

Husthwaite Newsletter

February/ March 2021 Edition 111

International friends and family edition



See page 10 for a Letter from Canada.

Creepy crawler “spider sliders” made and enjoyed by the granddaughter of the Penman family in Canada.

An inventive idea which could be extended by parents and children everywhere to fill time creatively during Covid.

Think hot “sausage” dogs, or faces and other designs on sandwiches or cakes. Let your and the children’s imaginations roam free!

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS SALE

For a number of reasons, including Covid restrictions, I have decided to close the holiday let 'Sleepy Willows'.

So, I am now having an 'everything must go' sale of the good quality contents. This means beds, a King and 4 singles (double already sold) all well -maintained, sanitised memory foam mattresses, bedroom furniture including oak wardrobes, lamps, bed spreads, towel bales and bed linen sets, mirrors, chairs, A dining set and 8-seater garden dining set. Basic charcoal BBQs, Kitchen equipment, cutlery, dishes, glasses etc. Pictures, books, videos, games, jigsaws, TV, radios, and many other miscellaneous items.



3 X Oak wardrobes Kitchen Dining set

2 X Single

2 X corner storage

This and much more - reasonably priced, with proceeds going to maintain Husthwaite Village Hall



King size bed

2 X Single

Assorted bed spreads

Garden dining set

Due to current severity of the Virus I hope to open the viewing of contents **starting Friday 19th February**, unless further tighter restrictions are ordered. Interested parties contact me on:

01347-868234 or 07894 865897 to book a one at a time viewing. **Hand gel available, but please bring your mask.** Contents and price list available upon request. If you have any questions or are interested in a particular item please let me know and I can forward a photo and details.

Payment by cash /cheque please, cheques made payable to Husthwaite Village Hall.

Debbie Lewis-Green

EDITOR: Jan Coulthard *Please send articles for the April edition to me by March 20th (this is the final date!) via email: jancoulthard@hotmail.co.uk or by post to Aletheia House, High Street, Hushwaite YO61 4PX or tel. 01347 868130.*

Notes from the Editor

A distanced walk round this village in icy sunshine in January reminds me of why this is such a good place to live, and I don't mean just the views. Meeting chatty but distanced village walkers is a highlight of the day. Good people all.

This edition is concerned with looking outside our parochial concerns to people worldwide who are friends or relatives of someone living here. The letters have poured in from across the world, amusing, interesting and serious, and they give us all a window into their world, and personal stories. They are really worth reading.

They show how similar we are the world over, in richer countries at least, despite different governments and lifestyles. **Thank you** to all villagers who contacted friends and family to write to us. **Special thanks must be passed on to those abroad who took the trouble to send us words and pictures.** I hope you enjoy reading the letters as much as I did—you can imagine how delighted I have been to get these almost daily postings from afar. It's obvious how important these links are with others abroad! If anyone wonders how we started up a link with friends abroad, please ask.

What next? Well, we await the vaccine so everyone feels safer, and the chance to resume some activities. And yet we must still plan in case of another virus.

My personal New Year wish-list for 2021:

- *That the NHS has enough money, manpower and hospital beds for standard procedures as well as emergencies and future pandemics;
- *that care homes and home care become safe and affordable;
- *that schools have resources to provide every child with a home computer or laptop;
- *that broadband is strengthened, and as a necessity now, made affordable for all;
- *that governments act in the whole country's interests, not just the elite;
- *that wealth and income is taxed fairly & progressively, and we support the poor;
- *that jobs are created in green power and public services to support the economy and cut unemployment;
- *that social media are made to behave more responsibly !
- *that Brexit does not encourage anti-immigrant behaviour, extreme nationalism and a regression to poor food standards and even more unregulated poverty wages.

Enough to be going on with!

More Reading Ideas for Lockdown

My favourite has been: **The Iron Book of Tree Poetry** I often dip into it. My favourite poem is: Tree Planters, Hergest Croft. This poem is about Giant Redwoods and reminds me of the Wellingtonia Avenue in Camberley which borders our son Gary's garden. They are magnificent trees . **Pauline Smith**

Matt Haig : How to Stop Time Tom Hazard has a dangerous secret. He may look like an ordinary 41-year-old history teacher, but he's been alive for centuries.

Marion Brunet: Summer of Reckoning A psychological thriller set in the Luberon, a touristic French region

James Meek: To Calais in Ordinary Time England, 1348. A gentlewoman flees an odious arranged marriage, a proctor sets out for a monastery in Avignon, and a young ploughman in search of freedom is on his way to volunteer with a company of archers.

3 Hours: Rosamund Lupton In rural Somerset in the middle of a blizzard, the unthinkable happens: a school is under siege. **Lawrie Hill**

Little Fires Everywhere: Celeste Ng A thriller set in Cleveland, USA.

In Extremis-the biography of war correspondent Marie Colvin by Lindsey Hilsum A compelling and revelatory biography of a brave, troubled and glamorous woman.

The Beekeeper of Aleppo: Christy Lefteri Powerful and moving Syrian novel.

A Song for the Dark Times: Ian Rankin The latest fine Rebus detective thriller.

Jan Coulthard

The Little Book of Humanism: Alice Roberts and Andrew Copson. Piatkus 2020.

A beautiful little book which sets out the basic ideas of humanism....in essence, lots of thoughts about what a good non-religious life is about, quotes from all kinds of people and wonderful little illustrations. It's a book I'm really glad to have found and I keep re-visiting favourite bits.

Toymaker: Tom Karen. Bonnier Books. 2020.

Tom Karen fled Austria before WW2 with his parents and ended up in England. He became head of the famous Ogle Design Agency in the 70s, creating the Chopper bike, the Bush radio and the Reliant Scimitar sports car....all iconic designs. I'm interested in making things and why objects look the way they do, so his thoughts about design are fascinating. His reflections on what kind of job he made of being a father are revealing. **Andrew Coulthard**



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LETTER FROM VIETNAM

As teachers at the British International School Hanoi broke up for the Tet holiday in late January 2020, the first cases of Covid-19 were being confirmed outside of mainland China. The cases were predominantly in Thailand, South Korea and Japan and teachers had been advised against leaving Vietnam to go on holiday. A single case of Covid-19 had been confirmed in Ho Chi Minh City.

We were concerned about the events taking place in Wuhan and on mainland China, but concern was empathetic rather than critical.

Then, things changed. Whilst on holiday in Phi Quoc, a small island in the South, we learned that Covid-19 had reached Hanoi.

Moreover, it had reached the street I lived on. Friends sent video clips of the bottom half of the street cordoned off. Trucks were driving through spraying everything in sight with disinfectant and people living in certain houses were ordered to self-quarantine for two weeks. Officials in hazmat suits swarmed the empty street. That night, when we went out for dinner in Phu Quoc, the restaurants were closed. When we flew back to Hanoi, schools were closed.

Shortly after this, I called home to explain to my parents there was a possibility I would not be returning home to see them that Summer holiday. Largely unconcerned, and with Covid-19 not yet a problem in Europe, they gently dismissed these concerns and told me to remain optimistic. Fast forward to January 2021 and things are very different; it is now me calling home and checking that my parents are staying safe as Covid-19 continues to ravage the U.K. and Europe.

Life continues with normality inside Vietnam. How is this the case?

Vietnam has been outstanding in its response to the pandemic. Despite having a population of almost 100 million, sharing a huge land border with the country where the virus originated and having only a third of the wealth of Bulgaria per person, only 35 lives have been lost to Covid-19. Vietnam is almost unique in posting economic growth for last year.

Vietnam, like other countries across east and south-east Asia, learned lessons after the SARS outbreak in 2003. When Covid-19 hit Vietnam, the country was prepared. When the country had only five recorded cases, schools were closed for three



months. Alongside this were rapid changes to Vietnam's border regime, with inbound flights from China suspended immediately and entry to all foreign nationals halted by March 22nd. All this happened while a vast track and trace operation was created from scratch, with even 'third order contacts' of known cases being quarantined for two weeks. On two occasions, people we knew received a knock on the door and were taken to jungle quarantine camps by hazmat-suited officials.

Now, there are no known cases of Covid-19 within Vietnam. Border-security remains tight but inside the country, it is business as normal. For this, there is an overwhelming feeling of gratitude amongst nationals and foreigners alike.

That is not to say that there have not been difficult times. Online teaching for 3 months had its own stresses and has caused the same concerns and pressures as teachers in the UK have experienced.

The main difference for us, however, is that we are all working a long way from home and struggling with the fact we have not seen our families for over a year. By far the hardest part for me, and the others in my position, has been having to make the second phone-call in almost a year to say, "I don't think I'll be home this Summer."

