

Christmas
2021

2021 has been a slow year for the Derbyshire branch of the Chisman family, which means the newsletter content is a bit thin this time round.

So let's hope for a *Merry Christmas*, a happy, prosperous, and rather more fun-filled New Year for ourselves, and for all our readers.

Farewell to my youth.

My self confidence (and hold on the fact that I'm not old yet) has been supported over the years by three things. First I love to ski. At the age of 75 I was still enjoying my ski holidays as much as I did when I was younger. But, three years ago things changed. When Mike, Sally and I ski together it is fairly normal for me to be in control about 90% of the time, but not for the other 10%, and that is where a lot of the excitement lies. Unfortunately, the last time we went, the figures were more like reversed - only in control about 10% of the time. A lot of this was down to my gammy ankle, but whatever the reason, that sort of skiing leads to bad accidents and so that was the end of my 50+ year skiing career. The second thing that kept me feeling young was my love of roller coasters. I've been on many of them over the years, including a memorable visit to Cedar Point, Ohio in 2004. (If you see a program called something like "The World's Scariest Roller Coasters" you can bet that half of them are at Cedar Point.) Recently though I suffered from vertigo after a visit to Alton Towers with my granddaughters, and it's happened more than once, so that's that. Finally, (see right) my little racing car has had to go and, when you add in the bifocals, the hearing aids, an arthritic ankle, and the walking stick, I can sadly announce that 2021 was the year I became an old man.

The Knowle Farm Newsletter



Farewell to a much loved friend.

No, not Earl or Mike!

For my 60th birthday, my brother bought me an "experience" driving a Caterham at Silverstone. The little car excited me no end as (in the hands of the instructor - not me) we would pass Ferraris and other super cars round bends and it generally beat the pants off all opposition. - with my bottom about 4" off the ground. Not everyone's cup of tea I know, but I was hooked.

I realised that such a car would need a good deal of looking after, and **that** very definitely wasn't my cup of tea. So, at the time, it wasn't a practical proposition.

However, in 2002, when Earl (an old school friend - centre) and I got together, we discovered that he loved tinkering with cars and would love to be part of the project.

So it was that in 2005, Earl and I

bought our Caterham (named Nancy for a series of long and complicated reasons) and amid huge excitement, started our careers as true petrol heads.

Later on we were joined by Mike (right) - also at school with us - also a would-be petrol head.

Since then the three of us have had many happy hours hurtling round the racetracks of this country at high speed, occasionally scaring ourselves silly in the process. Until you have experienced traveling backwards down a race track at 90+ mph you haven't lived (we stopped a foot from the barrier).

In this way, between 2005 and 2018 we would enjoy occasional track days each year. But we didn't get Nancy out in 2019 (as, you may remember, I had other things on my mind that year - notable getting married and a trip to China) and we couldn't get her out in 2020, so we decided to have a track day in 2021.

It started badly with Earl - same age as me remember - struggling a bit with the physical work involved in preparing Nancy in the spring, and I suffered something similar changing the wheels and

loading her onto her trailer. It got worse when, over one zoom conversation, I mention that I was feeling a little nervous and both Mike and Earl agreed - they were too.

Nevertheless we went ahead and we all arrived at Snetterton in June for a day of speed and thrills (but with luck, no spills) only to discover that what had started back in 2005 as huge amounts of excitement had morphed into huge amounts of anxiety by 2021.

Actually hurtling round the circuit remained as much fun as ever and there is no doubt that traveling at 110mph along the back straight with ones bottom inches from the ground is exhilarating.

However, by the end of the day, I was suffering from a bout of vertigo, and Earl ended up in the medical centre having an ECG.

Alas, the writing was on the wall.

So, in September, I sold Nancy, and the three of us delivered her to her new owners. There was a feeling of sadness, but the note of underlying relief was unmistakable.



Quite a transformation.

This is how one half of my office looked 10 years ago - and the other half looked just as "busy" - but we had decided that it should be converted back to a bedroom. You can imagine it wasn't going to be quick, and indeed it wasn't.

The first bits were relatively easy - the old glass TV monitors replaced by modern flat ones and moved. Computers moved. Desks cleared and taken to the charity shop. But the further it went,

the slower it got and when Liz died the impetus died with her, and there it pretty much stopped.

Then along came Henrietta and impetus was reintroduced, so off we went again to charity shops and the tip. Bit by bit the room was cleared, but again, the more I cleared the slower it got, and, as always with these things, it was the last few things that were the most difficult. Don't

want to throw them away, but don't know where to put them. In the end I told Vicki I'd started my IDKWTDWTSTPSBHWID (I Don't Know What To Do With These So They'll Probably Still Be Here When I Die) box.

The last thing to go was the carpet - about which the least said the better (hadn't seen a vacuum cleaner for 25 years) - and it was the last trailer load that went to the tip.

And so, finally, in about May this year, we got it cleared and we

could start converting it to a guest bedroom - something Henrietta has wanted since she first saw the office in it's half-empty, never seen a vacuum, jumble sale state.

It was a rather bigger job than we thought as there was an old (and rather unattractive) fireplace that had to come out to make way for a dressing table, and about a squillion holes in the wall where all the shelves had been, but it is now finished and we have our brand new guest bedroom.



Lockdown news.

As I write this at the start of November, it looks as though our total imprisonment may be coming to an end. We started to get back to normal after our second jabs, and have been to the theatre a couple of times, the Royal Opera House twice, and out to dinner with friends several times - and it's great to have life getting back to something like normal. But what things amused us over the last few months?

