

*For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

*Colossians 1:16,17*



*We wish you a blessed Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.*

*Ken and Elizabeth Joyce*

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After living here for 2 ½ years our house in Bellingen now seems very much like home; it has been a good move with blessings such as seeing lots more of family, almost daily walks together to the village for shopping and coffee, new neighbours and friends.



Anna's family is closest (20 minutes south) so we see some of them often – they can walk from our home to their High School. Peter is about 45 minutes south, Christopher and Simeon are about 500 km north and south.

We have got to know many of the neighbours, people in the shops and the very friendly people at Bellingen Uniting Church. We meet people from other churches at prayer meetings, Bible study and the team who teach Scripture (SRE) at the primary school each Friday. Elizabeth has been involved in facilitating the SRE teachers' updating their training and qualifications – that job is not quite all there yet.

Liz enjoys volunteering, “playing shops”, at the primary school canteen fortnightly. She has worked through two on-line courses with the University of Tasmania on Preventing and Understanding dementia, finding it interesting and informative. We have both helped with art exhibitions at Bellingh Show and Uniting Church.

Ken leads and preaches every couple of months at church, attends to the pool maintenance, gardens (while avoiding weeding), has the citrus trees looking healthy and with promising buds. The azaleas, roses and camellias are looking much more healthy. Apart from occasional sessions of Atrial Fibrillation he also keeps well.



With the help of some local tradesmen quite a bit of work has been done around our 113-year-old house and grounds. Paths have been paved, an old kennel demolished, trees lopped, out of place shrubs removed, overgrown gardens trimmed, gutters repaired, gardens developed.



**Newly paved paths, much improved gardens.**

Together most mornings we have our Bible reading, still using Scripture Union’s *Encounter with God*, on the iPad nowadays, and prayer time in which all recipients of this letter are included frequently, even daily.

Continuing our goal to take grandchildren overseas, in April we took Peter’s Elliot and Anna’s Zachary, then both 12, to China and Asia. We flew to Shanghai for a couple of days, took the bullet train to Beijing for several days then joined a cruise which called at Bussan in South Korea, Nagasaki and Kagoshima in Japan, Hong Kong, Ho Chi Mein City, Bangkok and Singapore where we spent several days with our nephew, David Sidey and family. It was a wonderful month away with many new and exciting things to see.



**Bangkok Palace**

We have taken several trips north to Bribie Island, stayed with Ken and Adrienne Moloney in their new home in Murwillumbah and Phil and Gail Baker, now at Coomera in Queensland and joining Paul and Rhonda Rutledge when they travelled north. Also Elizabeth’s sister Prue and David Sidey in Maryborough, Qld. Less often we have travelled to Sydney and the Shoalhaven.



**Great Wall of China**

By the time you get this letter we will have celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary (which is in January) by taking a cruise from Sydney around New Zealand – just the two of us this time!

Peter continues as Head Teacher, Administration, at Macksville High School and Virginia works as a consultant nurse in the Nambucca area. Ethan (14, Year 8) and Elliot (13, Year 7) have both had successful school years. They love living in Scotts Head with its beautiful beach; fishing, access to camping trips. Most of the family are into bicycle riding; a ride of 100km is not uncommon; Peter is an office-bearer in the local cycle club and looks after its website.

Christopher manages a large team of developers at an IT company in Brisbane; Brooke works in a nursing home on Bribie Island where they live. Laura (14, Year 9) has an active social and school life; Lily (nearly 12) attends Caboolture Special School. Sam (25) is near the end of his university studies including management and startups. Ben (23), like Sam and Eliza, lives and works in Brisbane. Eliza (21) has our first great-grandchild, Oliver Smith (turns 2 in January). She works from home taking phone calls for an insurance company.



**View from our front veranda**

Simeon works as a General Manager with Telstra in Sydney city, Kelly as a senior lawyer with the ABC in Sydney; they live in Annandale in Sydney inner west. Charlotte (10, Year 5), Oliver (8, Year 2) walk to a school nearby, Thomas (2) has lots of confidence and attends day care several days a week.

Anna is manager of Ability Links with four offices on the mid-north coast of NSW; she is also working part-time on another degree. Andrew works from home on IT related jobs plus some home building. Josh (20) is studying music performance jazz saxophone and teaching at Monash University in Melbourne, Elisha (19) attends University of New England in Armidale where she also works at *Hungry Jacks*. Jacob (16, Year 11) is given numerous shifts at Nambucca McDonald’s, Zachary (12, Year 7) is making good progress at school and with the Double Bass.

Elisha and Sam Nelson announced their engagement in May so coming up in early February is their wedding. They have chosen a beautiful rainforest setting at Bonville Golf Resort – we expect a wonderful day celebrating with them.