Molly Hill (Daughter of Lawrie and Mary Hill)

Teacher at the British International School, Hanoi August 2016 - Jan 2021

The Village Christmas Tree

After the decision was made to have a village Christmas Tree, to cheer us up in these awful times, The Hushwaite Village Trust and The Parish Council agreed to fund it, and it was decided to put it on The Green. Sheila Mowatt coordinated the team. Cameron Smith and Andrew Coulthard sourced a 25ft tree from Lupton Bros. Wass Farm Shop, Jeremy Walker dug a 4ft hole to contain the metal tube (with lid) made by Mike Barker, and Jan Coulthard sourced the lights from ETC in Easingwold. The huge tree arrived on December 4th. Richard Duffield and his helper Stuart brought a tractor with a lift and helped by Cameron placed the tree securely in the hole.

Jane Maloney bravely volunteered to go up in the tractor bucket to help Richard fasten on the lights, no easy task! The lights were then festooned like a waterfall and fastened on the lower branches, by Sheila, Jan, Andrew and Cameron.

When nightfall approached on the 6th, the switching on coincided with the lovely lights the turned on by the church, and the effect can be seen in the photo on the outer cover of this Newsletter, as well as photos of the preparations.

Thanks to everyone who helped and to our funders.

Jan Coulthard



LETTER FROM IRELAND

PETER & MARGARET DEWHURST (friends of Breda and Mike Wells)

'Stay home-stay safe' was the clarion call of this unusual year, in Ireland as elsewhere. When we were invited to remain within five kilometres (that's about three-and-a-half miles) of our home at all times and go out just once a day for a brief exercise, not being discouraged, we took full advantage. It was a time to really take in the beautiful countryside that is part of rural Ireland, in the village of Farran where we live in County Cork, an environment which we have been living in for many years but strangely never taken full advantage of. So this year it was the year of the best foot forward-literally!

The lock-down (or lock-up experience as I call it) reminded me of a gentler time when all there seemed to be was the time of day and nature on your doorstep! With decreased activity generally, nature took over again all round us and you began to really take it all in for the first time- but it had always been there: the gentle ripple of the water as it runs through the stream, the call of the lark and the greening of the trees as they burst into bud to welcome in the warmer weather and spring-time. It was marvellous to see nature re-awakening after the winter and to know, that at a basic level, everything is all right with the world.

But nature indeed was oblivious to the hidden Covid agony on our doorstep and like many other countries we were equally affected, but walking the fields and taking in nature helped us put aside for a while the challenges the real world faced. As we walked through the grounds of our local medieval abbey, we could get lost in the world of ancient battles back in the mists of time and let our minds wonder.

When the restrictions were lifted for a time during the summer we got more adventurous and explored further afield (at a safe distance from others of course) the beautiful Gardens of Ireland at Muckross House in Killarney and Dirreen Gardens near Kenmare in the beautiful County Kerry. We got even further ambition and decided that although we couldn't go on a foreign holiday, we could go offshore and explore some of the beautiful and fascinating islands that sit invitingly off our coast. There are eighty of them in fact (20 inhabited) so we had a choice! To visit, you have to engage in a little brain work, working out the ferry times and making sure you could arrive on time, and oh, not missing the last ferry back to the mainland! Trying to get the car backwards on to the ferry was exhilarating and ever so slightly hilarious! Nevertheless, we explored amazing and terrifying but beautiful cliffs on Tory Island off Donegal with only seabirds for company and the lovely, almost tropical delights on the lovely island of Aranmore, again off the Donegal coast. Closer to home, off County Cork, we visited a number of rather remote islands where only a handful of people live but with beautiful views of the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse off the Irish coast, coming with a sense of simple solitude

enhanced by a beautifully packed picnic!

However, Covid always lurked in the background this year constantly like a monster in the dark, waiting to pounce, a monster where the only defence was to wear a mask and wash your hands constantly. We should have known we were in for a tough time when the Government dismissed Saint Patrick's Day and all the parades and fun, with an instruction to stay at home and essentially stay away from everyone and mind our own business (a very un-Irish thing to do!).



We looked across the Irish Sea in 2020 and saw further potential trouble brewing in the form of a phenomenon known as 'Brexit'. For years, we had wandered across to Great Britain on the ferry and occasionally by plane, without fear or favour or worrying about any great divide between us. The currency difference was a bit of a nuisance over the years but modern technology whittled that away with plastic cards of various sorts that happily work anywhere! But now, come the end of the year, all businesses were starting to get worried about customs, VAT and tariffs and border chaos. What next? Possibly a problem with car insurance too? Would there be our favourite biscuits in the shops? The pandemic had already put toilet paper on the risk list without any further intervention needed! These issues hung over us like the Sword of Damocles, particularly in the second half of the year as we settled down in our gardens catching the last of the setting sun.

With the luck of the Irish, we always thought we would get a deal to make things easy but it looked like Ursula and Boris were not going to make up the differences between them for a long time, but they saw the light as the hands of Big Ben approached midnight on Christmas Eve. So now, even though parted, we can still say we're together!

So, as we sit here apart from our friends and relatives as we did for most of 2020, I look at a half-empty glass of Guinness and imagine it full to the brim. Manchester United sit at the top of Premier league (if only temporarily), I have a mask that looks sporty, our walking speed has increased, and we are all ready to enjoy more walks and island visits. 2020 has helped us realise the things that are really important: friends and family, sunrises, sunsets, gentle rain and a peaceful countryside. Oh yes, we will go travelling if restrictions permit: more islands, more walking and possibly, quite possibly, a routine and unquarantined visit to good old England and my homeland in Wales! - with clean hands of course! Distance means so little when our friendships mean so much! But in the meantime..... back to the Abbey!

LETTER FROM CANADA

from Marlene Penman

(Thanks to Angela Ovenston)

Finding JOY (a Christian music radio station) on the journey to Florida, led us to visit my mother, Joy, in a nursing home residence in Titusville. However, on March 3rd they had all ready gone into quarantine at the home. So we visited using our cell phones on each side of the window, talking, singing and dancing!

Only three days into our three week trip, Prime Minister Trudeau requested all Canadians to return to Canada! We had to clean, donate and sell my mother's home in two weeks! Success! So off we trekked north, only to find that some of the legal papers had not been signed! Phoning ahead to cities on along our route home to locate lawyers was a major challenge! All said and done, a two day trip turned into a four day trip, but every paper was legally signed on US soil before crossing the border! We made it to the Peace Bridge, Fort Erie and promptly put into quarantine for 14 days! Praise God, no COVID!



Being a travelling piano teacher, teaching in-house came to an immediate halt due to COVID! After several months, I cooked up an idea. I'll teach outside, but every day we tried - it rained! Turn to Plan B. . .how about the garage? Keeping the garage door open for fresh air worked well for a few weeks but then fall descended upon us with the cold winds and temperatures. Determination plus, the students and I wore face masks, coats, fingerless gloves, scarf and heaters in the garage to accomplish their lessons! Success. . .but finally winter took over our idea and we are now awaiting spring for more lessons!

Pianos are large and cumbersome for camera technology, but I have tried to become a techie! I have a granddaughter in Virginia that decided to teach me to be a techie! She is five years old! Takes a youngun to teach a young-at-heart teacher! Moving the computer around to see her correct sitting position at the piano, sometimes seeing the floor more than the seat, we made it work! Little Joella played her first three Christmas songs for her church on Christmas Sunday. Success!

Beautiful pipe organs have been silenced due to lockdowns and most churches remaining closed. My husband, Bob, and I assist our friend in tuning, restoring and maintaining these *King of All Instruments!* However, with closures, critters love to visit whether it is warm or cold outside, especially organ chambers! It is always funny to tell the church leaders that their organ is not playing well due to a dead fly inside the reed tongue and block of the pipe! Or a mouse making a nest around the cables and chewing the insulation around the wires! Or a mother skunk eating the cloth sleeve of the organ blower! Or a snake has found a warm nesting home under the pedal board the organist plays with her feet! Fortunately for me, we do online church services weekly during these COVID times, so a snake has not found a home under our 1892 Edward Lye & Sons₁ organ pedal board. . .I would be standing

on the organ seat, not sitting, in one second or less!

Remember the days of freedom to visit family and share hugs and kisses? Get out the creative juices to figure out a way to share love! A special **birthday** was coming up for our 19 year old granddaughter who lives in New York and we longed to celebrate with her! Plan A: I phoned the Canada Border Services with an amazing idea. . .walk to the Canadian Flag on the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls, she walks to the American Flag on the Rainbow Bridge, and we have the United Nations flag in between! It is a 6 foot distance! But they didn't like it! *Nope*. . . that was a quick response. . .unless we want to go into a 14 day quarantine! So Plan B: my granddaughter, Katianna, and her family drive to Fort Niagara and the Niagara State Park, NY and we drive to Niagara-on-the-Lake, on to a little parkette along the Niagara River at the narrowest spot of the river, at the mouth of Lake Ontario! Bringing binoculars to see each other across the river and using Facebook Messenger, we could hear them LIVE! We all wore birthday hats, brought a birthday banner and balloons and ate birthday cupcakes together! Dancing around and waving was a sight to behold by all visitors to the parkette! Another celebration soon arrived and we determined to spend it together! Meeting at *OUR* special spot, we ate **Thanksgiving** dinner together as a family! This time our three year old grandson, **Mckiernan**, and his parents came along for the fun! He wanted to send giant bubbles across the river for the girls to pop! We tried and tried but the wind blew them into oblivion into Lake Ontario! We made the best of the Canadian borders being **shut!**

9 months after Lockdown along comes Christmas to celebrate! *Our* meeting spot was pretty cold, rainy and windy but not our hearts! I dressed up as Mrs. Santa Claus, over my winter clothing, with a dancing Christmas bulb necklace and headband on, while we sang Christmas carols together! Dancing and waving and throwing snow balls at each other across the river! After a one hour sing-a-long time, we all looked like Rudolph-the-Red Nosed Reindeer, and wishing God's blessings on safe travel and our families, we departed on our journeys with joy in our hearts!

