



Christmas 2016



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Qinghai Lake

Abia, Hannah Phil, Tim, Matthew, Liz, Joshua, Elaine, Sarah

What an exciting year! Looking back there are signs of retirement! – cruise, multiple holidays..., Fitted around them is the regular business of looking after Elijah(Tues), Teddy Bear Club, Razzmatazz, Job Seekers' Club, Sunday services, Powerhouse and Housegroup.

The early part of the year started reasonably calmly but in June we joined Liz's Dad, sisters and brother-in-law for a three night cruise Tilbury, Ghent, Amsterdam & back. Loved waking up cruising along the canals and spending each day in a different city. Apart from delays getting on and off the ship we had a great time and Jim, Liz's dad at 91, was able to explore another city with the family.



Ghent

Peter, Phil, Sue, Jim, Liz, Louise



Lunch in a fertile valley in the desert mountains

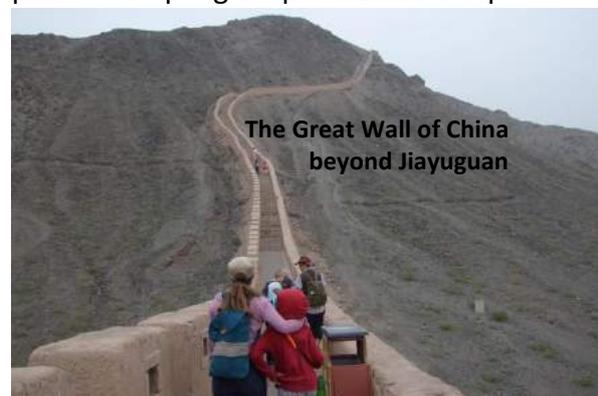
Two weeks later we met Elaine Hamilton at Heathrow and flew to Amsterdam and on to Beijing. We voted one day and left for Europe the next! There we were met by Sarah who was our guide for the day to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. We then all flew on to Xining and were met by Tim, Joshua and Matthew. We stayed two weeks and I can bore you with the details but the key elements were spending time with the family, visiting the schools they taught in, the house church they belong to and a Qinghai banquet provided by their neighbours who live

above them. We were able to visit the local markets, parks, noodle shops and dumpling shops. We had a trip over the mountains to medieval Guide, another to Qinghai Lake, returning via Gonghe where we enjoyed yak burgers (ultimate cross-culture!) Then we went on a rail journey up the Silk Road to



The gates of Jiayuguan

Jiayuguan to see the fort and the westernmost bit of the Great Wall. We rounded off our China experience by returning to Beijing and visiting the Summer Palace and a delayed flight home which meant we had a 42 hour day!



The Great Wall of China beyond Jiayuguan

After two weeks to recover, we went to 'Due South' a Ventures residential holiday for young teens, which has moved to Shrewsbury (not exactly 'south'). We provided support for the team as they gave the young people a great holiday. The theme was 'Circus'. Our bit included looking after Elijah and Anya (Zac is now old enough to be a 'camper'), child protection training, stage lighting, setting up a Fair, and so on.

Phil has been supporting other local churches by speaking in the absence of Pastors as one is between Pastors, the other the pastor was seriously ill. Still speaking at South Ruislip as well which is a real privilege. Liz has been busy with the regular tasks plus extra – taking her dad to hospital appointments, etc. Becky completed her PGCE and is now an NQT in a secondary school in Bolton. She and Mark help to lead a church-plant in Wigan. Dan and Jenn continue to be busy with work and CAYOS at Hilly Park Baptist Church. Jon works in Amersham for The Entertainer, plays a variety of instruments at Hilly Park and spends most of his spare time with Ella! Tim & Sarah currently foster ChenChen a 2 year old awaiting adoption.

Grace, mercy and peace to you,
Phil & Liz