

The

Tropical Telegraph

Chiang Rai, Thailand and Oxford, England

Greetings and good wishes for Christmas 2019 and the New Year!

Christmas 2019 No. 18



Here's wishing you hope and strength as another bizarre and tumultuous year passes by. Apart from mental distress at the absurdities of our leaders and at the dismal prospects for the future of the planet, everyday life has continued more or less as normal for us privileged folk. This edition of TT is full of stories of good times with lovely people in attractive places; how lucky we are! I hope 2020 will bring some chance of a better world - less fighting and destruction, less hunger and poverty, less stupidity and short-sightedness; more collaboration and compassion; more action to protect every precious aspect of this beautiful world.
May you have a good year!



The year's story

Moving east again – for a while

It's cold, grey and wet in Oxford this 14 October 2019, as I start to put TT together. In three days, I shall be back in Thailand and the benign warmth of a Chiang Rai winter. This summer, I've been based here for five months, two of them with Raymond, and it has been a wonderfully rich and varied time.

This may be our last Thai winter, as we are planning to return permanently to Oxford next year, if Raymond can qualify for the first stage of UK settlement. He will graduate in December at the end of his 4-year course and hopes to find work in his field of study, logistics and supply-chain management. We'll move in the spring if all goes well.

The end of a long romance

I first went to Thailand on holiday on my own, six months after Roy's death, in 1992. It was the start of a romance that drove me to emigrate in 2002 and which continued for a few years after that - up to the dark days when things between me and Chai were falling apart and his family mounted their legal assault after his death. It was never quite the same again, even though the Thai legal system served me well and stood by me and there were no other horrors. Through those experiences - and much else - I came to know aspects of the country and the people much more intimately; it was not always pleasant, though there were wonderful times too.

I have some very good friends in the country, and continue to enjoy myself; I remain proud of my hillside land and the flourishing young forest I've planted and cared for all these years; and, of course, with Raymond around for the last four years, my spirits have been lifted no end. But our future is not in Asia; from such different origins, we are both content to seek our fortunes in England.

Clearing the decks for emigration will take some effort - you don't spend eighteen years (in Raymond's case, four years) in a place without accumulating a few spoons and chairs. And there's the question of the land: it's out there, for sale, on the market, but there is yet no queue of potential buyers.

Mapping out the year

Winter and spring

We spent Christmas 2018 in Chiang Rai and then had a New Year holiday at a seaside Marriott in Rayong in the far south-east of Thailand. After that, the first third of the year was pretty much fallow with both of us occupied with reading, writing and study.

Summer

In May things hotted up when I came to Oxford, to be joined by Raymond in June. I had a fortnight in Uppsala in May, teaching on the annual pharmacovigilance course and working with the talented young team who are transforming UMC's communications. I had some lovely days with Marie and Rafe at their home in Göteborg. In the UK, there were several parties and celebrations around the country, then, in July, it was Evidence Live in Oxford, another poster presentation for me, and Marie and Rafe staying for a while. I gave some online lectures for a European Master's course.

Busy in Oxford



A luxury lunch

A fine piece of beef at a fine restaurant in Soho

The ever-faithful Brixton retail store for stocking our African cupboards



Ghanaian bliss with light goat soup and banku in Brixton

Our new relative in Ghana - Jayden Raymond's sister's son



Raymond and I travelled west to visit the Hugmans in Pembrokeshire and, later, had a three-day holiday in glorious St Ives, prompted by a generous hotel voucher from friends in August 2018. Raymond ran to Iffley and back each morning and went to his gym most days. We spent hours walking by the River in the summer sunshine, and had plenty of good eating and drinking on our own or with friends. We saw lots of films and a performance of Hair (it did not have quite the same impact I remembered from 50 years ago!) We redeemed another of the generous presents we received in 2018 and had a luxurious lunch at Gauthier, Soho; on another occasion it was off to Brixton for goat soup and banku and shopping at Kumasi Market; another time, Raymond went off to London on his own to meet a Ghanaian friend from Milton Keynes for lunch. In news from Ghana, the arrival of Raymond's first nephew was announced.

Infuriatingly, my Thai visa expired at the end of July, so I had to dash back and renew it, along with the tax and insurance for the truck. I had a busy few days, frustrated by every moment I was away from Oxford and Raymond. I packed up a few boxes of my photographic and writing archives and couriered them off to England.

