident bugs. But how to find out without pulling it all to pieces? Suggestions on a postcard please.



Funerals.

Having attended rather more funerals this year than I would have liked, here are a few thoughts for the newly bereaved that I gathered in the months and years after Liz died. Keep yourself busy and when someone says "Would you like to.....", don't think about it, just say yes. Then you may find (all quotes from elsewhere):-

"I've been so busy having fun, that I forgot how sad I am".

"I realised that you don't have to wait for sadness to disappear before you find joy in life again - you can hold both in your heart at the same time"

And should you decide to look around:- "Having someone to do something with is relatively easy, what is difficult is have someone to do nothing with."

Things you learn skiing.

For many years I have wanted to be able to film when I'm skiing. The scenery is stunning, and following two expert skiers such as Sally and Mike down a powdery slope with pine trees either side and the snow billowing out from behind their skis - that is something I would love to capture. So, this year I finally splashed out on a GoPro camera that fixes to my ski helmet. It is controlled wirelessly from an app on my phone, but the downside is that as I ski down a slope with the sun behind me, the camera on my head makes the shadow look like Tinky Winky from the teletubbies.

One of the problems with this set up is that it is sometimes difficult to tell whether the camera is running or not, so I have many bits of film of us going up the lift, and nothing of us coming down again. The skiing equivalent of filming ones feet. However the most embarrassing footage came when I failed to realise the camera was rolling as I went into the gents loo. That shot came as a bit of a surprise to us all as we reviewed the days filming.

Another issue is what to film. Filming from behind is easy, and on one occasion right in front of me, Mike hit a bump at high speed and took off, failed to land successfully, and slid about 100 yards on his bum - much to his chagrin and our amusement. I got most of it on camera, but unhappily it's too far away to make out the details.

The best shots though are when I ski alongside Mike or Sally, and film them. However, as the camera is fixed

to my helmet, and points to the front, this involves me skiing down very steep slopes at high speed while looking sideways rather than where I am going. It can be tricky.

We all now have trackers on our phones so we can see how far we have skied, how fast we went and so on, and top speed does get a little competitive. While Mike I have occasionally hit 50mph (quite fast on skis) it came as a considerable surprise one evening to discover that we had hit 65. We hadn't done anything particularly fast that day - then it dawned. We had left them on in the car on the way home....

(Mike to ghost-wrote the following item for reasons that will become apparent....)

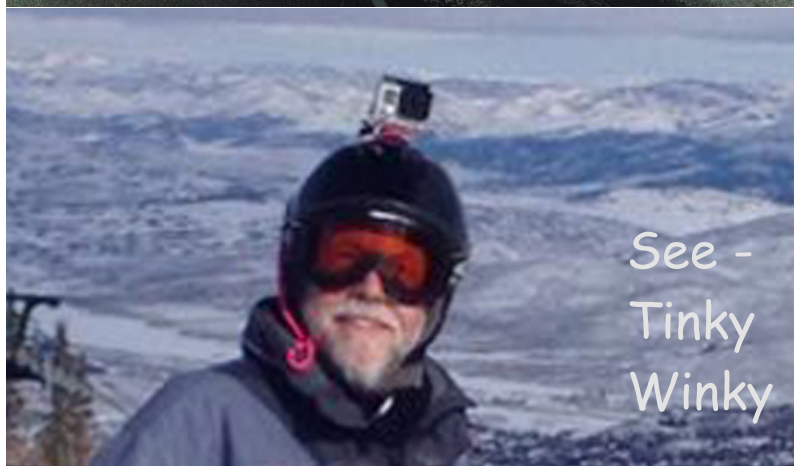
When we are skiing Sally likes to attend a church service on a Sunday, usually held outdoors on the ski slopes. We found the place on the mountain where the service was to be held, and at the appropriate time we dropped Sally there. We agreed with her that we would return in 30 to 40 minutes to pick her up. Mike and I resumed skiing and after the agreed time we returned and waited about 200 yards uphill from where the service was being held. Watching the service I thought that it was probably ending, and so we started to ski discreetly down so that Sally could see us when the service was over. Mike and I skied off towards them, but what I had not realised was that the minister and congregation were standing on deeper snow just away from the smooth piste. I hit this deeper snow while trying to stop, lost control, skied right between the minister and his congregation on one ski, and fell in an ungainly heap a few yards on. So much for a discreet approach!



