

Christmas Newsletter 2022

26 PALMBROOK AVENUE, HAVELOCK NORTH 4130

rita-norris@xtra.co.nz

Greetings everyone. Once more and I hope that you have a special Christmas with as many family, friends and neighbours as possible.

I am so very lucky that David and Diane have been extremely supportive and I am always in touch with them and they visit regularly. David and I fly our radio control planes and Diane has taken on a role of searching for geological treasures and bringing them home for the enjoyment of my Geology classes. Diane's daughter Ella has just finished year one at Victoria University in Wellington and this year will have a European Christmas. She heads off to the UK in November to stay with family and then heads off to Amsterdam to meet her good friend Amy. In 2020, Amy stayed with Ella while she was at Scotts College in Wellington. She was on an exchange from an International College in Germany and Ella & Amy have always been in close contact. Amy is at University in Amsterdam and with Ella, they will travel to a village near Frankfurt to have Christmas with Amy's parents.

Looking back on my diaries, (yes I still write them) I see that last summer was very hot and we were still in lockdown. As cases of the virus dwindled, we started to slowly ease restrictions, although later than the rest of the world and by mid winter (July), life was eventually going back to normal. The first cruise ships have started to arrive as mask wearing has almost stopped. However, a new virus strain has arrived and cases are rising so what the future holds I do not know. I have had all my injections and not had the virus although all the rest of the family have and recovered. I still wear my mask in supermarkets. However, it wasn't the virus that hit me but in August all my joints became inflamed and I could barely get out of a chair or even out of bed and David was coming to help each day. I had Polymyalgia and after scans and X-rays, I was given Prednisone. This is a wonder drug and within a week I was back to normal and even better moving than two years ago. The high dose has been reduced but it will take time to fully recover. There are side effects the worst being elevated sugar levels in the blood that I monitor carefully with diet and exercise; I walk 3 km each day (down to 41 minutes now). However, I am back to gardening, flying the planes, teaching Geology, Computing, and 85 next month so I cannot complain.

The year actually started with David having a large contract to build vision cabinets that would sit over the conveyor belts of kiwi fruit and monitor the progress with computers and lights. David hired a building and designed the cabinets and Karen helped in the build. When Karen had a medical procedure, daughter, Andrea helped and when she had to go to Auckland, I helped too. The deadline was

completed and the cabinets sent to Te Puke. David then installed the cabinets so they were ready for the harvesting of the Kiwi Fruit.



David building the cabinets he designed; Norris Helping; cabinets loaded to head up north and in action over the Kiwifruit.

Diane and Andrew have been regular visitors and they help to keep my garden under control. Andrew is excellent in pruning the roses and spreading Compost whilst Diane does the weeding. Their electric bikes have given them much pleasure and they have travelled extensively in Hawkes Bay to Napier, Clifton and the wine country vineyards. Further trips have taken them to the National Park in Central North Island and to the West Coast. One brilliant trip was to South Island down to Christchurch, Dunedin and Lake Tekapo with Adam. With Bikes loaded on the car, they stayed motels and villas and explored the countryside at each destination. I received wonderful rocks from them and especially a huge piece of a basalt column for Diane found a site similar to the Giants causeway in N. Ireland.





Here they are presently cycling around the Marlborough Region in South Island including collecting more geological samples for me and they found a hidden area called "Mount Norris" which I had never heard of.

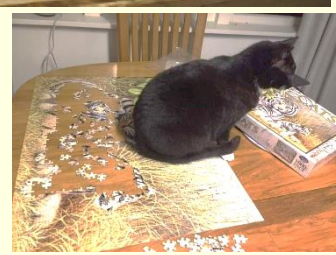
David is a keen skier and normally goes to the ski fields in central North Island but this year the skiing was poor with little snow and much rain. Therefore, David, Kayley, Andrea and Tom (Andrea's Partner) headed to the ski fields of South Island and had a brilliant time. Kayley and Andrea also did some ice-skating.



David on the Mountain; Kayley and Andrea skating, David & Kayley and Tom, David, Andrea and Kayley on Treble Cone Peak.

Kayley is also into Cheer leading and Karen takes Kayley with her team regularly to Competitions in Auckland. Karen is also able to visit her Mum & Dad Tony and Lois there, Sister Robyn, Brother Logan and his Partner Emily. The team has won

medals and in May next year, Karen will accompany the team to a competition in Hawaii that is very exciting. Logan after his success in topping his final year in Computer Studies at Auckland University is doing a PhD there in Computing. With his coding skills, he writes algorithms for David's kiwifruit company. Liam is flat out working as an electrician for there is a desperate shortage of skilled tradesmen in NZ and high wages are available. With partner Katie, they are researching buying a small house to put on a section. Diane's Katie has just bought her first house in an outer suburb of Wellington. With Partner Dylan, they will move in at the end of November. House prices are falling significantly in NZ now. Our pets and animals are doing well with Stormy, Diane's cat, following her like a shadow and always interested in her activities. Sam, David & Karen's dog is as bouncy as ever and always waiting for a treat when I visit. Karen looks after the sheep on their section and they come on her calling. Diane recently went to a large pathology conference in Sydney which is the first for a couple of years for she has been doing zoom meetings. She presented two papers there, Adam accompanied her, and he gave a paper. Diane is now a Chief examiner in Pathology for the South Pacific and Adam is completing his first year at Wellington Hospital. Andrew also travelled for he had an Optometry conference the same week. They were all able to visit the Blue Mountains for a couple of days.



Karen and Diane, me with my large plane, A rainbow over my house in a bright spell after the rain, a Yellow Hammer visitor, my regular Thrush, a Blackbird feeding young on the ledge I put up on the corner of the house and Stormy helping with the jigsaw

After twelve years of good service, my computer started to show its age and David & I sourced a new super one that is unbelievably fast. I was able to transfer all my data from the old one for if it one thing that I teach in my computer classes is that always create good backups. I have finished my Geology and Computing classes for the year and the last session was to show the class how to make a Christmas card similar to the one I made accompanying this email. I still do photography as you can see from the above pictures especially flowers and my "pet birds" that come to my garden. **Finally Best Wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year, Norris**