



Our Global Village

February/March 2023

Wishing you all a Wonderful Year for 2023!

A different sort of voyage of discovery with 5W

Some years back I began researching my father's World War II history. He was in the British Army and we knew he had taken part in the Normandy landings in France in 1944, going through Holland ending up in Kiel in Germany in 1945. We knew that his unit had spent some time in Helmond, in North Brabant where he and other comrades were billeted at the town's bakery where they received comfort and kindness from the family who ran the bakery. We also knew that many years later on in the 1980s he had reconnected with the son of the couple who ran the bakery, and that they began regular visits to each other which lasted over several years.

In recent years I had made various attempts to trace this family but with no success. It was then that I came across the entry in the Members' Directory for Rinie in Helmond! I sent Rinie an email introducing myself and telling her about my father's wartime history and my quest to find the family who had befriended him. I got an immediate response from Rinie offering to do whatever she could to help. Her email began 'How wonderful to hear that your father was one of our liberators!'

Luckily the search was made easier when my sister found an old scrap of paper in the family bureau giving an address in Mierlo, just down the road from Helmond. This was the best clue we had. I told Rinie about it and the next day she drove to the address where remarkably the granddaughter of the couple who had owned the bakery in 1944 was still living! Angie was delighted to hear from me and we exchanged emails, and then began speaking on video calls, which we still do on a regular basis. Angie had many happy memories of my father which she shared with me.



All this happened in 2020, and I was finally able to make a visit to North Brabant in September last year, staying with both Rinie and Angie. They arranged between them which places to show me. Rinie was a wonderful hostess and she took me to many local places with WWII links, including an amazing museum at Overloon. I also had the privilege of being able to attend the Helmond Liberation Commemorations on 25th September with Rinie, where I was introduced to the Town Mayor and several local veterans. Rinie also liaised with local historians on my behalf to get more detailed information for me about the liberation.

Spending time with Angie was very special. As well as time spent talking about our families, and going through photo albums, we had two great days out, one being a very exciting outing into the beautiful local countryside on an electric tricycle, and another day at nearby Zundert, the birthplace of Vincent Van Gogh.

I have had so many benefits from being a member of 5W but I would never have dreamt that a 5W member would help me trace the granddaughter of the couple who meant so much to my father and who I had been unable to track down for so long.

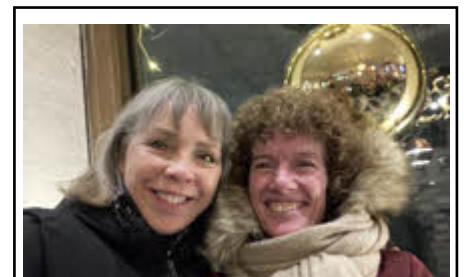
During my time in the Netherlands I also stayed with Cocky in Eindhoven, and Magda in Amsterdam, so many thanks to both of them also for welcoming me into their homes, and helping to make a very special trip.

Sue, West Yorkshire, England

My husband and myself were spoiled on a recent trip to four countries and 5+ cities in Europe by true "5W Christmas Angels"! Visiting the Christmas Markets has been high on my "Bucket List" for many years and 2022 that dream trip happened. We were hosted in 3 of 4 main destinations by 5W Hosts sharing their homes with us and giving us tours of their cities. We were additionally blessed with three additional 5W Day Hosts who took us on tours of their cities. The Christmas lights and decorations at the markets are something unseen anywhere in USA! I can't wait to return for another holiday season to view more. Though the lights were bright, the shopping experiences grand, the city tours and history stunning and the foods new and tasty - the best part of the trip was the awesome 5W Angels we met! THANK YOU ladies for giving so much to us... you have won our hearts! Patricia, USA



Kati - our super gracious 5W host & tour guide for 4 nights in Budapest



With Janice, ready to sample her Austrian Gluhwien recipe