Always wanting some quiet time to myself, at least once in a while, now I have found **too** much quiet time. Baking cookies and cakes and cooking up meals for neighbours and friends has been fun to fill in these quiet times!

Missing the warm temperatures of Florida, we decided to purchase a small hot tub for our backyard! It is a real privilege to sit under the stars, mostly clouds these days, in the warmth of the waters! Getting up and out of the hot tub brings you back to reality real quick. . .as you race between the snowflakes and tread gently on the ice to get back into the warm house again! Have you ever attended a *Launch PARTY*? We are into everything space as my step-dad, Bert, worked designing and running the ground control on space shuttles in Cape Canaveral, FL. My granddaughter, Joella, aspires to be a female astronaut; so she donned her astronaut suit and ate space shuttle cupcakes! We used Facebook Messenger so we could both celebrate by watching together on their big screen TV the lift-off for Falcon 9 Rocket that launched SpaceX Crew Dragon, with astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley in May 30, 2020. COVID cannot keep enthusiasm and aspirations squashed!

New Year's Eve is a time for celebration! Watching the crystal ball countdown and fall in NYC! Anticipating the Rose Bowl Parade from California on New Year's Day! What a difference a year makes! Our friends decorated up their double car

garage and with the garage door open for good airflow, we celebrated for a “few” hours, always physical distancing, all snuggled up in outdoor winter clothing and blankets on our legs. Eating with warm china plates and hot food, drinking our sparkling juice in crystal glasses, a rug on the floor of the garage and heating pads on each chair and a large round disk heater, we brought in the New Year, 2021 with anticipation for a COVID vaccine! We DID it! We made it work despite COVID!

May God bless each and every one that reads this newsletter. May you know that God is our comfort and strength! May you find the JOY in the journey of our life of COVID with God taking our hand and showing His love to us!

Marlene Penman, Canada

Marlene Penman has Taylor ancestors (shoemakers) in Husthwaite, some of whom emigrated to Clinton, Ontario and who donated the St Nicholas stained glass window in the Church in memory of their parents, William and Anne Taylor.

Sarah Aspinall and her friend Heather in Gran Canaria reflect on Brexit.

Post Brexit, it seems to me the UK is at a critical point.

What kind of country is it going to be now it has recovered its much vaunted ‘sovereignty’ and independence? For me, the priority should be to maintain our international reputation as upholders of democracy, truth, tolerance and justice. The EU is one of the most successful international peace-keeping initiatives in modern history and I am hugely saddened by the rejection of this historic enterprise. I feel that the UK urgently needs to signal that it is still committed to its neighbours and to playing a leading role in the fight against tyranny and injustice. Closing the Department for International Development was not a good start; the treatment of desperate refugees stranded in the English channel further undermines our reputation. I know we can do better.

There is a notable overlap here with the Environment theme of the last newsletter. Climate change intensifies the crises which are the drivers of mass migration: war, violence, famine and deepening poverty. These create a global problem which we need to work together to solve. But the answer of many rich nations appears to be to build walls, despite having been responsible for the majority of the emissions which are the main cause of global warming.

Perhaps even more alarming is the way some people in the UK now treat ‘others’ within our borders. It was a very sad day for me when, only weeks after the 2016 referendum, one of my university students arrived at class in some distress having been the subject of racial abuse on the bus in York. It was the casual but flagrant way this had been done which was particularly scary. That student was British - although this should of course be irrelevant - and I am concerned that some of the forces that propelled us to Brexit will continue to seek out targets for their hate and

that public debate will remain aggressively polarised. Thus my most pressing hope for the future is that such behaviour will once again be deemed unacceptable by everyone and that we will relearn how to debate important issues in a civil and respectful manner.

Sarah Aspinall

Thoughts on Brexit from abroad

My name is Heather Adams and I am a friend of the Aspinalls, having been at college with Sarah about a hundred years ago! I have lived in **Gran Canaria** for close on 30 years with my Spanish husband. I work as an interpreter at international conferences across Spain.



Prior to 2016 I had never consciously identified as being British (probably more European, or half English half Scottish, if pushed), but gut-wrenching despair at the arguments and tactics used to drive through Brexit has

gradually led me to understand how I had, hitherto unquestioningly, accepted the majority view in Spain of the UK as a country founded on pragmatism, constancy and good sense - and how I had been happy for others to view me as a British person in that same light.

Now, none of my many European friends and colleagues continue to associate the UK with those values. As Brexit seems to them to have no rational basis, particularly at a time of significant global threats, they are genuinely baffled by it.

This has left me feeling very upset and alienated. I am also concerned for the many European friends in the UK and British friends in Spain who are still (5 years on) having to live with the uncertainty about their future status. But I know that many, many people in the UK have not rejected Europe and I remain hopeful that a new relationship will be forged, based on mutual respect and co-operation.

Free Offer

I have a HP 2100TN A4 black & white laser printer available free to anyone who wants it. It's 20 years old but still works well and is economical to run.



LETTER FROM AMERICA (1)

From the sunny southwest and dry desert of Arizona I'm sending greetings and a brief synopsis my youth and Hushwaite days until today...thankful that 2020 is really now 2020 and hindsight! And extremely hopeful that 2021 heralds the hope of vaccine and the freedom that we all took so much for granted.

As a young girl, my sister and I were occasionally packaged off for family visits to my mother's cousin and her husband in yes, you guessed it.....Hushwaite. This was actually initially quite terrifying as she was also my godmother and school teacher of some considerable note and with no children of her own. after we managed to either break their world of calm right open, or they calmed us down to behave in a somewhat orderly fashion....we had a blast! Many walks to the village, great hills for tiring little legs out! Lots of fresh air, to increase hunger and horses! Not the conventional kind but many piggy back horse rides from our very playful and loving Craig.....the best of times, books, fires and a magnifying glass in the most interesting of studies.

In my mind they were the epitome of suave, a very cool house that they had built, a daunting slope of a driveway,, And a house that had two very educated, well travelled adults. We made several visits over the course of our youth each different as our years and interests changed and matured. Lots to explore...but very many happy memories. Once I became an adult, I married an American basketball player, most unusual for an English girl! But I was anxious to show my own children where my godmother lived and all about Jill (Galloway), my Godmother.

We arrived one trip, 4 gangly children and one stressed mama (me) after driving from London. It was almost as terrifying as the first visit of my youth, but the noise and rambunctiousness was from my kids!! Jill dealt very well with us all and I was delighted to make the acquaintance of the village pub!! Leaving my oldest with strict instructions to behave! The charm, bonhomie and great food were much appreciated, soul soothing and memorable. Time has not changed and lost the charm of the English country pub, equally important, the beautiful church, community and life! Friends, and friendly greetings everywhere we went..unforgettable...but as my late father in law was fond of saying " fish starts smelling after 3 days" so we gratefully did not overstay our welcome; poor Jill may have a different memory, but ours was awesome!

Late last year in the middle of a world pandemic...Jill left her home of many decades and memories, and bravely moved to a flatter more age friendly spot. She has such a quirky view of the world, a strong character, great sense of humour, inquiring mind still! And for most of her married life she lived in a village barely large enough to fit on all maps! What a foothold, safe haven for her travels far and wide, She always was happy to return to her village of friendly faces and concerned

neighbours. I envy her legacy and the village for being both progressive and historical all at the same time!

Here in Arizona, my home for the last 27 years it couldn't be more juxtaposed! The brown for the green, the new for old and the huge for small, Phoenix being the 5th largest metroplex in the US. But I'd like to defend my adopted home for being friendly, bold and very American southwest! Cowboy charm and all! We aren't all crazy yanks, we are independent thinkers who love our freedom, country and liberties, decry racism, injustice where we see it, strive for equality but encourage freedom of speech, religion and beliefs. Respect our constitution and the liberties many died securing for us and live daily in hope that our duly elected governments hold our prosperity and lives in high regard, work for a better tomorrow and honour our past heroes. Without history and acknowledging it's part in our growth, we are doomed to repeat the same errors, or worse never strive to be more!

So Husthwaite, thank you for being part of my growth, my backdrop of friendly community and loving my Godmother in my absence. She is part of your rich eccentric patchwork of fabric that makes you quintessentially English and perfectly preserved. Jill will always be a wonderful anchor for us to visit the area, and her fierce love of its history is quite contagious. Stay beautifully green and English!