Late summer

University term started in the middle of August, so Raymond set off back to Chiang Rai. With the number of friends we now have in Oxford, and their general level of hospitable energy, I did not have time to feel lonely. The annual University Meeting Minds alumni event provided some entertainment; Mark and I spent an evening at the Sheldonian Theatre with Salman Rushdie as he launched his new book (Quichotte; I had read *Midnight's Children* in preparation for the evening and was bewitched, I must say); there were dinners and parties and private

views and jazz concerts; plenty to keep me occupied. And then, I also had to prepare myself for three serious professional assignments, in Sicily and Saudi Arabia.

Now, as I put the finishing touches to the text and photos, I am back at my desk in Chiang Rai. Outside, there is a benign winter sun, a gentle breeze and a temperature of about 23 degrees. Ui is in the TV room, ordering jeans from an online store, a purchase I've just agreed to. Raymond is in the library on campus, revising for next week's exams. If I can just shake off this persistent cough and cold, all will be well.

Kente cloth from Ghana

The background design for the pages in this *Tropical Telegraph* is Kente cloth. Kente, known as *nwentoma* in Akan, is a type of silk and cotton fabric made of interwoven cloth strips made by and native to the Akan ethnic group of Ghana. It is an Akan royal and sacred cloth worn only in times of extreme importance and was the cloth of kings. Over time, the use of Kente has become more widespread. [Wikipedia]



Travels with the brain



With my generous host, Dr Adel, in the main conference venue



Inside of the main entrance to the SFDA's amazing new HQ



I had a meeting with the SFDA crisis management team, one of whom - Ms Madawe here - brought with her the copy of my book, *Expecting the Worst*, which she had acquired in Uppsala at the UMC course in 2015



The foreign guests were taken on a fascinating tour of the magnificent National Museum



We were treated to a generous traditional feast in the company of some of our hosts. I did not find sitting and eating on the floor easy



Impressive lobby at my hotel during the conference

Within the space of a month, there were three professional meetings requiring a good deal of preparatory attention in advance, to say nothing of a clear head in situ. First was a meeting in Erice, Sicily, to examine causality in medicine, especially from the philosophical angle of dispositionality. Then, I was off to Saudi Arabia to present a talk on risk management to the Saudi Food and Drug Authority annual conference in Riyadh, and to have a consultation meeting with their crisis management team. Hardly back from that, off to Erice again for a joint meeting between UMC and the Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based medicine. This was to examine the question of how to exploit the stories of individual patients and their therapy and outcomes for the better treatment of others, in contrast (and in addition) to the population-based evidence of epidemiology.

I was anxious about the trip to Saudi Arabia, and not just because of the responsibility to provide them with good value for their investment in paying for me to go. Associated, as I am, with WHO and its humanitarian mission, supporting healthcare anywhere in the world is the essence of the job; other considerations are real but secondary. I was treated with great generosity; I delivered my short lecture in a huge plenary theatre and had serious conversations with men and women in the Food and Drug Authority. We had authentic Arabian food sat on the floor of a traditional restaurant and were taken round the amazing National Museum. The country has announced that it is gearing itself up for major tourism, a strategy (presumably) as a hedge against future falling oil revenues. And flying business class with Saudia is an almost perfect way to travel.

All these meetings required me to present my research and thinking formally in lectures, but also constantly in group and plenary discussions. In both the Erice meetings, Rafe and Marie and other colleagues were present (as well as distinguished medics and academics from all over), and they were the senior participants much of the time, but I was also under pressure to make sure we did not waste our time and came away with positive results. I had direct feedback from my Saudi hosts (very positive), but it remains to be seen how productive the two Sicilian meetings will be in the longer term, though they did go very well. Marie and Rafe and I tacked a few days holiday on to the end of these meetings, in Cefalu and Palermo.



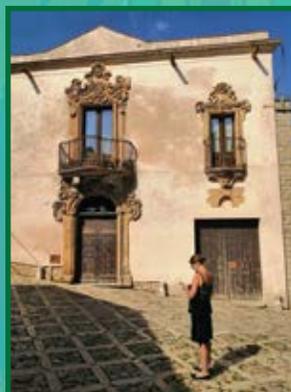
Delivering my talk at the second Erice meeting with the mountaintop panorama on the screen. Photo by Gerard Ross, one of my UMC communications colleagues



This is in the main conference monastery of San Rocco



View from the open conference area in the second main building, San Domenico



Marie checks our location in front of one of the town's many lovely old buildings



The tiny town has a multitude of impressive churches. That's Marie on the steps.



