

## **SALT LAKE CITY –September 2012**

### **Monday 10 September 2012**

Never had such a quick turnaround, just back a few hours back from Marrakech before we set off to Heathrow. We flew with KLM alias American Airlines from Heathrow to Salt Lake via Atlanta. The flight wasn't too bad but I was still suffering from the Morocco tummy. I was very surprised to see a pub in Salt Lake airport. It appears that most places now serve alcohol with a meal and bars are springing up everywhere. The "membership requirement" to enter bars was removed just after my last visit in 2009.

In Salt Lake City, Bars are open from 11 am to 2 am. Restaurants can serve liquor, wine, and heavy beer (over 3.2%) from noon to midnight. Rick had reserved a rental car but there was a conference on down-town and not a single rental car to be had at the airport – very annoying.



The Russian Olympic team ready to fly home.

### **Tuesday 11 September 2012**



Fortunately my Morocco tummy is behaving itself today. The Airport Inn internet and phones were all off this morning, very frustrating. We got a taxi to the Valley View Funeral Home which was really pleasant and dignified. Auntie Ray's best friend Sally came along later with her son Geoffrey, both her son and husband are very ill. . There were masses of forms to be signed. We decided to have a flower display on the coffin. Auntie Ray had prepaid for quite a bit of the funeral expenses and fortunately had chosen her coffin. We also

decided to have a permanent internet page of remembrance which can have up to 30 photos and as much text as you like. We have chosen a granite plaque (they don't have headstones) and put an Obituary in the paper . We had to talk about how they wanted her to be dressed and had to choose one of her wigs and decide on what makeup etc. There will be a viewing before the funeral with part of the lid open. She has chosen a nice plot where on the funeral day they will erect a canopy should it be too hot or wet. The grave has to be lined with prefab concrete slabs but we were assured that the coffin has integral rubber seals! Sally and one of her daughters have offered to sing a couple of spiritual songs, sorry but we declined to help them out on that! They were going into such detail that you would have thought Auntie Ray was royalty.

It's hard to believe there will be no more Auntie Ray. Sally has been a true friend to her for over 50 years and when she rang the hospital that morning they said Auntie Ray had a good breakfast and was recovering well. They took her to the toilet and she had a funny turn, her head slumped forward. When they put her back to bed she recovered and even had a conversation with them. Then a little while later she took a couple of deep breathes and passed away. Sally rushed to the hospital as soon as she could and Rachel was still warm so she sat with her and talked and held her hand. It was very moving when Sally said that she felt like saying to Rachel "Come on, get up and stop fooling around".

After Sally had gone and we had finished signing loads more forms we then took over the place as Rick sat in the bosses chair to try and sort out the car hire and at one time he was even using their mobile phone. They were very helpful and kind even though we found it amusing having to call someone Randy. Greg took us back to the airport in the big stretched black funeral car, Rick said it was like we were the President or FBI. Still no hire cars available until Thursday. We were given the contact details of a car hire firm some distance away from the airport, everyone is on the make, and they have charged us a fortune for one days hire of a crap car but at least we are mobile. We were told it's all about supply and demand and they were actually rubbing their hands each time someone paid for a car .

Tomorrow we are going to Auntie Ray's flat to see if we can find the photo frame I sent her. I had scanned all her photos and it would be nice to have that on in the background at her funeral.

Our sat nav wouldn't recognise the memory card so we had to find our way back to the hotel the old fashioned way. It took ages but Rick has sorted it out for tomorrow. The hire car was a complete nightmare, every possible warning light was on, it ate the petrol and worst of all the indicators were intermittent. Having to do hand signals over about six lanes wasn't funny. We had a nice meal in a hotel nearby last night but it was a bit extravagant so will not go so mad tomorrow night. We haven't had time to have lunch either today or yesterday.

