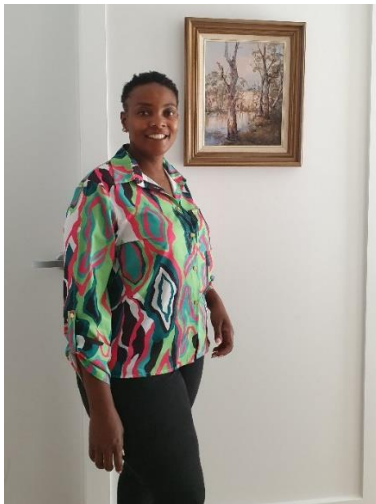


# JANUARY 2024 – IN REVIEW

## Welcoming the New Year –

Nam and I welcomed 2024 in our usual way: we went to bed at about 10:30 p.m. and ignored the celebration completely. Fortunately, my home visit stoma care nurse was of a similar disposition, and so Penny arrived on New Year's Day at 8:00 a.m. for a scheduled visit. My stoma care kept to its schedule, which pleased me, and Penny received double pay for attending on a Public Holiday, which pleased her. The effects of my disabling and degenerative peripheral neuropathy have meant that I now have great difficulty in properly managing my own stoma care. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) agreed to add home visit stoma care nurse to my list of therapy providers, and so I can claim the cost from my NDIS budget.

Penny's early morning visits might well be causing tongues to wag in the street though. Sometimes she is wearing nursing scrubs if she's on her way from or to a casual nursing shift. But at other times, she is a fashionista and influencer. Just look at her stunning photograph!



*Penny – my home visit nurse*

## Feline Friends –

Lily has reigned supreme over our household since 2016. The Lockleys house is dedicated to Her Feline Felicity with the name, *'Il Palazzo del Gatto'*, 'The Cat's Palace'. But since September 2023, Lily has had a [Lady-in-Waiting](#), **Juliana**. Juliana is a domestic short-haired breed with muted calico colouring. She was hand-reared in an environment with lots of other cats. Lily is a domestic short-haired breed with tabby colouring, but she clearly has a substantial mix of the Bengal breed as well. The Bengal breed of domestic cat is so-named as it is barely removed genetically from a diminutive Bengal leopard. Lily clearly has both physical and behavioural traits of the Bengal cats. Juliana is forever trying to make friends with her big sister, but big sister just bats her away. Nam has been using the sure-fire method of training cats ... food. The sisters can either play nice and share the food treats on offer, or Lily can be haughty and hungry ... the photograph shows the result!



*Lily and Juliana strike a détente, with the provision of food treats*

### **Friends From Afar –**

One of the few pleasures I've taken from my over thirty years in academia come from former students who have taken the trouble to keep in touch with me and to visit me when they can. In 2023, Professor Leader from the Department of Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics, University of Cambridge, was on a lecture tour of New Zealand, Sydney, and Melbourne. He insisted that his itinerary include a side trip to Adelaide, expressly so that he could stay with Nam and me. I had supervised Imre in his Probability subject in the early 1980s at the University of Cambridge!

From some of my earliest years at Flinders University, I had met **John Kat**, a student in the School. We became good friends and kept contact once he'd graduated and initially moved to Canberra for work. I even went to stay with him and his housemates in Canberra for about a week. On the Friday evening, we all went to a "certain nightclub" in Canberra. I was amazed at how many people came up to me and excitedly asked if I was John's visiting former lecturer!

John has now lived in London for a couple of decades or so. For many years he has been with a partner, Scott, who happens also to be Australian. Every time that John returns to Adelaide to visit his father, he makes certain to also visit me. Just before Christmas last year, John was on such a visit and specifically arranged an afternoon when he could come down and just the two of us have a "deep and meaningful" conversation. In January, Scott joined John in Adelaide, and again John carved out some space in their very busy schedule for both of them to visit and to show Scott our new house.



*Scott, Alan, and John*

## Bits and Pieces –

- I find it difficult to get out and about these days, and kindly I have friends who drop around for a spot of lunch or afternoon tea from time to time. My illness and the mind-sapping medications that I take, mean that I'm really only able to socially engage from about noon until late afternoon. I have developed the ability to fall asleep in the middle of my talking to guests!
- We have my mother, Joan, around for dinner most Wednesdays, with my sister, Judith, usually picking her up. Mum has been in an aged-care facility since her severe ischaemic stroke last year. On the third Wednesday, we eat a little earlier so that Joan, Judith, and I can attend the Progressive Christianity Service at Adelaide West Uniting Church. This month's theme was "*We are a people of hope. Sources of hope in difficult times.*"
- In September, the theme for the Progressive Christianity Service will be "*The Good Samaritan in Action.*" The presenter will be a famous theologian and philosopher from right here in Lockleys.
- I have been putting to good use the remainder of the small part of my activity budget for which I possess cognitive awareness, in writing of various kinds. I have also done some major updating and revamping of parts of my personal website. Please visit <https://www.alanbranford.net> and have a look at the *Spirituality* section and the *Creative Writing > Poetry* section.
- Our new daughter, Juliana, required dental work. This is expensive for humans, even with private insurance, but for cats it is bankrupting. She went in for her surgery on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Nam picked her up that evening, and immediately she inhaled a bowl of (soft) food and proceeded to play with her toys as vigorously as ever. She was six teeth lighter, and we were \$1,700 lighter!

## Sturt Desert Pea – Floral Emblem of the State of South Australia



*Sturt Desert Pea – Floral Emblem of the State of South Australia – from our very own garden!*