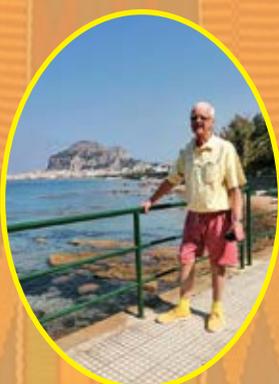
The astonishing entrance to the San Domenico conference centre



It's a town like no other. It has a distinctive paving pattern for most of its streets where few cars are allowed.



There's an annual rally on the long, serpentine road up the mountain



View of Cefalu from the far end of the prom



Cefalu's cathedral and busy square



The delights of Sicily

Mighty impressive cathedral in Palermo, but less wondrous inside



Brilliant Sicilian ceramics in Cefalu



Our first lunch in Palermo, at Gulu



Palermo's old market had everything, including amazing zucchini about a metre long



Seafront Palermo - fine architecture, oleander, outdoor cafe - everything essentially Sicilian



The lovely reception area of our wonderful Palermo B&B



Street view from balcony of B&B in Palermo



The lovely small beach and harbour in Cefalu

I can hardly believe my good fortune in having three trips to this beautiful island this autumn, twice to mountain-top Erice and once to Taormina, within sight of Etna, on the east coast. I'm just back from the second of the Erice meetings, and off to Taormina in a couple of weeks.

After the first meeting, Marie, Rafe and I took ourselves off to Cefalu, a first-time for all of us. It turned out to be an absolute joy; excellent, elegant rooms in the middle of the old town, right on the seashore, the sound of the waves lulling us to sleep; narrow, old streets lined with (mostly) interesting shops with endless variations of Sicilian ceramics being crafted before our eyes; good beaches, nice bistros and cafes, and one quite spectacular restaurant. This, we discovered on our first evening and returned to several times, as it was, in our estimation, unlikely to be surpassed by anywhere else. It was right above a beach, just at the edge of the old town, with views across the sea and to the sunset in the west. The service was friendly and thoughtful; the food delicious and the ambience a kind of holiday dream.

After the second Erice meeting we had two nights in Palermo. Here, Marie had found even more superb accommodation - Boutique Vintage B&B, it was called. Also in the old town, this was an icon of perfect elegance and hospitality, with the best croissants ever for breakfast and objects of aesthetic interest throughout the building. Palermo's cathedral presents a stunning exterior to the world but we thought the interior somewhat pretentious and dull in comparison; there were an awful lot of relics, including an extravagant silvery confection of a side-chapel that housed the remains of St Rosalia, the 12th century patron saint of the City. We had some good food and loved wandering around the markets and decaying old streets; but it was grand and formal and did not seem to have the vivacious life and colour of Cefalu. [For pics of Taormina trip, see p. 11]



The Great Audrey Sainsbury, 90, if a day, and entertaining her friends to celebrate the occasion, as if there were no tomorrow



11 Brunswick Street, Sheffield, where I lived in the 1970s and early 80s, pursuing probation, academia and public transport



All the Hugmans in Gloucestershire for Jenny's 70th birthday celebration



Troels and B

Special events

It was Audrey Sainsbury's 90th birthday this year. She invited me to her party in Sheffield, where she remains as alert and ironic and busy as ever, warmed by her memories and enduring love for her perfect Eric, the man who played such an important part in my life as a young probation officer in the city in the 1970s. (In the taxi back to the station, I asked the driver to take me past 11 Brunswick Street where I had lived on my second time round in Sheffield; it looked smart and healthy.)

My sister-in-law, Jenny Hugman, celebrated her 70th birthday at a rural hotel in Gloucestershire. As with Audrey's party, I used my Senior Railcard and took the train. It was a fine summer day in a lovely setting and one of those rare occasions where all the living Hugmans (of our branch of the family) were in the same place at the same time - all six of us. Jenny's family - multitudes - were mostly in attendance too.