Claire Stivrins, Arizona, USA

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LETTER FROM AMERICA 2

Hello Husthwaitians from San Jose, California!

I'm Alex Mather, grandson of the wonderful Pauline and Stan Smith, and an Easingwold School "alumnus" (2007-2014). I moved to California to marry my wife just as Coronavirus was starting to grip the world, in fact, my flight to the USA was the very last one before the travel ban. Cutting it close was an understatement!

The Bay Area locked down the day I landed, the first place in the USA to implement one. This saw great results, the curve was flattened, cases were stable, then Silicon Valley tried to reopen. We are now at a point where approximately 1 in 20 people either have or had Covid-19 and every aspect of our lives is seen through an anxious avoidance of other humans. Just goes to show how a relaxed attitude to reopening can take a place from being the gold standard for Covid responses to critically failing.

When the severity of Covid-19 is so directly visible and impacts every part of our lives here, it's disappointing to see parts of the USA still arguing over its existence and disregard others' lives. Beyond the doom and gloom of a pandemic, the country has seen major protests against racism in the Police force, pathetic attempts at leadership, a shameful election filled with school ground insults, and a recent insurrection flavoured cherry on the cake. So an ideal year to reminisce about better times!

I will be forever thankful for the opportunities to travel to Europe with school, visiting Spain, France, Switzerland, and even a once-in-a-lifetime trip to China. These trips taught me to respect other cultures, to love delving into cuisines cooked for generations, and to understand that people everywhere are pretty similar. In the face of the isolationist intent, I'm worried that other generations won't have the exposure to other cultures, and that they will irrationally hate people for no reason other than its what people in their world do. Here in America there is a fear and hatred of the alien, a racism born through ignorance. But just as we have fish and chips (something I direly miss), Mexican people have Mole, Vietnamese people have Bánh Canh, Polish people have potato stuffed pierogi, and I think if the ignorant people of the world spent more time celebrating life sharing these things they would be less angry people.

Hopefully, the future will be less polarising, an environment where solutions to the very real problems people face are made through collaboration rather than division, and ultimately I wish for you all to stay safe so we can open the pubs sooner!

Wishing you all good health,

Alex Mather, San Jose, California





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LETTER FROM FRANCE (1)

(Forwarded by their Husthwaite friends Mike and Breda Wells)

This year, as for decades, the big Christmas tree was erected on Place Kléber, in the very heart of our city of Strasbourg. It stands 30 m, much higher than the buildings behind it and it seems to talk to the cathedral spire. The tree is decorated with km and km of lights from the bottom to the top. Two hundred electric balls are hanging on the branches and they change colour from orange to blue and purple. Big electric candles offer a soft orange flickering light next to bright white stars. The decoration is different each year.

The tree comes from the nearby mountains, the Vosges, and it is a big adventure to transport a 6.5 ton tree to Strasbourg, lift it up, add some branches and decorate it. Expert drivers are required to drive this long vehicle, tree surgeons and rope professionals are needed to secure the tree upright and decorate the it.

On the last Friday of November, thousand of people gather from all the city and there is a big party with a countdown to the switching on, a concert, happy people all around and light in the children's eyes ... no, no, not in 2020! No count down, no concert, no. We were all at home because of the lockdown.

From December 15, the end of the lockdown, I often rode to Place Kléber, making a small or a big detour just to admire it as I usually do. "Usual" is not exactly the right word because I am never used to the magic that tree brings to me. It is always important for me. From the other side of the Place Kléber, the top of the tree is high in the sky, it is majestic and from the foot of the tree, it seems to be living and I could nearly speak to it.

This year, no chalets run by charities, not thousands of tourists coming from China, Japan, America, Europe and taking thousands of selfies. Songs by choirs were banned and the city was not as decorated as the past years. It was a bit sad. But the tree, my tree, was there, magnificent, proud to light Strasbourg and speaking loudly "Merry Christmas for all and happy New Year".

Chantal Krafft, Strasbourg, France



Chantal and husband Philippe snapped in Scarborough in 2014 when they cycled all the way round England!



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LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

Thursday, 7th January 2021

To the villagers of Husthwaite,

As I write we have just heard that Boris Johnson has put England into Tier 5 lockdown. The restrictions sound similar to what we have been doing. My name is Lynda Adamson. I am 65, retired and living in a rural area. I count my lucky blessings that I live in Australia.



The Australian government went early and hard, with restrictions starting back in March 2020. For many months there were only four reasons to leave home: - work or education; exercise; medical care or caregiving; or shopping for supplies. Non-essential businesses closed and many people in administrative type jobs, worked from home. Schools closed and children learnt from home. Most construction, mining and manufacturing however continued to operate.

Thankfully Australians are reasonably compliant with following government directions. The restrictions have only been a minor inconvenience for me. The biggest problem being I had to cancel my first trip to see your lovely country, and my aunt who lives in Husthwaite. I live in the state of Victoria, which unfortunately did not fare so well in the second wave of the Coronavirus, caused by some returning from overseas breaching quarantine rules, that required them to stay in mandatory hotel quarantine for two weeks. Currently we are in fear of a third wave which appears to have started because airline crew did not quarantine.

I think it is sad that the British government couldn't, or wouldn't, bring in harsh restrictions early, as the multiplying effect of this virus is exponential. You are now dependent on the vaccine being successful. At least you are not getting the bad publicity that America is receiving but, the way I see the situation, England is in just as bad a position as America with a similar death rate, from COVID-19, per million of population.

There are some positives to come from the pandemic.

- Thankfully, the installation of the National Broadband Network (NBN) was completed last year, providing good internet connection across the country. Thus parents and children could work from home and generally make use of modern technology. Many have now realised that they can successfully work from home. Further many have realised they don't need to live in the city and are moving out to rural areas where housing is cheaper, the lifestyle is better, and there is no long commute to the office. Almost 70 per cent of Australia's population of 25.6 million live in the eight capital cities, with more than 40 per cent living in Sydney and

Melbourne. It will be interesting to see if we will finally be able to make decentralisation work.

- Doctors have been doing telephone consultations and sending electronic prescriptions directly to the chemist. Patients can then have the scripts picked up or, home delivered.
- Supermarkets and many retailers have been providing a lot more 'Click and Collect' services. We can shop online and then either go to the store to collect or have the goods delivered.
- Instead of the State governments meeting with the Federal government biannually, they are now meeting monthly via remote teleconferencing.
- Age care arrangements came under scrutiny, with an even greater push to help people stay in their own home.
- Some 400,000 Australians have returned from abroad during the pandemic, prompting government and business leaders to hope for a kind of "reverse brain drain" of skilled professionals.
- •Mask wearing is now more accepted by Australians, particularly in Victoria, and will probably become the norm during the winter season. Already we have had a decrease in deaths from Influenza.
- Best wishes to all of you in Husthwaite, England during this challenging period. I hope you stay safe and can find some positives.

Regards

Lynda Adamson (a relative of Jill Galloway)

Lindenow, Victoria, Australia (Jill Galloway's Niece)

LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND (1)

8th January 2021

Neither I nor my wife Lynn know Husthwaite; Lynn was brought up in Easingwold in the 1960s and knew Jill Galloway through the school. Jill has stayed with us a couple of times when visiting New Zealand and she was a good friend to Lynn's Mum, Joyce Masters, till she passed away. I may not know your village but its Viking name is wonderful (my own roots come from Tyneside and Yorkshire and I feel a strong affinity for the Hambleton area).

I could write about New Zealand but that might sound as if I am bragging as day-to-day life here has been "normal" after a few weeks of lock down in March and April.



We are very fortunate, and I know something of how tough times are for you as my sister and brother in England both have ill spouses and haven't dared take the risk of mixing with folk at large since last March. Lynn and I emigrated in 1982 and between them our three kiwi daughters have eleven children, and we have long since felt settled in our country of adoption. Across the western world our lifetime has seen the disappearance of millions of skilled and semi-skilled jobs which provided both income and dignity to so many people. With the loss of this stability we see a loss of hope, loneliness, drug abuse, family breakdown and divided communities. The world as we knew it has gone. People speak of "getting back to normal", but that implies a stability that had already been lost though we might not have wanted to admit it?

In New Zealand we may for the time being be immune to Covid but we are not immune to the malaise at the core of western society.

The population is much smaller, ability to produce food for the world from our equitable climate enables the country to pay its way but nonetheless we see around us a culture of entitlement through perceived victim status, a mental health crisis and scary conformity to a political correctness in our media, universities, schools, government and - most of all - social media.

So what of the future?

There is a Maori proverb which translates as, "What is the most important thing? **It is people, it is people, it is people.**" Indeed it is relationships that matter and it is relationships in our society that have been destroyed at so many levels. At a practical level our faith has seen us integrated into a strong community. At what some may see as a more relevant level we have chosen to make our home in a relatively small town of 16,000 people, the heart of a prosperous farming region, and close to a larger city with excellent infrastructure in terms of retail, medical, cultural and recreational facilities.

