

*Christmas
2020*

2020 has not been a good year for anyone, but that doesn't mean there was no humour to be found. We did at least manage to get a laugh or two out of the virus.

We also had a great celebration at Aaron's 40th birthday - a real highlight in our otherwise rather depressing year.

So, although the content is a bit thin this year, let us hope for better next year, with as much happiness and prosperity as can be found, for ourselves, and for all our readers.

The Knowle Farm Newsletter



The best bit of our year was probably Aaron's 40th birthday celebration. About this time last year, Aaron (Henrietta's younger son - the one who gave a speech at the wedding for those of you who were there) started to sound out the family to see how they felt about celebrating his birthday with him in Mustique. Mustique?? Who was going to say no to a free week's holiday in Mustique with a few days added on in Barbados at your own expense? None of the family any-

way, and that was the plan up to March this year when it became apparent that air travel was off the option list for the foreseeable future. Faced with this, Aaron, not to be put off, rented a splendid house just outside Taunton. Ten fully en-suite bedrooms, a pool, a tennis court, and a cinema in the basement was enough for all the family to enjoy a week in luxury (plus, it had the advantage for me, that Naresh, Vicki and my granddaughters could come too). Then, just as

happened for most families this year, the lock down was imposed and even Taunton seemed doomed. Happily, by July things were opening up gently and we could all head off to Somerset. However, the restrictions imposed a limit of two families mixing in one house so we finished up planning that this luxurious house would be occupied by two of the Hudswell families, Henrietta and I would take the caravan and sleep in that, and the other two families would bring tents and camp on the lawn. That was the legal answer. But - once we all got there, we realised that the only person out of the entire 21 of us

that was working outside the home was Naresh, so we decided to ignore the whole awful business, and just enjoy a few days with our families. It was a truly wonderful week. After all the worry and fear of the lockdown, it was a blessed relief for all of us, and no-one got ill. The weather was kind and we ate outdoors during the day and had a big family meal in the evening. A different family prepared the dinner each night so no-one was stuck with all the cooking, and we had a great variety of food.

Getting to hug the family again was definitely the highlight of a bad year for the two of us.



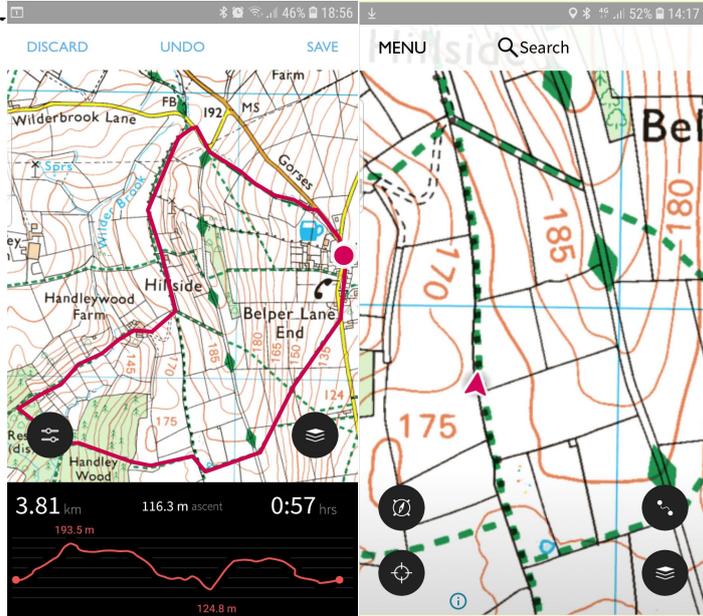
Discovery of the Year. The O.S. App

The discovery of the year for me was the Ordnance Survey phone app. Having bought a paper copy of one of the Explorer series of maps (ideal for walking at 2.5" to the mile) there is a printed code on the cover that enables you to download a copy of the map onto your phone or tablet.

The app then uses this map and the phone's GPS system to show you exactly where you are. That's always been the trouble with map reading for me - I can read a map quite happily, but telling where I am on it is another matter. So - the perfect answer.

I have lived on the farm for nearly 24 years now, and although we are surrounded by footpaths, I have never tried to walk them as many of them head across ploughed fields, or through farm yards, and I'm never sure about that.

Now though? Well! Henrietta and I walked pretty well all of those easily accessible by foot from the farm (and several that we drove to) during the lockdown and I know them all by heart.



It is amazingly accurate - you can tell if you stray off the path by as little as a couple of feet (see the picture), and if you want to plan a walk, it will tell you - before you leave - how far it is and how up-and-down it is too.

And - if you cough up about £25 a year, you have access to maps for the whole country. No more buying paper maps at £9 a pop.

I thought it a bit of a bargain, and now, wherever we go I have the local Explorer map to hand, a facility we have used a couple of times this year while away from home.

large bay window at the front of the house collapsed last year, and something needed to be done. Step up the three old friends Terry, Mike and Earl. Of the three of us, Earl is undoubtedly the practical one, and over the years we have developed a technique for working together. The day before we try to do anything, Earl and I will spend all day (and many cups of tea) arguing about how the job should be done while Mike watches with mild amusement. Then, on day two, we go out and Mike and I do what Earl tell us to. It's a tried and tested system, honour is satisfied, and the job (mostly) gets done to Earl's very high standards. And so it was with the gutter. Semi-circular gutter and backing fascia all replaced over three days. Couldn't have been done without regular feeding courtesy of Henrietta though.