Our French friends were describing the form that they had to fill in in order to leave the

house. The question that amused us was "what sort of going out are you doing"

Bored?? You don't know bored. Another friend got up just to watch dustmen when they restarted.

My daughter said shopping was the highlight of her week - and the day the vegetable box arrived - well!

Nish Kumar commented "I've never been so bored - and utterly terrified - at the same time."

I had a personal best of 2.5 in popmaster (Ken Bruce, 10:30 weekdays on radio 2 - another feature of our lockdown lives)

After months of queuing to get into the supermarket, we went to Sainsburys one day to find no queue. We didn't know what to do.

One of our neighbours commented that every time she looked out of her kitchen window it was to see Henrietta dragging

Terry back up the road after we'd been for a walk, and we - well I - discovered many things about local walks:-

1. They are much better in retrospect than at the time,
2. Derbyshire seems much more **up** than **down**, and
3. I greatly prefer **along** to both **up** and **down**.



A new theory emerges about the origin of the coronavirus.



A Sad Day

We had an Ash tree that bordered one of the fields and the road, but the tree surgeon said it was dying (Ash die-back) and was probably best felled before it got worse and broke the fibre optic cable that was running up the road between its branches - something that doesn't bear thinking about, cost-wise.

It took most of the day for the men to bring it down, it took Andy another day to turn it all into logs - half each - and, inevitably, it took me two months to unload all my logs from my trailer. Sad, but Andy and I now have a great supply of logs to be used in 2024, and we do plant trees on the farm regularly,

The Travel Section (Such as it was)

It's been a funny old year one way and another hasn't it? We started the year in lockdown, after a non-Christmas, but, thanks to some wonderful work in Oxford and elsewhere, by the end of April many of us were fully vaccinated and starting to think about life again.

On the 18th April (memorable date) we went for our first drink with friends at the pub. We had to sit outside, which was fine until the sun went down, then it just got jolly cold. Us men would have stuck it out for the joy of a second pint, but it was too much for the ladies, so we called it a day.

As restrictions were slowly

relaxed, in late June we managed a few days at Warners on Hayling Island with Henrietta's daughter, Kathryn. Great to be able to get away, but as with many organisations, Warners needed time to get the machinery working properly again.

In July, we managed to get a weekend away in York, which would have been lovely if it hadn't rained the entire time. Henrietta can't stand being shut up in the room, so a nadir was reached when we trudged round the walls of the city in the pouring rain. We go soaked. But - we did get to the Railway Museum which was a plus for some of us. On our way back, we popped in to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park - a few hundred yards off the M1 just south of Leeds - and it was well worth the visit. Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and many others. Oh, yes, and Damian Hurst on whom we weren't so keen.

But September brought a much anticipated break in Norfolk, complete with a week on the Broads. We were on the north Broads this year which is rather

prettier than the south, but a great deal more crowded - which I had forgotten about. This led to us being unable to moor where we wanted to and thus unable to eat in the pubs and restaurants we wanted to which wasn't ideal, but we still had a lovely week.

It has been a pleasure for us to visit family again, as I'm sure it has for you. To see the grandchildren growing up (and my new extended family now consists of 11 grandchildren) is always a joy.



If the cap fits award.

Overheard this year:-

Speaking of the things that have been rediscovered in our lofts over lockdown, I found a crushed velvet dress from 1970. It is, strangely, now three sizes too small for me.

My partner has not been able to rediscover any clothes from this era, as he is still wearing them.

Getting older.

Getting older is just one body part after another saying "Haha, you think that's bad? Watch this!!"

Put-down of the Year.

Of Gavin Williamson when he was fired as defence secretary

The sacked defence secretary inspired heroic disdain among those obliged to work with him, ministers and public servants alike. He represented a mismatch between ambition and ability that seems striking even by the standards of this government.

Census entry of the year. (but not this one)

A report by the Uppingham local history group on the 1851 survey. One householder was confused by the question "children's place of birth" and put "upstairs" for one child and "in the parlour" for the other, while another desperate man, asked who had slept in his house on the night of March 30, gave an empty form, explaining that his wife had just given birth to their third set of twins "and nobody has ever slept since".

What is an "Eggcorn".

"Knowledge is Power"
Francis Bacon.

"France is Bacon" It's an eggcorn. A good one. Like those who think old people get confused because they have "Old-Timers' Disease" or think that the phrase "for all in tents and purposes" is something to do with camping.

I saw this yesterday - someone threw an Omega 3 pill at me but don't worry, the injury was only super fish oil.

Some covid one liners.

What's the difference between Covid-19 and Romeo and Juliet? One's the coronavirus and the other is a Verona crisis!

Why do they call it the *novel* coronavirus? Because it's a long story...

Ran out of proper food and started eating lettuce leaves. Today was just the tip of the iceberg, tomorrow romaines to be seen!

What do you call panic-buying of sausage and cheese in Germany? The wurst-kase scenario.

The grocery stores in France look like tornadoes hit them. All that's left is de brie.

What's the best part of teaching your children at home? You can't be fired for drinking on the job.

30 days hath September, April, June, and November, all the rest have 31, except for March which was infinite.

What did the barista call her face mask? A coughy filter.

Thought for the year.

What do we learn from cows buffaloes and elephants?

It's impossible to reduce weight by eating green stuff, salads, and walking.

A comforting thought for many of us.

From The Times 15th Sept.

"Only 640 people out of more than 51,281 who have died from Covid-19 since January had been double-jabbed. Of those, 59 did not have any underlying serious health conditions. The average age of those who died and had been double-jabbed was 84, which is three years higher than the national life expectancy."