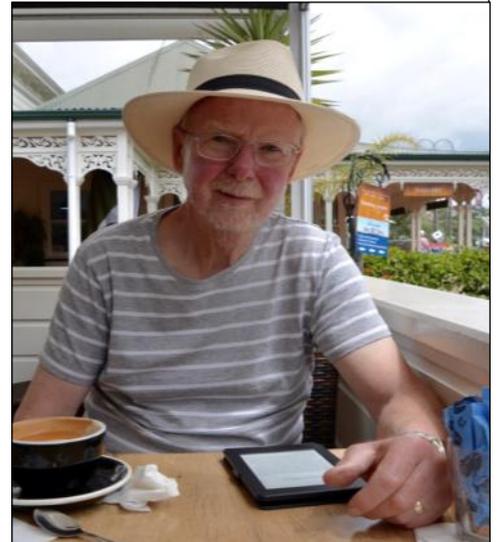
Friday is market day in our town of Feilding - we will go to the market in the town square - chat to the stallholders, "bump into" folk that we know and have a cup of coffee, often sitting outside on the footpath. People here have time for each other. When we need to we drive the fifteen minutes into Palmerston North, our "big" city, it is also pretty relaxed by European standards. So if we were to return to England to live we would choose a small or medium sized settlement where people know each other, that is located within easy striking distance of a larger city ... somewhere like Husthwaite or Easingwold.

May I conclude by commending you on having a Husthwaite Newsletter and plead with you to treasure and further strengthen the bonds that knit you together as a community of neighbours who live alongside each other and have a care for each other's wellbeing.

Throughout the Covid crisis in N.Z. our Prime Minister kept saying, "Be kind".

Good people of Husthwaite - be neighbourly and be kind! Best wishes!

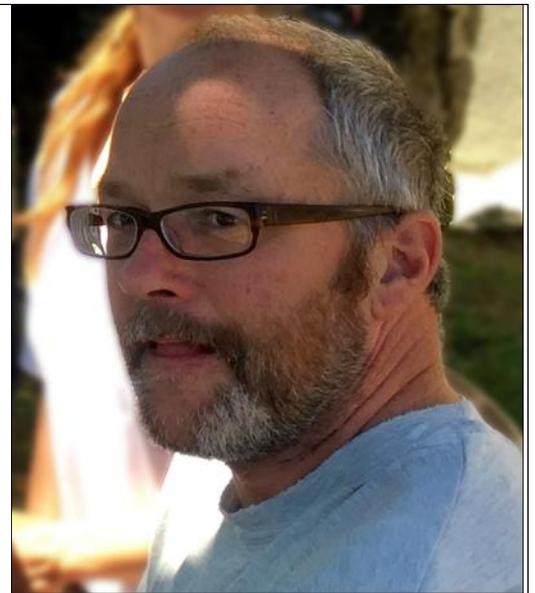
Mike & Lynn Richardson Feilding, New Zealand



LETTER FROM FRANCE 2

[A local connection: Our last night of UK cycle-camping was actually at Baxby Manor in 2015]

Like much of the planet, the past year in France has been dominated by Covid-19. This meant an end to shaking the hand of almost anyone you happened to meet and the gratuitous kissing of friends, male or female: too bad, after three years in France we had just got used to the routine, knowing how to respond, even initiate.



The first impact on our daily lives was the introduction of ‘*confinement*’ (your English lockdown) on 16th March. This national condition was announced on TV & radio by President Macron, a statesman-like speaker quite unlike the current occupant of no. 10. *Confinement* meant that you had to stay at home unless you had a very good reason not to.

There was a list of possible reasons, presented on a form (known as an *attestation*) with tick-boxes, published in newspapers or on-line. You had to tick one box only, put your name, address, date & place of birth, the date and the time of signing it: yes, French bureaucracy is not legendary for nothing, but at least you know where you stand. Or run. Exercise was only permitted for 1 hour and within 1km of your home. If a *gendarme* found you without the *attestation* or it was not valid, then an on-the-spot fine of €135 could be demanded, so we never left home without one. Not that we’ve ever been challenged, *gendarmes* being as rare as a bobby on a Tuesday night in Bugthorpe, or even rarer. Other boxes were for going to essential work, helping the vulnerable, buying essentials or “participating in missions of public interest at the behest of the authorities” (roughly translated...).

This last category came in handy for us because on 25th April our village launched an initiative to make fabric masks. Not surprisingly, many, like my wife and I, were keen to get out and do something practical for the ‘war’ effort, so armed with our completed *attestations* we turned up at the village hall to work. We were not alone, there were many familiar faces (despite the masks) and we could even remember the names of some, I’m sure it’s easier for them to recognise us as we are the foreigners.

I am not known for my dressmaking skills, but can cut a straight line with a pair of scissors, so spent an amicable few days cutting out donated cotton sheets and duvet

covers. A bonus was to be there before noon when the chef from the local restaurant (unable to function) arrived with trays of 'amuse bouches' for the workers, free of course.

These cut pieces were then sewn together on machines at the hall and by many at home (including my wife) to create 2,470 masks, enough for everyone in the village area to have two each plus many extra.

Three years ago we introduced a new feature to local life: a plant swap (*troc* in French), in which folk could exchange plants, seeds, advice etc. for free with a small *buvette* for refreshments, of course. This proved a big success and we had hoped to repeat it on 9th May 2020...but no: another broadcast from Macron on 13th April extended the *confinement* to 11th May- and perhaps beyond, so it was not to be. By the time that *confinement* was lifted in June it was too late in the growing season - perhaps next year...

Jamie Searle Auvergne France

(*Jamie Searle used to work with Mike Wells in the BBC, and he has retired to a small village in the Auvergne region*)

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LETTER FROM AMERICA (2)

At first glance our community of Hillsdale here in Oregon and your village in North Yorkshire would seem to have little in common. I, as an occasional visitor to your village, clearly see the dissimilarities.

First a bit about Hillsdale, which is tucked away in the hills and once forested dales in the heights just to the southwest of downtown Portland. Alas, our city centre, about three miles from our house, is now almost deserted thanks to the pandemic and acts of mindless, nocturnal anarchy. In truth, Hillsdale, with a population of nearly 8,000 is just a small enclave in a larger metropolitan area with a population of 2.5 million.

Until the 1940s, what we call Hillsdale today was a remote commercial wide spot in the road to the state capital, Salem. The place was mostly dairy farms, until World War II brought thousands to Portland to build ships. Finally the post-war years saw the remaining farms divided into the suburban tracts of “ranch-style” homes. To the south and west of us are newer suburbs. The **Willamette River (see below)** roughly defines us on the east, but if you cross to the other side, the metro sprawl marches right up to the foothills of the Cascade mountain range. There the iconic volcano Mount Hood is a dramatic backdrop. Mount St. Helens, venting still from its massive 1980 eruption, is visible 60 miles to the north.

Then there’s the age difference between our communities. Once, when I took Richard Wood, your energetic neighbour and my dear friend, on a tour of Portland, he was stunned at our “youth.” With the sweep of



his hand, he exclaimed, “Imagine, Seifert. None of this was here 200 years ago! None of it! Not a single building.” Indeed I pointed out that the very road we were on would have been an ancient, Indian trail 200 years ago. For millennia prior to that, the worn and winding path connected native peoples living off the vegetation of the Willamette Valley with the massive, seasonal salmon migrations.

The list of differences is endless. High on the list would be is that Hillsdale’s population is roughly 20 times that of Hushwaite’s. Oddly, the City of Portland designates Hillsdale a mere “neighbourhood,” one of 98 in the City. As such, we are unincorporated and have virtually no political power. We have no designated Hillsdale representation on Portland’s small seven-“commissioner” City Council. Well then, given these stark differences, what are our similarities? For starters both communities consider themselves, well, communities. What constitutes a

community, you may ask? A caution: the word “community” has been nearly drained of meaning in today’s world of myriad communities: “virtual communities,” “communities of interests,” “communities of colour” and even the inevitable “communities of communities.’

The communities I refer to here are physical communities, AKA “places.” They are homes to tangible institutions which themselves are homes to vibrant activities. You in Husthwaite have your Village church with a Parish Council, a Village Hall with its activities committee, and, of course, the school and the play park. Those are places where the villagers gather – or did until this damnable pandemic hit. In sorrow for our losses, but with patience and inoculation, this too shall pass.

Here in Hillsdale, we have a library (the fourth most used in the county), three public schools, three schools affiliated with religious groups, a vibrant Sunday farmers’ market and a commercial centre with some 40 shops and businesses. Like you, we appear on official maps as a place with boundaries. I often refer to Hillsdale’s extending beyond our boundaries because we are a small regional centre within the city. It helps that eight bus lines run through Hillsdale on that old Capitol Highway, once a dusty Indian path. To help with finances, just as you have a Husthwaite Village Trust, we have a modest, independent Hillsdale Community Foundation.

