

The year 2017 by Terry Rawkins

The year 2017 a good year for me, started badly. I had spent Christmas with my friend Di and her family in Poole. In normal times I would not have stayed so long but I knew that I should attend the funeral of my work colleague Peter on December 30. It will save me a boat trip if I stay on.

The drive from Poole to Bracknell was bad, a foggy icy day on the M3. I met up with many of my work mates there and left a bit early to catch my boat at 16:00. The journey home was worse than the morning, very foggy and cold but not freezing. All boats to Yarmouth were cancelled, so a phone call then a drive to Christchurch to find a hotel to spend the night.

January was not much better as I had to attend another funeral, Tony Gore an old school / Scout friend, he was a year younger than me. Can funerals ever be good? Well this one was. Tony had no family but many friends of all ages, his friends from; school, scouts, work, his scouts, and marching band members. All knew him for what he did for them, a wonderful day.

January and February are not good outside months but I did a few RNIB visits to my blind customers so I was able to have a reason to get out but mostly I tried to catch up on work indoors.

My friend Di had invited me to a "Murder Mystery" that was fun to do and ended February.

In March I was more active in the garden, I had decided that the garden should be a lot easier to manage. First I dug out the large concrete base that had been the base of an old greenhouse, perhaps. I did this not quite knowing what I would find under there, Maureen had always thought that it was an old well. It was not a well but it was very thick. Now to get rid of the concrete and fill in the big hole. The soil came from the vegetable garden, I will buy some good soil to replace that. I found a place behind the summerhouse to dump the concrete but first there are two hawthorn trees that need to come out. This would be the start of a year long task.

At the end of March I was to see Caleb in a school play but the dates were changed and I could not make the new day. "Come anyway" said Rebecca, "It will be good to see you"

It was an unusual request but I will go. I spoke to Pauline a neighbour, saying, "I think she is Pregnant" "So off to Bracknell I go and sure enough I was right. Then off to Poole Di had tickets for a Am Dram play. She was not feeling very well. A four day visit was a tad too much as although we spent our time well and enjoyed each other's company Di was under a lot of pressure from her family. This would be my last trip to Poole for a time.

My helping with the Beaver scouts is still going strong, during this time there was the first sleepover at the Island's scout campsite Corf.

I also volunteer for the RNIB the charity for the blind. I am part of the Technical Support Squad, I help with any computer problems they may have. I am the only one on the island so I have to travel to all parts, which is good, it's work that I enjoy very much.

Every Monday morning come rain or shine I go over to Corf as a member of the service team there I can enjoy the outside life, drive the small tractor and have fun.

<https://sites.google.com/site/corfonow/>

Easter is a traditional time to do some decorating but what to do? My chalet bungalow has an annexe, the lounge of which is a little sad. This could be my project for the year. I could make it a bit modern with the aim in the long term to make it into my downstairs bedroom should I need it. I would remove the old built in wardrobe and get another one built, install new blinds rather than curtains and make it a bit smarter. But first check in the roof space as those stains on the ceiling need to be seen to. Yes it was mice but all gone now.

That project was started on 30-Mar-2017 and finished on 15-July-2017 much too long but I am pleased with the result.

The month of May saw me on my first trips away, to Cornwall to see an old school friend and then to Plymouth where I stayed with Allison and Michael.

I found out that Tony had left me some money in his will, what to do with it? I could buy something to remember him by, give it to the scouts, no I checked he has bequeathed some to them already. When in Guildford Tony and I would sometimes go to London, a whole day out see the sites, have a meal do a show.

That's what I will do, in his memory. Mid July I travelled to London by train, first time for that. Stayed two nights there, saw the Carole King musical "Beautiful". Travelled on a big London bus. Walked to the Science museum and the V&A on day two and had a very nice meal in an Angus Steak House that evening. Visited the Winston Churchill war rooms and was home late Friday afternoon very tired but very happy.

Throughout the year my friend Roger would phone me from Australia, he is coming to the UK to do some family tree research, he will be here for three months or so and perhaps we can meet up.

The Saturday morning after London Roger phone again, “I will be with you on Sunday”. I had thought I had a week to put the Annexe right. It was almost there but June had been a hot month, I had three sea swims, helped at the scouts fete and walked to Yarmouth and back, visited the County show in Newport. A full time was June & July.

The annexe now has a good WiFi signal that supports my second Amazon echo or Alexa. Modern LED lighting and TV. Alexa is plugged into the Amplifier, all in all my man cave.

That was a hectic Saturday.

The two weeks that Roger was here were great we toured the Island talked about old times and enjoyed ourselves. Roger had hired a van in London spent two weeks there then went over to Northern Ireland down to Cornwall and now the Isle of Wight.



The van had no Sat Nav of its own, Roger had purchased a UK one which worked well.

Until, that is, we set off to the birthday bash in Plymouth.

Over the bridge we go towards Yarmouth I know we take the next left for the ferry.

She says, “At the roundabout turn right”. I say “Turn left NOW”. The sat nav was set for No Toll roads or Ferries !

After a long a wet drive to Plymouth we enjoyed the comfort of the local Premier Inn and had a look round old Plymouth. Then to Graham’s birthday party. Graham is the youngest of the four men there, 70 in a few days time. We all attended the same school in the 50’s and we gave and got a lot from scouting in Guildford.



After all that what to do? Looking forward to a hot summer but with no visitors expected.

I now had the rest of August to do something but what, Becca had a month and a bit before the birth of Arthur.

My garden overlooks a field there are trees both sides of the fence. Perhaps if I took the trees down on my side of the fence it would not lose much as a hedge and it would make the mowing easier, not that I do the mowing.

So one by one I set about digging out about 5 trees each took a whole day it was hard work but the weather was good and when it was too hot I went for a swim in the sea.

The last one was always going to be a problem as it was close to an Elm the other side of the fence. At last it came out but I had had to cut through a large root belonging to the Elm.

September was now here and my friends Trevor and Teresa came round on my birthday. Very good said Trevor, OK said Teresa but Maureen will not like it at all will she.

The next week Maureen blew over the two Elms in the field !

So I then had to even it out and trimmed the trees in the field, well cut them down at their ankles. In doing this I exposed a lot of new growth that could not grow in the shade of the larger trees but are now in the light.

Before



After



The rest of September was tidying up the mess I had made, filling holes and making good the damage done to the bank. And another funeral, Maureen's uncle in Guildford.

Then on 27 September Arthur Jack was born,



Rebecca is now with Mike in a new house and with a new baby. And good luck to them all.

The year is getting on I had better think about the Somerset Carnivals in November. No room at the Inn I will have to take a hotel in Taunton and see the North Petherton carnival not Bridgwater.

An eight day trip to Poole, Taunton and Bodmin. A great show and good company.



My videos on youtube:-

<https://youtu.be/flpEZDLBU-U> <https://youtu.be/QHx8WrKxIBg> <https://youtu.be/OJL5mVKB3GM>

Christmas is coming



Something special for Arthur:-

Maureen spent many hours doing Cross Stitch some were finished and given to family members. We all have cards with Cross stitch from her.

Rebecca said, rather sadly, “No cross stitch for this one”

Perhaps I thought there is one made for the next baby.

Maureen would have thought for a Great Grandchild but no it would be for her Grandson.

I asked around and found someone to add the name and dates for me.

My last trip of 2017 was to Bracknell to hand over this.

And so at the year's end I look back and think, Gosh that was a good year, one has to be positive. I think myself lucky that I can say that.

Happy Christmas and a great 2018 to all who read this

Terry Rawkins 18 December 2017