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Dear All

As I said at the start of this letter last year, time certainly seems to be speeding up, whilst I go slower and slower. Unfortunately my hip got worse and worse and then when I was house-sitting for Sarah (at the end of February) it gave up altogether so the doctor reluctantly sent me for an x-ray when I returned home. He changed his tune when the results came back though, asking me how I felt about a hip replacement?! I was seen by the orthopaedic surgeon from Hereford just after Easter (and luckily my school friend, Rosemarie, who is a retired nurse, came to spend Easter with me and volunteered to stay another night so she could come with me) but he said that I was too young and too heavy to have one, but he did offer me a steroid injection in it. This I had at the beginning of June, and it did help a lot. Unfortunately the effect started to wear off at the beginning of October, and I am now in a great deal of pain again, and find driving, as well as walking, difficult. The doctor managed to get my next appointment brought forward from the end of January to the end of November, and having lost 4½ stone and gained nearly a year, I am now on The Official Waiting List. This, I am told, is four months long, so I may, with luck get to the top somewhere around April. I have rung up his secretary and pointed out that I can come in at short notice if they have any last minute cancellations, so I am keeping my fingers crossed, but NOT holding my breath!

The picture on my card this year was taken during the first winter I spent here. There are snow pictures from the last two winters, but they have all been taken from inside the front door, as I am now (having slipped and fallen on the drive twice) too nervous to venture further with snow on the ground. Have made sure I am well stocked up as we have already had some snow here, although it hasn't settled yet. However I thought it was interesting to compare that picture with the one taken this July, when they had just finished installing my PV Solar panels. As you can see I have also replaced the windows upstairs and had thermal hot water solar panels fitted since 2007. Both solar installations are working well and I am very pleased with them – particularly that I got the PV Panels before the FiT payments were reduced on 12th December. You can also 'spot the difference' with the frost damage to my garden!



My hip has not stopped me enjoying many things this year – luckily a visit to Cornwall in July took full advantage of the pain relief that the steroid injection offered me, and I was able to walk along the sea front at Penzance and take this view of Mount St Michael. It was really a research visit, to see if there was any clue as to the origins of the RUBERRYs of Cornwall (who have been there since the mid-1600s). The ROWBERRY Y DNA Project has shown that they share the same ancestor as the ROWBERRYs of Tree Two, which is based in Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire from the mid 1600s. So far no luck with this, but research continues.

In October I was pleased to receive a £100 M&S voucher from Amey, as I have worked for them and the Herefordshire Council counting cars etc for 10 years now. When I was staying at Jean's looking after her two kittens my friend Anna volunteered to take me to the M&S at Merry Hell (Hill actually!) and help me to spend it using a wheelchair from ShopMobility. This was great fun, and having lost so much weight I was in desperate need of some new, smaller clothes!



Before this I was unaware that ShopMobility was open to all and this has since proved very helpful, enabling me to join a walking tour of Hereford with my favourite local author, Phil Rickman. And I'm not only saying that because he included me in the credits in his latest book *The Secrets of Pain* published this October! He started a trend and it appears that I have also been mentioned in two other books this year. Debbie Kennet writes, in the acknowledgements in her book *DNA and Social Networking, A Guide to Genealogy in the Twenty-First Century* "Polly Rubery joined the blogging community at the same time as me, and was a friendly sounding board for my early blog postings." She has left me well behind now, I haven't posted to my blog since 2008, although I am quite busy on FaceBook (easy to find as I am the only Polly Rubery on there) and have a RONS Group with 320 members! In fact I found out

about the third mention through PRAS (the Phil Rickman Appreciation Society) where Phil (who also hosts a BBC Wales radio programme *Phil the Shelf* – about books) wrote "Small world, or what? Reading *What Am I Still Doing Here?* the latest work by Dr Roger Lewis, ... of Bromyard ..., I came across a reference, on page 305, to the treasurer of the local history society, one Polly Rubbery (sic). Can it be....?" It was... and is this why it is "the funniest book of the year"?

In the early part of the summer I was lucky to get some help with my pain from Jill, an excellent reflexologist, and with the housework from her daughter-in-law, a lovely girl called Jen, who was between jobs as a nanny. This was invaluable as I have been very busy with B&B guests this year, perhaps a reflection of the loss of our Tourist Information Centre, with whom I was not registered. But only Herefordshire Council could get rid of all the TICs in a county where tourism is a major source of income!

The Oxford Census Course has only run once this year – Ancestry have changed their Library Edition website, making it unsuitable for the course as written, and Oxford is still in discussion about what to do. The HCT evening class has also only run once, the summer term of 6 weeks being too short for it. My car counting and Electoral Registration work has been somewhat hampered by my hip. And while you might think that this has given me more time to myself, unfortunately I have spent a lot of it asleep at my desk – the effect of the pain-killers I am taking!



However I have managed quite a bit of research both on the Rs and for other people. In May I was able to present my cousins Sheila and Peter with a folder of information about their mother's ancestors to match the information that already had on our joint paternal ancestry. Sheila came over from Canada to visit Peter, so it was pleasant to spend a day with them both at Peter's (shown looking at a RUBERY file with me)

Besides B&B guests I have welcomed several "R" visitors and shown them around their ancestral homes and was also delighted to meet several of my census course students – one of who put me up for the night before driving me to a census conference at Kew.

Other important highlights in the family were the birth of my fourth grandchild, Henrietta on January 5th (sadly I have yet to meet her) and my son Alan starting his own business **Iterign** (Product Design & Engineering Consultancy) at the beginning of April. As I write this he has been shortlisted for the Local Business Accelerators competition in the Newbury Weekly News area. We both anxiously await the finals on 22nd December! Good luck Alan!

Well as usual I have run out of space, but I hope that you and yours continue in good health, and I look forward to re-joining you in 2012. Happy Christmas and all the best for 2012!