A slightly longer journey took me to Southwell, Derbyshire, for the wedding of Troels and Hannah. Troels I have known since the 70s, when he was a friend of Audrey's son. He is, by vocation, a forester, something I think quite wonderful.



This retired Thai warship, Prasae, built in California in 1943, is a war memorial and tourist attraction in Rayong

Holidays



Visitor before the mast on Prasae



Mr Phan was a generous and amusing host, driver and companion for the day



Raymond, with Mr Phan, our charming off-duty concierge from the Marriott, in the mangrove forest



Monkeys are a common site in temples, and not entirely friendly or well behaved



The Khao Laem Ya National Park with some impressive coastal cliff walks



Inundated boardwalk in the mangrove forest



This was a fine pool at the Marriott until it was filled with sand by a serious storm



Two powerful motors took us out to islands in the Gulf of Thailand

Raymond and I have had some very good trips this year.

In January we set off for Rayong, a far south-eastern province of Thailand. We chose a Marriott, hoping for a bit of class; we were satisfied but not overwhelmed. We had a spacious, well designed room with a panoramic view over the sea. The day-bed against the window was a fine place for reading and dozing. The bathroom was splendid, with powerful showers, a big bath and very good toiletries. The gym was good enough for Raymond (and that's a pretty high standard) and we both used it, though at rather different levels of commitment and energy, of course. The breakfast was good, though the rest of the feeding arrangements were very unsatisfactory and inflexible.

One day we took a speedboat out to some neighbouring islands, where Raymond snorkeled and we had a picnic on the beach. Another day, we were taken out by the off-duty concierge - an amusing, intelligent, ironic young local who knew his way about and drove us in his own car. We paced the boardwalk through a great littoral mangrove forest and visited the famous warship, Prasae, originally built in California for the US Navy in 1943. It's set in concrete and is good fun to explore: the guns are still in place to play with, the decrepit bridge is open for inspection, and fit young chaps can hoist themselves up before the mast.



Suit, shoes and sculpture



All set for dinner



Interesting objects in the Hepworth garden



A stray Hepworth catches our attention on our way into town



Monumental lobby of Tate St Ives



The delightful, lively interior design in the hotel lounge



Our hotel had this absurd, huge chair in the entrance

Among the generous presents we received for our civil partnership last year was a hotel voucher for the Mr and Mrs Smith group (which looks very posh and exclusive). We decided to go to the St Ives Harbour Hotel and Spa, perched, as we discovered, high above Porthminster beach. The hotel was not all we might have hoped for (dreary breakfast, desultory service in the restaurant) but we had a great time in St Ives, which is a truly lovely place, even at its busiest. We were especially moved by Barbara Hepworth's house, studio and garden - the place she had lived, worked and died. The sculptures, placed by her in the lovely, flourishing summer garden were especially memorable. We also went to Tate St Ives where we were exhausted by the range and intensity of talent on display; and such an amazing building!



Cool guy on hols



Barbara Hepworth's garden



The biggest sculpture in the Hepworth garden



Much of St Ives is really delightful, even in the busy season



Porthminster beach



Such exotic sights on the beaches of St Ives!



St Ives harbour

Oxford



Peaceful summer scene on the Cherwell



You see some of the strangest things from our balcony



Upstream is Osney, another agreeable walk from the house



This is a man who likes his summer ice cream



Iffley - a favourite destination and posing place



We spent a good few hours by the river during the summer, and Raymond ran this stretch every morning



Ready for the catwalk or an evening out in Oxford



A coat of preservative to help the garden furniture survive another few years



A wild retail moment resulted in Raymond becoming owner of these splendid shoes. You'll see them at work in St Ives



Our wonderful photographer friend, Kay, delivered a great album of pics from our ceremony in August 2018



I do love my study and spend a lot of my domestic life here



The River House dinner table with vegetarian stuffed small pumpkins



They were a bit knobby, but there were plenty of them



This year's batch of pears and ginger after a heavy crop from our tiny tree



This was the first flower on the magnolia we planted a couple of years ago. I missed its peak, but it was still lovely.



Genius fixer, our dear friend Mark, reveals the sockets which had been covered by the big bookcase in the study for four years.



