

2022 in New Zealand started off the same way it ended in 2021. New Zealand closed to the rest of the world. Locked in. It took another 5 months before we were allowed to travel overseas again. This meant we missed out on our grandniece Charne's wedding in Knysna and my 50th year nursing reunion in Howick, Natal.

The financial ramifications of COVID are still felt in several sectors. If the world was unprepared for COVID it is nothing compared to how unprepared we were for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Putin's arrogance that it was right to invade a sovereign country and bomb it into submission defies all logic and humanity. The hardship, misery and devastating freezing conditions in Ukraine put everything into perspective. It has made me feel grateful for the warm home I live in and my family who are safe and well. My volunteer projects were cancelled for the 2nd year and will be reinstated next year. Theo continues with his sculpting and has done two commissions. He is now fully retired. For 7 months this year we stayed in Auckland 2 nights a week so we could look after Mia while Kelly returned to work. It has been absolute delight watching her develop every week. The beauty of being a grandparent is being able to spend quality time with your grandchild.

In March Reinie's son was born. Theo was specially delighted and honoured that Reinie and Kath carried on with the 225-year-old tradition of naming the first son Reinhold. He is known by his second name Etienne which is an old Cape French name. Etienne is a gorgeous, happy, chilled little boy with toffee eyes like his dad. We are thrilled they are coming to live in Hamilton next year.

In July our miracle baby Clara arrived. Fiona and Tony's daughter. Clara has brought such joy and unity to our family. She is a refined delicate little girl with the most beautiful long fingers. We are hoping she will be a musician like her dad.

In September Kelly's son Zach arrived. 15 months age difference between him and Mia. Zach has a permanent wide-eyed look of surprise hoping Mia won't notice him. The great thing is once they are a little older, they will be the greatest of friends.

So, from no grandchildren to 4 within 15 months makes life very interesting. I am so happy that I am retired and full of beans and can spend time with them. Despite all the arrivals we did manage a 4-week trip to England. Our trip to England was incredible. We went to places we had never been before, had glorious sunshine and meet up with family and friends. What a joy to travel again. One of the highlights was 5 days spent in Marlow with my dear friend Lynne. I also met up with my Tea Party friends. Every week for over 2 years we met up on a Zoom meeting hosted by Lynne. During this time, we shared stories. When I got to meet everyone physically, it was like meeting up with old friends. The other highlight was 4 nights in the Lake district with our friends from Holland Agnes and Frans. England countryside on a sunny day is hard to beat.

Christmas is a week away. This year we are privileged to have all our children and grandchildren in our home to celebrate with us. If COVID and the isolation has taught me anything its to treasure and appreciate what you have close at hand. To treasure your family and friends. Theo and I are truly grateful that we are healthy and strong. To everyone a wonderful festive season and may 2023 bring Peace to Ukraine and severe punishment to Putin.

My quote for 2022 is:

"You know what the great thing about babies is? They are little bundles of hope, Like the future in a basket."