Guttering

Now, you may not think that guttering is a subject of great interest, but the gutter on the



My 3 Favourite Lockdown Jokes



The Travel Section



Despite everything we did get a little travel in during the year. We were lucky enough to get a couple of weeks in Lanzarote before the whole thing kicked off - we flew home just 5 days before the lock down took effect after hearing (and not entirely believing) the frenzy over toilet rolls. (The corresponding frenzy

in America, meanwhile, was entirely more believable - guns and ammunition).

Those sunny, lazy days in Lanzarote now seem like a far away dream, and who knows when we'll feel safe enough to return. Very soon we both hope.

Norfolk Broads

We also had a lovely week in Norfolk - Henrietta's first on a

boat - and while she was worried about her prescribed role of "crew" it all turned out well, the weather was lovely and we had a great week. So good, we are hoping to do it again in 2021.



Fear of Flying

Obviously, there wasn't much travel this year, but there was a great deal of worry about when or if would be safe to travel in aeroplane again. I did some research:-

From WHO:-

Research has shown that there is little risk of any communicable disease being transmitted on board an aircraft.

The quality of aircraft cabin air is carefully controlled. Ventilation provides a total

change of air 20-30 times per hour (every 2 or 3 minutes!) Most modern aircraft have recirculation systems, which recycle up to 50% of cabin air. The recirculated air is usually passed through high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters of the type used in hospital operating theatres and intensive care units, which trap dust particles, bacteria, fungi and viruses.

Transmission of infection may occur between passengers who are seated in the same area of an aircraft, usually as a result of the infected individual coughing or sneezing or by touch (direct



Fibre to the Farm

Nothing to do with travel, but I thought you might like to see

what it took to bring fibre broadband to the wilds of Hazelwood. It's been a long time coming, but we are now traveling at full chat along the international data highway.



contact or surfaces that other passengers touch). This is no different from any other situation in which people are close to each other, such as on a train or bus or in a theatre. Highly contagious conditions, such as influenza, are more likely to be spread to other passengers in situations where the aircraft ventilation system is not operating.

Also, from Condé Nast Traveller - dated 2010

The most common way to pick up a bug when flying, experts say, is from a contaminated surface - tray tables, lavatory doors, and

latches on overhead bins are loaded with viruses and bacteria.

So - it's very sensible to wipe everything around your seat - particularly the tray table - with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser

Finally:-

The achy, knackered feeling many fliers get after spending hours in the air usually has nothing to do with colds or flu and everything to do with the bone-dry, oxygen-thin atmosphere of the cabin. The airlines have to boost the oxygen and moisture levels at high altitude - and that costs money.

Suggestion of the Year.

Mid May 2020:-

A petition on change.org notes: "Under international law if you defeat a country in a war, you become the de facto government of that country until new arrangements are made. Therefore if the UK declares war on New Zealand and then immediately surrenders, Jacinda Ardern and her government will have to take over the UK and will do a much better job than the present bunch of clowns."

One Liner of the Year.

From the Edinburgh fringe. Jokes about white sugar come along now and then, but jokes about brown sugar - Demerara.

Thoughts for the Year.

Sign in Frome Somerset - "Viagra - it might not make you James Bond, but it will make you Roger Moore."

Peter O'Toole in 1998. "The only exercise I get is walking behind the coffins of friends who took exercise"



Achievement of the Year.

My granddaughter Asha won 3rd place in her age group in the world wide *Pink Lady® Food Photographer of the Year*

competition. The theme was obviously food photography and this was her entry, entitled Dark to Light. Her attached comment was "The joy of seeing the smiling faces of home grown mushrooms when the cupboard door [in which they're grown] is opened...I wonder what they are saying to each other and to me..."

Lockdown Poem of the Year.

You may remember "The Great Toilet Roll Crisis of 2020". At the time, the poet Pam Ayres was on holiday in Australia but was inspired by the crisis.

"I think that I may take a stroll,
And buy myself a toilet roll,
At home it will be safely stowed –
With the other pallet-load."

Surely this is the only example of a literary work inspired by the panic-buying of loo paper.

Caption Competition.

I was actually trimming back the Virginia creeper, and Henrietta was holding the ladder steady - perhaps not the best person for the job really, given her tiny size. Mind you, all she was worried about was stuff dropping on her head. But caption suggestions from the family were:-

"Does ITV work if I do this?"

"Terry taking no chances when it comes to social distancing"

French Put-Down of the year.

Gavin Williamson may think that entente cordiale means drinking squash at Glastonbury but the former defence secretary could be angling for the foreign office since he shares Boris Johnson's taste for winding up the French.

At a Fourth of July party with the American organisation "Republicans Abroad" Williamson said he had been asked why we didn't have a public holiday on Trafalgar Day. To which he replied: "If we had a holiday to celebrate every victory over France we would never work."

Lyric Change of the Year 2.

I'm not sure of the attribution for this one, but it's William Rees-Mogg singing, and it's set to the tune of Gilbert and Sullivan's I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General:

"I am the very model of a prejudiced Etonian
My diction is impeccable, my politics draconian
I'm quite the polar opposite of what you'd call revisionist
And though I went to public school, at least I'm not a Wykehamist."

Lyric Change of the Year 1.

During the fuss over the words to "Rule Britannia" at this year's proms, there were several suggestions as to how the words might be made more appropriate. My favourite was:-

Rule Britannia, we have so much to cheer,
Rain and soggy fish and chips,
and luke warm beer.

"For a list of all the ways that technology has failed to improve the quality of life, please press three."

Alice Kahn 2006