### **Wednesday 12 September 2012**

We are still having car problems as the one we got from the dodgy place was a heap of junk. Every possible warning light was on and the indicators only worked intermittently which was a nightmare on the freeway. We spent most of the day going through the mountain of paperwork in her flat, she has a whole tall filing cabinet full of genealogy . Hopefully we can get a proper car today as we have another appointment at the Funeral Estate tomorrow and also need to go back to her apartment for a second sort. I sent her a digital photo frame for Christmas as I had scanned lots of her photos. We found it stuffed in a cupboard and have

picked some photos off it for a slide show to be shown at her funeral and also to put some on the website. Rick made me walk along the freeway to a Denny's for supper, it was horrible that is the food and walk. I felt so unsafe and we had to cross the huge road to get away from a drunk also we had to avoid the sprinklers that were going everywhere. Jet lag came in last night, Rick woke about 12.30am and I woke about 2 and I don't think I slept after that. I'm so tired and my mind is working overtime

### **Thursday 13 September 2012**

Still up most of the night with jet lag, so very tired and now Rick has a cold.

We have sorted ourselves out with an okay car that seems reasonable but the insurances is ridiculous at \$42 a day. At least we are mobile and safe. We were a bit apprehensive about viewing Auntie Ray in her coffin but it was fine. Her metal coffin is something else, all white silk padded with rubber seals. She looked very small and peaceful and was dressed in her temple garments which were a bit bridal. She was wearing her wig and they got the lipstick just right. As next of kin I had to sign the formal forms of identification. I am pleased we saw her. The coffin will be open tomorrow from 10am until 10.45 with the funeral at 11 am.



We then went back to the care home where there was a vintage car rally and barbecue. We had a long chat with the Manager who knew all about her bowel movements or lack of them! He said that she had been very troubled and was pleased to hear that she hadn't always been that way. Sally's son in law has a big trailer and can clear her room for us. We then drove 25 miles out from Salt Lake City to the Ski Resort of Snowbird in Little Cottonwood Canyon in the heart of the Wasatch National Forest. At the mouth of the canyon is the site where Mormon settlers quarried granite slabs to build the Salt Lake Temple.



Hopefully jet lag will be sorted and we will have a good night's sleep and be fresh for the big event.

**Friday 14 September 2012**



Sally, her husband, son Geoffrey and two daughters and grandchildren joined us in the room where Auntie Ray lay. Greg the manager of the funeral home said a prayer before closing the coffin. I didn't think I would like all that but it was fine and somehow fitting. When we got to the graveside a lady gave me a memory stick with 28,000 names that she had rescued from Auntie Ray's genealogical search records. The Bosnian who had befriended my aunt at the Sheltered Housing complex had driven some of the residents to the funeral rather than attending their usual Friday service. It was a lovely hot day and the Ward President said some lovely words and recited a poem. Sally said her bit about how they had been friends for many years and touched on some of the adventures they had experienced together. We all laughed about Auntie Ray's terrible driving. I think everyone was surprised to hear that although she had never married, Auntie Ray had experienced a few serious romances. Rick read a poem we found in her apartment. Here's my bit, it's the first time I have ever spoken at a funeral:

*The last few years haven't been kind to my aunt but she has certainly left her mark on many, especially her family. She will be remembered as dedicated to her cause, independent, conscientious, inquisitive, ambitious, adventurous, energetic, perhaps a little eccentric, definitely nosy but most of all for her innocent sense of humour. Many times she has had us all in stitches; there was always laughter when she was around.*

*Rachel had a difficult childhood as her mother never fully recovered after losing twins. Rachel, her sister Millie, her brothers Bob and George were brought up by their invalid father and a series of housekeepers until the fateful Christmas Eve in 1936 when their father was killed in a road accident. Rachel and Millie were sent to an Orphanage and the boys were sent to a Doctor Barnado's home in Wales. On her visits back home she and Millie always looked forward to visiting the matron, Miss Parsons. Further tragedy hit the family when George was knocked off his bike and killed when he was only 13.*

*As a child I was rather awe struck by this aunt who would appear every few years laden with gifts and anxious to take my sister Julie and brother George to meet relatives, mooch around churchyards and visit places and homes of our ancestors. Also I was proud that I had this rather eccentric Aunt who lived in America, which at the time was very foreign and somewhere we all aspired to visit. We thought it was a country full of film stars, cowboys and Indians and a place where you went the to make your fortune.*

*Rachel was very fond of her sister Millie and brother Bob and ensured she made regular visits and kept in touch by letter and telephone. She kept us captivated by amusing stories of her travels which included Egypt, Australia and Canada. She loved chocolate, marmite, her job and her house and garden that she managed to buy all by herself. She also loved animals especially her little dog Stacey (that was a very naughty dog) and the numerous birds she kept over the years. She encouraged her nieces and nephew to travel and take an interest in our family history and was always keen to know what was going on in the family.*