I’ve saved one of the most important strengths of a true community for the last. You are looking at it when you read these pages. Communication defines community. Without it, in all its forms, we would be little more than individuals chanced to shelter in the same place.

I’m proud to say a modicum of the genesis of your Husthwaite publication (The Husthwaite Newsletter) began with my friendship with Richard Wood. It began neither in Yorkshire nor Oregon but in a remote outpost school in Kenya. We had been placed there in the mid-Sixties – he as a contract teacher; I as a Peace Corps Volunteer. I was a nascent young journalist and, as you may know, Richard had been drawn to publishing even as a wee lad, as you would say. The call of the ink carried right on through his time at Leeds University. I answered to the same call at the Stanford Daily.

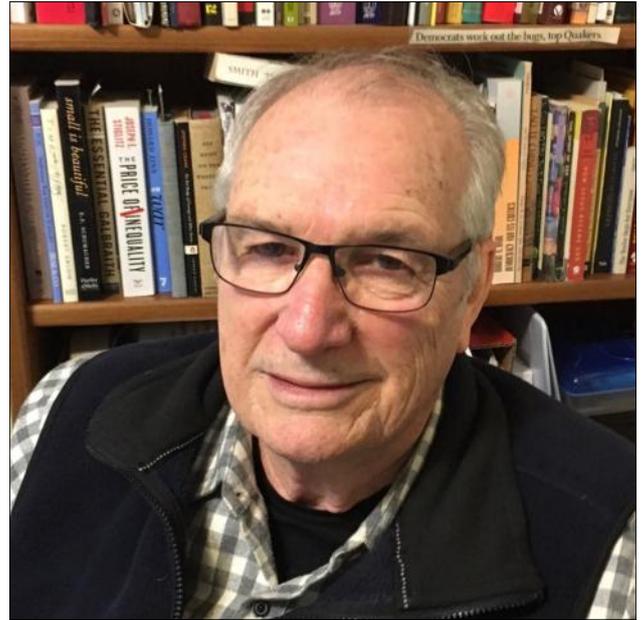
After working together in Kenya, inspiring our students to write and publish as well; we stayed in close touch. I started a newspaper called The Hillsdale Connection and discovered, and shared with Richard that, to my surprise, it could create and empower community – and even be awarded public accolades by the City’s mayor.

So Richard founded this newsletter back in 2002. I witnessed what it, and

Richard himself, had inspired on my three or four visits to Husthwaite. The village was alive with networking, creativity and service. You built a new community centre. You have organized and publicized dramatic, hilarious extravaganzas. You support those in need.

The joy of it all!

Here, The Connection, started in June of 1994, quickly attracted 4,000 Avid readers. Aided by desktop publishing technology, I launched editorial campaigns in support of a vote that created Hillsdale from three previous neighbourhoods. The change resulted in the commercial centre being placed at the core of the newly named Hillsdale. Prior to that commerce was on the edges of the previous designated



neighbourhoods. We put up “Hillsdale” signs in dozens of locations indicating where our “new place” was. We lobbied for street realignments, a dog park, a nature park and new sidewalks. A group of hardy trekkers built new trails and restored old ones.

When I mailed The Connection beyond the new, formal Hillsdale boundaries it went to “Greater Hillsdale.” That change enlarged the paper’s advertising base and its coverage. Our staff grew to four.

Today the paper, despite the demise of much of print media, and the challenges posed by the pandemic, continues. I eventually expanded the circulation to 12,000 and changed the name to “the Southwest (Portland) Connection.” A small newspaper chain bought it, but after 26 years, it still provides a forum and foments civic engagement.

Both our communities are blessed with these publications. I continue to preach that “Communication defines community,” Now, in light of the perversion of “social media” I add a caveat. The quality of communication (its adherence to truth and fact) also determines the quality of communities – and nations.

(That’s a topic for another day!)

Rick Seifert, Hillsdale, Portland, Oregon, USA

(Before retiring in 2018, Rick Seifert was a journalist and teacher of journalism for 35 years. He taught at the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Montana, the University of Portland and Portland Community College. ㊿)

A LETTER FROM FRANCE (2)

Catherine KOZLOW, born GENNOTTE, Belgian by nationality, Flemish father, Yorkshire mother (who has lived in Belgium for 47 years). Married to Nicolas Kozlow, French from Russian origin. Three children: Claire, Pauline and César (19, 16, 14), who visited Hushwaite last time at Easter in 2019. How do we know Hushwaite? Breda and Mike WELLS are my aunt and uncle.

As we live in Bordeaux, our perspective is quite French, quite European. We strongly believe in the advantages that Europe has to offer through staying united, so the referendum and the results of Brexit were met with disbelief in our household. I remember sitting in front of the telly, just not believing what I was hearing and seeing. Now that the deal has somehow been wrangled, just hours, or minutes, before the midnight deadline of 31st December 2020, it is a game of wait and see what exactly will change for us all...

I will tell you what we personally like about the UK (Boris Johnson is not part of our list)...

We always feel people are much more relaxed and polite in general in the UK, and they come across as much more civilized compared to the French unruly and revolutionary crowd! Of course, my French husband disagrees, he thinks “too civilized” means “being superficial”. I disagree with him: being civilized helps my blood pressure!

We love your beautiful gardens and landscapes, and of course Yorkshire itself! We love Breda’s banana custard pie, we love what Breda and Mike have achieved with their garden and house (quite remarkable), we love having a pint down the pub, we love the book shops in the UK, we love the diversity (we lived in London for 4 years and didn’t meet many British people there...), we love double decker buses, we love British humour, we love the quirkiness of some places, even your terrible dress sense sometimes!!... oops.



I loved my years at the University of Bath. But how sad that for example Erasmus (the European University exchange program) was abruptly terminated by Boris Johnson, and how sad that there will be tariffs on trade again, and procedures and admin for travelling. We fear that it will just become more and more difficult to have an open relationship with the UK, we fear it will flame “old rifts” again, especially between France and the UK. The most recent example with all the poor lorry drivers who were stuck in Kent in terrible conditions over Christmas didn’t give France a good image, even though 50 other countries had also closed their borders with the UK because of the mutant Covid-strain. But the tunnel is between FRANCE and the UK. So they are the 2 main protagonists. That is where all the first-hand aggravation happens.

We think generally the last 2 years have been awful, too much populism on the rise, and Twitter suspended Donald Trump’s account FAR TOO LATE. Isolation, self-protection and national interest seem to be key-words all over the world. I feel those are never the best option.

Our wishes for the future: more constructive debates and exchanges, less polarization, more attention to our climate change; every small action helps, every debate around the table with our children helps raise awareness. To change the state of the world, we need to change our perceptions, our beliefs and biases (some of them quite “hard-wired”), our habits and our communication. We have a job at hand.

Ingredients needed: some nice food, some nice wine, a lovely garden, people with open minds, who love talking and exchanging, laughing and spreading some goodwill through their words and actions. People who can take a comment, who can span a disagreement. Whatever your nationality, wherever you come from, wherever you live.

"The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress."

Joseph Joubert (1754-1824), French moralist and essayist.

I shall ask my husband (he works for the SNCF- French railways) again if there is a possibility of a direct TGV line from Bordeaux to Hushwaite! What would Boris say to that?

Au revoir, et au plaisir!

Catherine Kozlow, Bordeaux, France



At the beginning of February, the majority of people believed it was just a bit more than a common flu, and for a month not one rule about social distancing was followed. It lasted only two weeks. On the news, two kinds of images became familiar: a lot of excavators in Wuhan working 24/7 on the rush to build a hospital for 1000 people, and the numbers of intensive care cases in Italy increasing daily.

Prime Minister Conte, an unknown lawyer elected premier in a blink of an eye in a government crisis that made him chief of a centre right coalizioni in 2018, and a centre left in 2019, on 8th March took a tough decision: to put Italy into lockdown.

It was quite unexpected to see the Italian people respond, and follow government directions, trusting them. Maybe the fear from images of the morgues, the pile of coffins taken away by military lorries, intensive care stuffed with people. Or maybe pride, a reaction to those European countries that at first pointed the finger at Italy like we weren't ready, despite the news from China, to the point of some satire against the pizza-italians.

Again, it lasted two weeks, before we saw the rest of Europe being hammered by Covid, with it a strange feeling of sorrow mixed with a kind of immoral sense of satisfaction that equal justice was taking place. From that day many things started to show up: new words (lockdown, smartworking, social distance), the rush to buy food under government guidance, the region's governors on Facebook every day, scientists and virologists hosted on TV. Loads of funny videos on the web about Covid (I remember one of a girl making up, wearing a coat and when she was asked where she were going, she answered: "I'll mosey around in the kitchen"), all the balconies with pictures of a rainbow and the words: "It will be all right".

