

Another busy year for Cheryl and I with quite a bit of traveling and laying some foundations for the future. Both Ryan and Lauren and their families are doing well and we get to enjoy the grandparenting experience often. In all a blessed year!

First travel adventure for us was to Canterbury UK in March for the wedding of the daughter of long-time friends, Nigel and Terri, originally from Durban. It was amazing as the ceremony was held in Canterbury Cathedral which is awe-inspiring. Followed by a fabulous reception in a country barn. A really fun trip with lots of laughter and reminiscing. And while there I was able to meet up with one of my first girlfriends who I had last seen some 50 years ago. She lives with her husband just outside of Canterbury. On the way to Canterbury we diverted to Daventry to meet up with our Aunt Joyce and David. What a wonderful lunch with lots of stories of my dad as a youngster filling in many of the gaps in our memories. Then a quick pop-in to our nephew Warren and Jen before heading back to Houston. A great and busy 4 days!

Next trip was a fun cruise to the Eastern Caribbean in June with our niece Karen, her husband Darren and his parents Brian and Eileen. Ryan, Mer and Eddie joined us for the 7-day voyage that took in Cozumel, Grand Cayman and Jamaica. We love cruising and this was our first experience with Royal Caribbean which we really liked. We had very good weather and were able to spend lots of quality time with all the family. Highlight for Cheryl was swimming with the Stingrays in Grand Cayman!

Next up was a visit to Hong Kong as Cheryl had a meeting there early in September. It gave us the opportunity to meet up with our good friends Peter and Freddie who are South Africans that we had met during their stay in Houston. They were incredibly generous hosts and we managed to see a lot of the City in just 2 days. I must say the infrastructure in Hong Kong is very impressive and we were surprised by the very large expatriate communities.

Then at the end of November Cheryl had a meeting at Heathrow so I tagged along. Great trip which included a super Sunday lunch at a local pub, a wondrous visit to Windsor to see the Christmas lights and a surprise dinner with one of Cheryl's work colleagues from Chicago, Barbara and husband Scott in Piccadilly Circus. I also got to take a trip to Cambridge to meet up with an old work colleague from my days in the 60's at Ndola City Council, Ivan Ekins-Bell. Ivan's son, Ian and wife Helen generously made all the arrangements and got both Ivan and I there on time. Cheryl on the top was a drop-in by Jenny Cox another work colleague from the Ndola City Council computer room days. Our final trip for the year will be on Boxing Day when we head across to UK again, this time to meet up with Ryan, Mer and Eddie and take them for an overnight visit to Warren and Jen. Then they will head back to Houston and we will go up to Hull to visit with Karen, Darren, Brian and Eileen. After a couple of days there we will go back to Warren and Jen for New Years Eve.

Wow – I feel a little breathless just writing about all that!

When we get back Cheryl and I will go into some intense work as we empty our house and move into a smaller house close by. We will be going into a single floor house with a very small garden so much less to maintain. It is very close to where we are now so convenient for both our travel schedules. We will rent for a while until we figure out if we want to go back into the property market.

Cheryl has remained as busy as usual and still works most evenings and weekends. They have been doing a lot of recruiting and are also going through a serious reorganization

so lots of uncertainty and stress to add to the workload. Hopefully there will some indication of the future early in January.

I continue with my work in the local community park and have been managing the infrastructure in the park as well running the major events for the year. I will be looking at whether to continue running the events during next year as it is a lot of work with a limited return. I also went back into the restaurant industry helping out a local owner who needed some management help. Supposed to be just 20 hours a week but usually over 25 and has become too much so giving it up at end of the year. I am still working with Lions Clubs and have declared my intention to run for District Governor in 2 years. I am also spearheading a local child vision screening effort in our community.

Ryan and Mer are still doing very well. Mer is studying for her Doctorate in Education and so that keeps her very busy with her full-time day job. Ryan was able to move back to his own game development company but as a bonus the oil and gas company he was working for decided to outsource all their app development to his company. So, a very sweet deal! Eddie is now just over 2 and full of character and fun. We see them often and babysit whenever we can.

Lauren and Donovan have just bought themselves a new house so will be moving just before Christmas. Donovan had done a lot of work upgrading their house so they got a good price and will move into a much newer and bigger house not too far away from us. Lauren is still working in payroll support but also studying for her CPA qualification. She hopes that she will then be able to work more from home. Donovan is still teaching but is trying to get into a school district closer to home in the new year.

Quite a bit of change in the next few months but hopefully it will stabilize quickly ..