Raymond with Elias, one of Sandy's many lovely grandchildren

I stayed in Oxford for over five months this year, though there were various trips in the UK and abroad. It really felt like home; with Raymond around for two months, we began to settle into something like a very pleasant domestic routine. The sun shone a lot of the time and it was a glorious place to be.



Raymond and our friend Ian after completion of the Cumnor 5km run



A happy man shows off his medal after the Cumnor 5km run



A visit to Worcester College gardens is always a joy



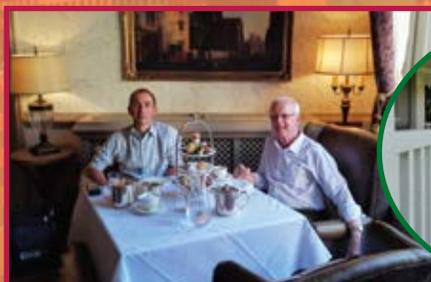
Marie takes a rest in Worcester Gardens



Rafe seasons a hefty snack at Gloucester Green Market



During the Evidence Live meeting, we had dinner in Keble College. Here, Jeff, Marie, Rafe and me



Geoffrey and I had afternoon tea at the Randolph; it was fine, but I do it much better at home



My old friend, Geoffrey, spent a day with me in Oxford. Here, on the pavilion steps in Worcester College



The presence of an ancient university does not prevent the intrusion of weirdos



All set for the trip back to Thailand



Picnic pause at Stackpole National Park



Pembrokeshire

Raymond celebrates a cliff-top walk in the Stackpole National Park



George, Chloe and Laura above the big beach at the Stackpole National Park



The Pembrokeshire Hugmans with Raymond, in bright summer sunshine at the village of Dale



Raymond and George on the long pontoon at Dale. Laura is in the background.



Uncle Raymond's nephew is now six months old.



Jenny's miniature Schnauzer, Poppy, soon became friends with Raymond

Reaching the Hugmans in the far south-west of Wales takes a few hours and usually three trains. Apart from one train, where it was standing-room only, we had comfortable journeys without problems or delays. The highlights of our stay were outings with the whole family in Andrew's authentic old Landrover (Defender, I think it is) for a meal by the sea in the lovely village of Dale, and a day at Stackpole (Stagbwll), a huge coastal National Trust property with splendid beaches and panoramic cliff-walks. While the children were body-boarding, Raymond and I went off along the coast and skirted the rugged sea-shore atop some impressive cliffs. Interesting, good cars have always been a feature of this family's life; Jenny has a wonderful, powerful new electric BMW, and my brother's pristine 50 year-old Morgan is still waiting in the wings for its relaunch after his death some years ago.



From Gothenburg, Rafe and I went off for a day-trip in the Mazda

In May, I had a few days in Uppsala, working on the UMC annual international training course and then time with Marie and Rafe at their home in Gothenburg, on the other side of the country. We enjoyed the usual pleasures of good food and wine and intense conversations about medicine and philosophy and the state of the world. One sunny day, we went to sea; on another, greyer day, Rafe and I set off in the Mazda for a distant second-hand emporium to explore for buried treasure. With the talented young communications team now established in Uppsala, my work for UMC, after 25 years, is tapering off; and no longer having my own place in Sweden, my time in the country is likely to be much less in the future. Fortunately, Marie and Rafe regard Oxford as a kind of second home, so we'll still be seeing a good deal of each other.



Rafe and me on the quay at Gothenburg prior to our lunchtime cruise on the St Erik

Sweden



A steamer trip - with lunch - out to the Gothenburg archipelago



Lunch on board was a very civilised affair



Our day-trip took us to an amazing second-hand emporium; this was just one of the mutiple barns, crammed with stuff

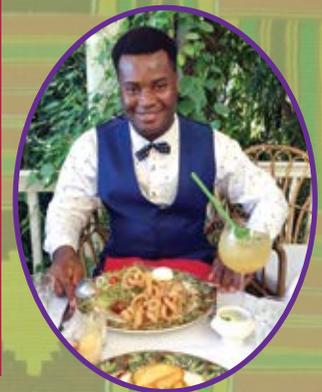


CHIANG RAI

A sumptuous Christmas lunch at our friend's exceptional bistro



Eggs Benedict starter for Christmas lunch at Chivit Tamma Da



Happy man with a big Xmas plateful



Raymond checks Santa's deliveries Xmas 2018



Hans and Aye Verschuur have been great friends to us through the years. Here, dinner in their town-centre restaurant.