We were proud of ourselves in the first two hard months of the lockdown; we had a deadline, a goal to achieve, three clear rules to follow and the will to demonstrate we are better then we thought . Summer was Eldorado for some, the return to a normal life despite the rumours of a possible second wave. Even the government used the time to discuss how to deal with returning back to school in September and find a way to stabilize the different streams of the centre left coalition. Few efforts were made to support the medical staff, our Spring "heroes", and now we feel "Summer, did you exist?". We saw our neighbour countries hit first by the second wave and then it was our turn. The government divided Italy in three zones with 21 parameters that make you need a pass from one to another. Local governors

could have tightened the rules but almost no one did, leaving the choice entirely to the State. During Christmas we could meet a relative or a friend, two people and as many children you have below 14. Now the numbers show us that it was a feast for the Virus. Deaths rise and the daily bulletin is part of the news. Through all these months people have been overwhelmed by the amount of words and numbers about Covid, so we are used to it. Even the best emotion felt everyday loses its strength .

We are a couple who live in a two flat house in the countryside, in the northeast of Italy, for sure not a bad place to live during a lockdown unlike others stuck on the 12th floor in Milan with children. Apart from the first days at home I continued to do my job and I liked the empty roads, the quietness around. My partner Caterina, on the other hand, lost her job as a sommelier but continued to manage the Facebook page and the web site of the restaurant. As the days passed we talked a lot about the the future and the possible scenarios. What we miss most is the human contact with the people we love and care about but we take it like a marathon where you have to save strength and resist the temptation to stop. These months made me feel even more grateful of what I have: a roof above my head, running water, heating, food, a flat that my parents only dreamed of at my age, books, films. No need to hide, no need to escape, it could sound like rhetoric but it's only an observation of reality. The storytelling of the news along these months is that we are at war. I remembered "The diary of Anne Frank" or "Is this a man" by Primo Levi: we are far from that.

I'm baffled and also angry to see people not following the simple rules of wearing a mask and social distance ,putting their beloved family at risk. The tragedy we are living in is stressing some ideas of our democracies, freedom on one hand and healthcare on the other. They are both rights we have achieved through war and deaths, now they are at stake on two different sides with deaths being the "middle of the scale". Is it more bearable to see women and men die by Covid or face an economic crash and lose our jobs?

Caterina and I, like all of us, ask ourselves what about next? How will life be when Covid is over? It gives you a sense of vertigo to know that the importance of this historical moment is impossible to foresee for we are part of it. What comes to my mind is an interview with a famous Italian actor and comedian of the 60's - 70's ,now no longer with us. When he was old they asked him if beauty will save humanity and he replied with his funny Tuscan accent : "Bah! Humanity gets on by kicking ass". It helps me neither to take the situation too grimly, nor to expect too much from ourselves.

(Typical bizarre photo of Matteo who is one our our dearest young Italian friends, with partner Caterina. He has spent many months over the years living here with us. Once he walked from Scarborough to here rough camping over 4 days! Some may remember the Ionesco play and Italian meal he and Caterina put on in the old village hall. Jan Coulthard)

LETTER FROM ITALY 2

Covid-19....it seems like the name of a space shuttle... and it has literally taken us to a new planet. At least here in Italy. I still remember the feeling of something far away, that affected Asia, China, nothing to do with us Europeans. And then it started slowly approaching..... Italy, then Lombardy



(“we are still safe, being on the Northern tip, 10 km from the Swiss border..”) and then our province ,“well, at least it’s not here in my town”, I thought. Then the first Covid case struck in Chiavenna, my home town. That was a shock. I finally realised the true meaning of “globalization”. I remember the feeling of being “under siege” by an unknown and cunning foe, that had managed to crawl unnoticed up to our doorstep.

On the other side I perceived that this Covid has made us, Italians, stick together, as a whole, with the same fight and goal: survive and defeat the enemy.

From March to June we accepted total lockdown and harsh restrictions without a blink: we couldn’t move from our houses unless for work or doing shopping. We could go out for a walk with the dog, one at a time. Always wearing protective masks. The poor dogs started hiding behind doors because they refused going out for the umpteenth time...

It was unreal....it was as if Italy had been stopped on the “hold mode” and waited for someone to push the “play” button again. I remember walking Anubi (my dog, who actually needed to pee, by the way!) and plunging into a vast motionless silence. Life was inside the house, not outside, in what used to be the real world, but now it seemed a faded image from the distant past.

Nevertheless, life kicked back again. On balconies, roofs and windows all over Italy. People started hanging out white bedclothes with a colourful rainbow on it and the writing: “Everything will be ok!”. They arranged to play songs and improvised small concerts, each person from his own window or balcony. We wanted to honour our wounded nation, in particular doctors, nurses and people fighting for their lives in hospital.

Opposed to this joyful, liberating and full of life image, there were the gloomy and painful pictures on TV and papers of long queues of grey military trucks, leaving hospitals with hundreds of dead bodies at night, in the dark...

But summer came. We, Italians, really had shown that we could be a united and caring community and nation. We were proud of ourselves. Something had changed

inside each of us. The lockdown had taken its toll on every single person. And when we emerged from isolation into light and life, we felt different.....grown up, more responsible and aware of how fragile we are and can be at no notice..

That being said, we also felt we deserved to unwind and enjoy the summer sun, sea and fun. Some of us still wore face masks when in a crowd and tried to keep a minimum of social distancing. Others decided that war was over and they could go back to normal life and..... partying.

Then September came and ... Covid with it, again. For the second time....

“Noooo. How’s that possible? Wasn’t it over?” The approach of the cold season and the opening of schools, shops and economic activities had tickled the apparently sleeping monster and here it was amongst us once more. Parties had done the rest.....

But our determination, our feeling of being a beautiful whole, our courage and will of fighting together wasn’t the same. The sheer idea of another “hibernation” and suffering down to one’s bones came back...and we swayed.

It is understandable....in some respect. But not to Covid. It carried on spreading at a high rate, uncaring and blind to those it crushed or brought to their knees.....

Now Italian regions have been given 3 colours, according to the infection rate: yellow, orange and red. Restrictions go from mild (yellow) to nearly-total lockdown (red). Unfortunately Lombardy, my region, has mainly been orange or red so far: economic activities usually thrive here, as well as tourist villages in the mountains or on Lake Como..... attractions for holiday goers who deserted beaches and came here in July and August, thinking they were less crowded.

The vaccine seems to be the valorous knight in its shining armour that has come to rescue us.... I am sure the knight will slowly retrieve the situation.

Nevertheless, I miss that compassion for one another, the sense of being a whole as a nation, that mutual understanding in each other’s eyes when we met in the streets with our faithful masks on. These values and feelings, the vaccine won’t give us back. Because they come from within us, from our deep inner true selves. Not from the outside world.

Valentina de Stephani , Chiavenna, Lombardy, N. Italy

We first met Valentina when she was 3, in the early 1970s, brought by her parents Paolo and Laura Via to see us in Leeds, a meeting of recently made pen pals. Neither family could speak the other’s tongue, so a mixture of gestures and quickly learned phrases sufficed then! Since then, both families have visited each other’s homes often over the years, a treat for us especially to see a beautiful alpine valley between Como and Maloia, and get to know the many kind friends and families there. They all really now part of our family, and we hope the grandchildren will continue the link, despite Brexit. Valentina like her parents is a teacher, in her case of English, some of which we are proud³³ to say was learned from us! Jan Coulthard

