

Christmas 2015

Dear *Jeanne and Matt,*

The Dutch stamp on the envelope shows you where I mailed this letter. I also wrote it in the house in Bussum where Annelies lives with Cousco, our genuine Maine Coon cat. Her brick house, built in the late 1930s as an early part of a subdivision development, is a fancier "3 under 1 roof" of which hers is the center unit, with basement, ground and second floors, and attic. Houses built later were traditional row houses. Annelies moved to this house for the first time in 1955. Her parents rented it. Annelies bought it in 1973, a major accomplishment then for a single working woman. Over the decades, she renovated the house in parts, most recently the kitchen last spring. She has yet to re-carpet and re-paint the living and dining rooms. My contribution recently has been help with renovation design.

In the spring this year Annelies and I took two trips, one to West Sussex in South England and one to Vienna. We went to West Sussex mainly to visit my cousin, who has known Annelies for decades as a family friend. I have wanted for years to visit my cousin and husband in their lovely home. Our delightful visit was all I imagined. While in West Sussex, Annelies and I spent two days in London. Walking at a brisk pace from Victoria Station, we saw many of London's tourist sights. Our last stop was Harrod's, an impressive experience. London was memorable.

To get to West Sussex, Annelies drove us to Dunkirk. There we took the car ferry to Dover. Annelies drove us the rest of the way on the wrong side of the road as the English are said to do. She is courageous. I saw her do it before in South Africa. The white cliffs of Dover visible from the ferry were lower than my memory of seeing them from a passenger ship in June 1948 sailing through the English Channel. In my memory of a boy of six making my first visit to Holland, the white cliffs were larger than they looked now.

Vienna was a first for us. It makes the most of its connection to empire in exhibits, shows, museums, galleries, and buildings. We caught a Vienna Opera performance of Madame Butterfly one evening and a medley of 18th century song and dance in costume featuring music of Strauss on another evening. The Symphony was sold out. We settled instead for a guided tour of the building including the Golden Hall. After six days there, we want to return.

I learned a lesson this summer about sitting for hours, in my case in an airplane seat during the nine hours returning from Holland. Having tolerated long distance air travel for six decades without adverse effects, I drank little fluid and hardly moved about the cabin, contrary to suggestion. Two months later, suspecting a persistent microbe, I went to my doctor with a mild cough that lingered and unusual-for-me shortness of breath after climbing four flights. With the help of an emergency CAT scan, she diagnosed blood clots in one lung. As a logical guess, she linked the clots in the lung with likely clots in the legs that probably began on the return trip from Holland. I am now strongly motivated to move about while flying, drink much water, and wear support socks.

My friend Bill and I now try for an annual visit. In October, Bill and Kay arrived in their motor home on their way home to Los Angeles after a summer in Albany near two grandchildren. Bill and I met as economics undergraduates. We discovered many common attitudes and interests. 55 years later I continue to enjoy his insight and wisdom and to learn from and about him. For example, only now did he tell me he was first in his MBA class at Stanford Business School, an admirable accomplishment.

Best wishes for 2016,

HAN
Seeing Matt in May was a genuine pleasure. I am so glad that Matt continues to do original research. We should all be so lucky to have the interest and stamina. Keep it up.