A part from a short storm that damaged a few trees, the farm is flourishing. Rubber production continues, with the workers sharing the income equally in recognition of their rising in the middle of the night for tapping. Prices have been low and flat for a long time, so there's little cash to be made in this commodity.

Ui is a regular presence at the house, though he now has his own, shared establishment in town. He's studying computer graphics and Chinese and English, though I don't think he's a very serious student. He's keen to get his leaving certificate, so I just hope he's studying enough to pass in six months or so. He's still night-time concierge for the hotel in town, earning rather less than necessary for a comfortable and secure life. He's lost fifteen or more kilogrammes in the last year, and is now proud of his slimmer, fitter body. He's fallen for the regrettable trend of lightening his skin, though I've expressed my reservations about the effort, both aesthetic and medical. On the whole, he's a good boy (he's 23); he's been largely in my care for fifteen or more years now.

Term-time, Raymond and I don't see much of each other, weekends if we're lucky. Then we go off to the Mall in town and catch a film and have a meal, go shopping, or watch films on Netflix. We have a much richer domestic life in Oxford.

The village is still a comfortable, familiar environment, but I do now feel it's something of a waiting room for the future we have planned elsewhere. Disentangling myself from Thailand (banks, furniture, truck, farm, all that) is the big challenge ahead.



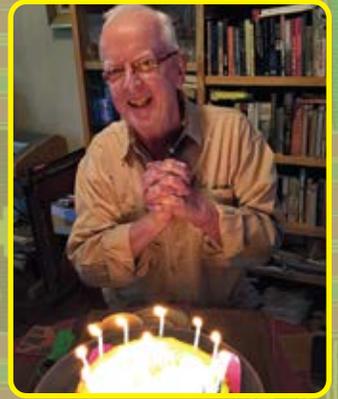
I'll be sad to leave this young forest which I've nurtured from bare ground for eighteen years



Our farm doesn't produce a lot of fruit, but this year a durian surprised us by arriving



Mr Sai and his son Nikom clear up the damage after a small hurricane smashed its way across the land



Happy Hugman on his 74th



A first batch of stuff about to be repatriated to the UK. Some things have to be sent, even though the cost is exorbitant



In December 2018, Ui was starting to exercise and take care of himself



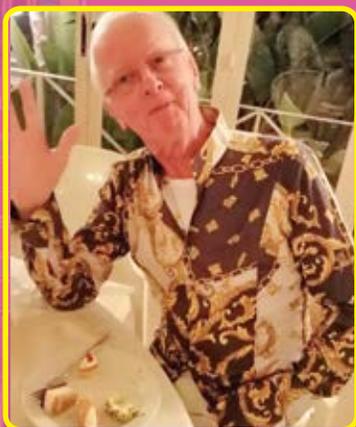
This year, he's thinner and fitter and is getting life organised (at last). Our relationship, live and online, is still conducted entirely in Thai



My neighbour in the poster exhibition was a creative GP and academic from Exeter. He had been experimenting with using chocolate peanuts in his training of medical students.



This view of Etna and the bay from my hotel room never ceases to entrance me



In the absence of luggage, I bought this wild shirt for the gala dinner. It was a great success!

Stop Press news and pics November: Sicily

Then it was off to Taormina, Sicily, for the 2019 Evidence-Based Healthcare conference, with the ever-present backdrop of Mount Etna. The downside of the trip was the failure of my luggage to arrive for six days and the daily need for shopping and improvisation. I'd foolishly packed my laptop cables in my check-in bag, so was a bit disabled in that respect. Otherwise, it was more or less fine – especially as I could (much to my surprise) buy my medications over-the-counter.

The conference was excellent, with several international stars in the field attending, as well as a number of up-and-coming specialists. My poster was well received. We were the recipients of some of the most sumptuous hospitality I've ever known, with food for breaks and main meals of a quality and variety that took one's breath away; it was international catering, with a strong Sicilian influence, of the absolute highest standard.