Greetings from Belgium

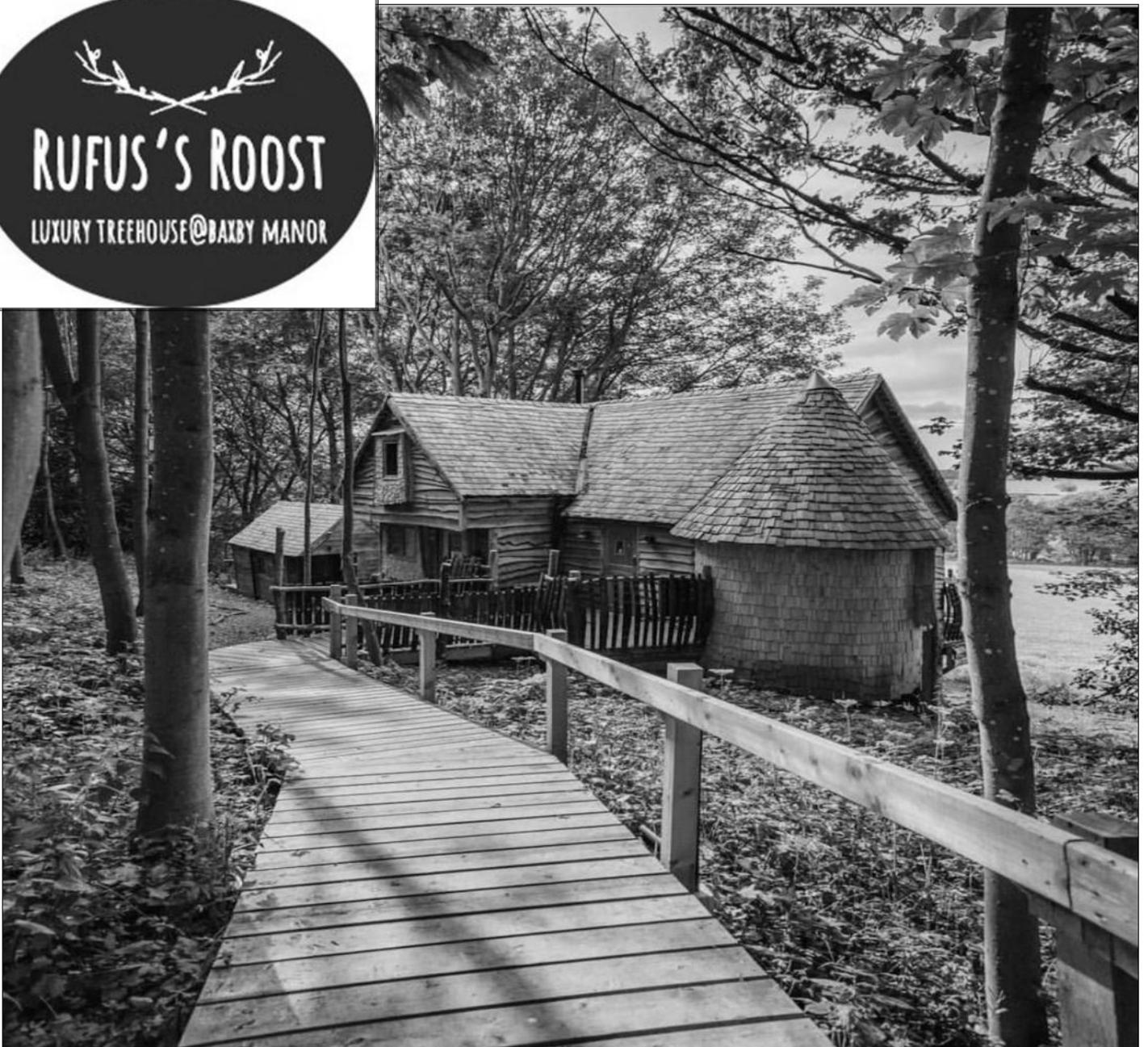


This is a message to all the lovely people of Husthwaite! A Happy New Year to you! I write from Leuven (Louvain) in Belgium where I have lived for the past 40 years. (This is the town where Stella Artois is brewed).

On 31st of January 2020 my husband Roger & I were invited by my sister Breda & her husband Mike to an Exit Brexit “wake”. We represented the “foreigners” so we parked our Belgian car discretely on their driveway, not to upset the other guests!! Having enjoyed a truly European feast, we raised our glasses to a bright future. As things quietened down, I was lucky enough to sit next to Andrew and Jan who were interested in our life on the continent (my husband is from Antwerp) and just how much we thought Brexit might change things. Andrew presented me with a wonderful “Lyrical History of England’s greatest county” - God’s own! (By Richard Morris) and encouraged me to read and enjoy it. I most certainly did just that! It was the best book that I have ever read about my place of birth, the place I grew up in & love.

Then came COVID and the book is still sitting here on my desk waiting to be returned safely and personally to Andrew. After having read this, and having so much extra time to read due to lock down, I then read the whole series of Amanda Owen -the Yorkshire shepherdess & of Hannah Hauxwell on her isolated farm in the Dales. Next followed the books of Gervase Phinn- known as the “James Herriot of schools.” As you can imagine, I felt that my knowledge of Yorkshire and its people was considerably enriched. I thought of all the tiny villages, beautiful peaceful countryside, the history, culture & nature that surrounds it. I had a feeling of nostalgia but also of pride that I had the chance to be born and schooled in such a lovely area. I love my life over here but I like to hang on to my ties to Yorkshire and rejoice in having “the best of both worlds” without ever forgetting my Yorkshire roots. Thank you, Andrew, for such a wonderful gift and I hope to return your treasured book as soon as we can travel to England.

Hilda & Roger Gennotte-Uttley *Hilda is Breda's Wells sister in Belgium. She is pictured with husband Roger visiting Scarborough*



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LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND (2)

I am a New Zealand cousin of villager Angela Ovenston and have been privileged to be a guest with Angela and John on many occasions. I have also met quite a number of your readers, as some years ago I gave an illustrated lecture on NZ gardens in your old village hall. I am very happy to give you the briefest picture of how my wife (also Angela) and I have managed with Covid over the past ten months, and indeed the community at large. We ourselves have had a very stable year, with close neighbours always ready to shop for us, walks within easy reach, and all the comforts of one's home. We have of course missed our usual joys of concerts, films, exhibitions, and for long periods not being able to mix with our families. We have been glad to attend church by Zoom, although find it does not handle congregational singing well. Above all we recognise that during the pandemic we have been among the most privileged of communities in the world, and my wife and I have especially enjoyed the simple pleasures of watching the seasons change, as we swung through autumn, winter and then spring.

We live in Auckland, which is perhaps the most susceptible part of the country, housing as it does 1.7 million or one-third of NZ's "team of five million" as PM Jacinda Ardern affectionately calls us. I think everyone in the world knows that NZ closed its borders to non-New Zealanders "hard and early", and as a result - assisted by vigorous contact tracing - deaths were contained at 25. These were almost entirely within two private aged-care homes, one in Christchurch and one in Auckland, where the infection raged out of control until the local health boards provided specialist help. An early cluster was occasioned by a wedding held just before the first lockdown, and traced to a guest arriving from abroad.

New Zealand was perhaps the first nation to initiate government-managed isolation in hotels commandeered for the purpose. This policy has proved very effective in containing arriving viruses, save on one occasion which taught us a lot about the ways transmission can occur and the virus pass outside the building. An infected traveller, at that stage not yet tested, must have touched a lift button which within ten minutes was then touched by a domestic staff member, who of course later carried it into the community at the end of their shift. The deed was done! Contact tracing had established that the staffer had used this particular lift and activated the button while the invisible smear remained 'alive'. These are my words, but you get the idea .

Auckland had an emergency during a second lockdown when the government ordered what amounted to a travel ban on all roads in and out of the greater urban area. This required a huge contingent of police and military to interview every motorist at road blocks, to ensure that only essential services got through. As one might guess, many of the ordinary public thought they could get through and vast

queues built up and essential goods traffic was needlessly delayed for hours. It was a learning curve for everyone, and it will be done better if there is ever a next time. For New Zealanders returning from extended time abroad, the cost of 14-day managed isolation is being borne by the tax payer, but for anyone returning from a short-term trip - the government imposes a charge on the traveller of \$3,100. At present some new arrivals include deep sea fishing workers from Russia, whom NZ's fishing industry traditionally relies on. At present some are bringing the UK virus with them, and so they wait out a quarantine period before boarding their NZ vessels.

We are having a wonderful January, with multitudes of families taking summer holidays at the beaches, but many of us here must be wondering, "How long can this bliss continue? How long can the NZ border go without leaking the virus into the community?" For the moment we just count our blessings, and extend our sympathy to so much of the world less fortunate. You may wonder how our economy has managed. Well there was a huge injection of government support from the onset of lockdown, and it is said that because the pre-Covid NZ economy was in pretty good shape, the cost was easier for the Exchequer to justify. Some small businesses eventually failed, but the community showed a lot of inventiveness, and many new small ventures emerged. The courier industry is buoyant, and many times its previous size.

NZ's agricultural and horticultural exports, and viticulture, have all had an excellent year, although of late the EU has proved a hard bloc to strike any deals with. We trust that the UK will become a willing trade partner, and that we may again enjoy a closer economic relationship like the older of us remember from the pre-EEC days, before we lost what was known as "imperial preference".

How do we in NZ view the USA? We are told that many Americans would love to emigrate to NZ, and no doubt over time this will happen. Our news media gives a lot of attention to the US, and our government-owned TV corporation has now posted its own journalists to Washington semi-permanently. As Pacific nations, NZ and the USA have a number of shared interests, and we hope the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, which Donald Trump pulled the US out of, will gain Joe Biden's support.

Finally, I must record that we have had an election, which drew the largest support for the NZ Labour Party in history. It is said that the ranks of regular supporters were swelled by conservatives who were disenchanted by the failure of the NZ National Party to stabilise itself under an effective leadership. That could take some time yet, and in the meantime our joint leaders Ardern and Robertson, whom it could be said are joined at the hip, will no longer struggle for a parliamentary majority. The House is in recess, but I doubt that Jacinda will slow down. She is a human dynamo, with an intuition beyond her years. The last I heard, she was still

saying she is too busy to have a wedding, so I guess her partner Clarke Gayford may just have to be patient.

Michael Jones NZ 11.01.21



The pohutukawa tree, viewed from our lounge over our neighbouring harbour. This native tree is endemic to the sea shore of northern NZ, and its bright red flowers occur right on Christmas; so it had gained the name 'The NZ Christmas Tree'.

Below: Jane Maloney and Richard Duffield perch in the tractor bucket as they begin the task of fastening the lights to Husthwaite's Christmas tree in December.





The village Christmas tree was erected and lit up in December on The Green

Photos by Jan Janiurek