Hows that for a sky 1



Hows that for a sky 2



See - Tinky Winky

New word of the year.

Ten year old brother of a new born baby filling his nappy - "Dad, it's going to be a poonami"

Dentistry award of the year.

I am terrified of the dentist. In common with a number of folk my age, the school dentist left me with a lifelong terror of the dentist's chair. Liz (and my dentist) understood this, and Liz always sat with me and held my hand as the dentist went about his work. I explained this somewhat unusual duty to a rather bewildered Henrietta early on in our relationship and she, with some misgivings, agreed to take on the role of dentist's chair comforter. This set up was put to the test when I was told I needed a root canal filling - something everyone says to avoid. However, I had up my sleeve (as it were) one or two of the sedative tablets that Liz had to take during one of the less pleasant aspects of her treatment three years ago. I took one of these and the whole thing passed as if in a dream. In fact both the dentist and Henrietta confirm that I actually fell asleep in the middle of the treatment. How's that for a result?

You and Me.

I have learnt this year that you and I do things differently:-
 I'm selective, you're fussy.
 I'm particular, you're fussy.
 I know what I like, you're fussy.
 I eat healthily, you're fussy.
 I have my way of doing things, you're stuck in your ways.
 I have traditions, you're stuck in your ways.
 I have standards you have fobles
 I have idiosyncrasies you have foibles
 I have interesting traits you have foibles.

Who knew 1.

Sir Paul Nurse, president of the Royal Society:-
 "Britain is probably top of the world at producing effective science."

Illuminating idea of the year.

Henrietta's youngest son and family were away on holiday in a caravan on the coast when storm Katie struck. They were all fast asleep when, late at night, the power went off, and in the ensuing darkness, they struggled to find the light. In the end they came up with their son's trainers which would flash when banged on the floor and this enabled them to find a torch. A modern solution to an old problem.

Culinary error of the year.

When we were skiing in January, Mike and I had just finished a Chinese meal and we both decided that what we needed was a bit of fruit pie to finish off with. Fruit pie was, alas, not on the menu so we called in at the local mini-market on the way home and found a cherry pie in the freezer - just what we wanted. Unfortunately, when we got home and opened it, the instructions started with "pre-heat the oven to 400°". The pie was not only frozen, but uncooked. We had to wait until the next day to eat it.

Signs Spotted in Ireland.

In a hotel room



If we smell smoke,
 we will assume you are on fire
 and take appropriate action!

Britain has twice as many Nobel prize winners per capita as the United States. More Nobel laureates are affiliated to the university of Cambridge than to all the universities in France.

Of the top ten universities in the world for science, one country hosts all four that are not in the United States, and that country is Britain.

Lesson of the year (especially for youngsters).

It's impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well have not lived at all, in which case you failed by default.

J. K. Rowling.

Embarrassing Question of the year.

At one of the funerals this year, in a moment of quiet reflection, a young boy chose to ask his mother "Mummy, when are they going to put granny on the fire?"

Auto-correct error of the year.

Text from Giles Brandreth to his wife- "I've just laid the au pair" - should have said "I've just PAID the au pair".

Who knew 2.

A science magazine my granddaughters read regularly said that hen's eggs are sufficiently strong that you can stand on them. This is a fascinating proposition which cried out to be tested so mum bought a dozen eggs and they decided that Grandpa Terry had to be part of the experiment.

My first suggestions was that outside would be a better place to test the theory than the living room! So, out we went, and light-weight Asha was the first to stand on them. That was fine, so then slightly heavier Sophia stood on them. That was fine too, so we decided that mum should try it and to our surprise that was fine (see below) . Finally, it was my turn, and Grandpa Terry's 75kg proved a little to much. So - you can indeed stand on hen's eggs. Who knew?