*Rachel's legacy to this world has to be her genealogy, she has created piles and piles of paper and spent many, many hours working on it. She had such an amazing retentive mind especially for names and dates and has helped so many with their family history.*

*Bob, Millie, George, Caroline, Rachel, Julie, Douglas, Philippa, Liam, Jack, Alexander, Jessica, Jennifer, Charlotte, Peter, Rick ,myself and the rest of the family and friends in the Uk all send our love and thank Rachel for enriching our lives.*

The funeral went really well and afterwards we went to have a look at the Bingham Copper Mine, it was enormous and really interesting. Then we went into Salt Lake so Rick could have a look at Temple Square. Auntie Ray would have been really pleased at what we did next as we went to the Genealogical Library and Rick found out why the Wood was incorporated into his family name of Roe. We were told that we struck it lucky by getting the best Genealogist to help us. Turned out when he was a boy he used to come into the library with his father who worked with Auntie Ray and taught him everything he knew. They finished off copying some wills for us so we could go to the free Constitution Concert by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. It was great stuff, hand on heart and patriotic songs. Only time for a McDonalds after but that's the best of the really terrible food here. Salt Lake has changed so much since my last visit, they now have pubs and there is a modern shopping complex.





The Temple



Inside the Tabernacle

We had some lovely messages about Auntie Ray, **this one is from Tony.**  
*Please accept my sincere condolences for your loss. I think I knew her fairly well and found that she understood my sense of humour. I guess my best memory is the time that I was staying at yours and you and Rick left us in for the evening. We had such a laugh about "an evening with her Toy Boy". Actually making me smile thinking about it. She was a brilliant intelligent girl who will be missed by all who's lives touched hers. God Bless Her*

**A message from her great niece Philippa :** *When I was younger I loved watching Fraggles Rock. All the Fraggles stayed in the kingdom except for one called travelling Matt. He would venture out into the world and send postcards to everyone of all the places he had seen. I was lucky enough to have a real life version of travelling Matt – my Auntie Ray. There was nothing that could stop her thirst for knowledge. She was always going to new places in different countries and had no intention of slowing down. Auntie Ray had such a passion for genealogy that even if you mentioned the subject you would spend the next few hours listening to her explain in such detail. Instantly you knew this meant so much to her. Another thing that makes me smile is her name. The fact that she used her middle name as she didn't like her first name, just the same as Granddad. It must be a Kirk thing!*

*Your passing has deepened our awareness of mortality and appreciation for life. Auntie Ray, you will be missed and will always be loved .*

**A message from her great niece Jennifer:** *Wasn't sure how to do this so I've bullet pointed them, hopefully you can pull them all together and make something that flows:*

- ⌚ *(I hope this one is correct, it was quite a long time ago.) Aunty Ray's love of English chocolate. Aunty Ray used to buy bars of Bourneville to take home with her and one time Muffin (who she called "Forever Hopeful") ate the whole bar out of her handbag.*
- ⌚ *I remember Aunty Ray mentioning to you that we had really big mice over here and it was actually an escapee gerbil*
- ⌚ *I remember she had a really sweet tooth*
- ⌚ *She would ask a lot of questions, sometimes this would cause people to get exhausted with her but she always meant well. It must have been the researcher in her, she was very interested in everything.*

- ⌚ *She remembered everything, the smallest facts and dates about the family tree, she knew it all by heart*
- ⌚ *most of all I remember the laughter. There was always laughter when she was around, she had a very innocent sense of humour and didn't mind laughing at herself.*

*Things that made her unique:*

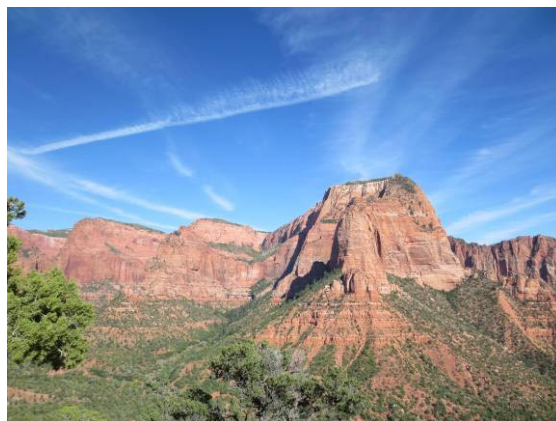
- ⌚ *the vibrating noise!*
- ⌚ *the wigs (when I was little I thought all Americans wore wigs)*
- ⌚ *the fanny packs*
- ⌚ *the combinations of beige*