I took a day-trip up the flanks of Etna after the meeting. I had a terrible cold and wasn't able to make some of the treks up to minor craters, but tramping on fields of volcanic ash, handling lumps of lava, going down into a lava tube, and seeing the lava streams, kilometres from their point of eruption, was all fascinating. The soil on the 2,000 sq km Etna field is so fertile that around a million people live, at risk, in the volcano's shadow and make their living there. We had lunch at an Etna winery and sampled the white, red and rose mostly made from varieties of grape I had never heard of (Zibbibo, Nerello, Mascalese, Carricante, Inzolia and others).



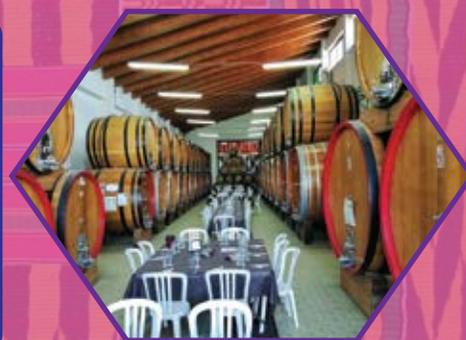
The conference catering was constantly amazing and irresistible



A volcanic ash field on our trip up the flanks of Etna



Taormina is a lovely old town, full of beauty and interest



On the Etna trip, we visited Don Saro's winery on the slopes of Etna for lunch. The big barrels on the right hold 5,000 litres of wine.

Health

I've not really felt bright and healthy for several years. It's not just the rheumatic disease (which seems to be in remission just now) but a more pervasive loss of energy and drive and pleasure in the moment. My brain is still in very good working order, and I do get a lot done, but it requires twice as much effort as before - heaving myself reluctantly out of my lazy armchair to get on with things. I'm no spring chicken, of course, and I may be experiencing the effects of seven and a half decades of exertion on an old body, but that's not quite the whole picture. My little army of doctors in Thailand and Oxford can't find anything wrong with me so I just carry on hoping I'll wake up back to normal one day.

A good life

My general state of mind has led me to neglect brucehugman.net in the last year, and I regret this very much. It was exacerbated by my ceasing to use my faithful Ixus camera and moving, first to my iPhone, and then, on replacing that, to my Samsung, for photography. I have never quite got into the routine of downloading and managing photos like I did with the Canon. I really must try and get my act together.

Maybe this is the last Tropical Telegraph. I can't yet think of an alliterative title for the annual bulletin that might come out of Oxford, but I shall study it. Let me know if you have an inspiration.

Communications

I'm lucky enough to have a rich and interesting life, surrounded by good friends and the loveliest partner it's possible to imagine. Our home in Oxford is a joy; there is so much to be thankful for.

Raymond is under pressure with his mid-term exams at the moment. These will be followed almost immediately by his exit exams which don't count towards grades but must be passed in order to graduate. He's achieved high grades throughout the course, but the unreliability and incoherence of some of his teachers are threats to some results - when exams are set on topics they haven't covered, for example. A first is his ambition, and he is within reach of it, but there are many uncertainties too.

He has had a great life on campus - lots of friends from multiple countries, lots of excursions and communal meals - and he's clearly stood out as a leader socially and academically. He's unlikely to see many, if any, of his friends again once the course is over, but it's been a good time while it lasted.

Stop Press news and pics November: Bangkok

A regular medical check-up called me to Bumrungrad Hospital (all indicators satisfactory, including a clear chest X-ray). Afterwards, I took time to visit Wat Pho and Siam Museum. Wat Pho is a huge, astonishing estate of decorated stupas, vast collections of Buddha images, beautiful prayer halls and, of course, the gigantic reclining Buddha. Siam Museum is the most lively, interactive, engaging museum I have ever visited, bursting with original ideas and creative ways of grabbing your attention. It has lots of brilliant activities for children with maximum use of endless digital and traditional ingenuity.

The prayer halls at Wat Pho are a fantastic golden extravagance



The reclining Buddha at Wat Pho is 46 metres long and impossible to photograph satisfactorily



The new Sanam Chai underground station for Wat Pho is a picture of elegant Thai style design

Sending you our warmest good wishes.

Bruce - Nana Yaw

Until April 2020
PO Box 246
Amphur Muang
Chiang Rai 57000
Thailand
mob: +66(0)896 35 35 94

River House
2 Marlborough Road
Oxford OX1 4LP
tel: +44(0)7510 168420
email: mail@brucehugman.net
website: www.brucehugman.net