### **Saturday 15 September**

Still jet lagged, will I ever sleep properly again. The Airport Inn has been okay, all the Receptionists look the same, rather plump with their hair tied back in a tight pony-tail. When I went to do some photocopying early one morning they were all stuffing their faces with huge muffins and drinking enormous milk shakes. The restaurant is run by a Chinese family and although it's run down and quite dirty the breakfast is alright. We upgraded our room and had a strange set up with the shower being a feature and positioned next to our bed. Set off for Zion Park.



### **Sunday 16 September – Zion National Park**



## Monday 17 September – Bryce Canyon

Stayed two nights at The Holiday Inn near Cedar City.



## Tuesday 18 September – Salt Lake City

We were going to set off to Yellowstone today but decided it was a bit ambitious and would take up five days. Instead we are going to see if we can change our flights to this Thursday. We could then spend last couple of days at the Great Salt Lake and Rick also wants to see the Salt Flats. Have to drop into the funeral home once more as they have a recording of the funeral for me to take home for the rest of the family. Booked into The Country Inn at Bountiful, it was a new town and modern hotel with houses and shops closer together.

Took a drive on part of the 30,000 acre famous Bonneville Salt Flats, we didn't make it as far as the speedway as there seemed no point. Imagine a place so flat you seem to see the curvature of the planet, so barren not even the simplest life forms can exist. Imagine the passing thunder of strange vehicles hurtling by on a vast dazzling white plain. This is not an alien world far from earth; it is Utah's famous Bonneville Salt Flats. It was creepy, Rick insisted on driving over a rail track where it was a bit boggy, I was terrified. We then stopped at the Marina and Great Salt Lake.

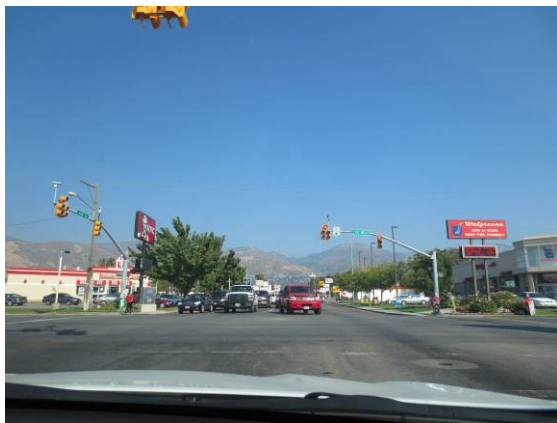


Great Salt Lake is approximately 75 miles long and about 35 miles wide and the remnant of Lake Bonneville it's too saline to support fish and most other aquatic species but several types of algae live in the lake. Brine shrimp and brine flies can tolerate the high salt content and feed on the algae. The eggs are harvested commercially and are sold overseas as prawn food.

**Wednesday 19 September**



We fly back home tomorrow 6 days early. The food and television here is terrible but we have met some really good people. I haven't slept properly since before Marrakech when I was awake thinking about Auntie Ray and how to get back home quickly. Bet we oversleep tomorrow as we have to get up early for our flight. Weather is lovely here but not the sort of place to sunbathe or even sit out in. Craving for a garlicky fish dish at Los Abrigos. We are pleased with how things have gone but can't wait to get home. Rick is anxious to get on with his pond again. I'll be back to splitting logs. The food here is very unhealthy and I am missing my five a day. We think we have both lost weight as haven't had time for lunches although Rick has been up half the night with indigestion after eating a big steak at the Texas Road House.



We spent today on Antelope Island in the middle of Salt Lake. It's such a desolate place, there were very few people around and at times we on our own with nothing but nature around us. We floated in the lake and now we have done the Dead Sea and Great Salt Lake. Rick is loving it and last night we went again to the Texas Road House and after eating an enormous rack of ribs he spent another night up with indigestion. His cold is a bit better. Not what we planned but it has been really good, everyone have been so helpful. Rick can't wait to get back to his pond and Mike is full on with his 60th birthday celebrations.