



A warm welcome to our 2020 newsletter and what a year it has been! Absolutely unprecedented in our lifetime and sadly our grandchildren will be paying for this crisis for most of their lives.



We started off the year with a new year break at one of our favourite hotels in Barnstaple.

You will recall that Michael and Sophie got engaged at the end of 2019. We spent some very enjoyable weekends throughout January and February visiting a wide range of wedding venues within about 20 miles of here. Finally Homewood Park near Bath was chosen and along with booking our church in Saltford, the date was fixed as Saturday 2 October 2021. Hopefully far enough away to not be affected by the pandemic by then.



Not content with sorting out a wedding, Michael and Sophie also had an offer accepted on a house in Cardiff and after finding a buyer for their house hoped to move in early April. As you can probably guess Covid and lockdown meant completion finally didn't happen till 30 May.

At the beginning of February Chris was involved in an accident when someone went up the back of him. After much discussion over many months (caused in part by lockdown) they finally agreed his beloved Jag should be written off. It then took months of negotiating with people now working from home to finally get paid out and a replacement car was finally purchased in mid June – my thanks to Tux for the loan of his car throughout.

Just before lockdown loomed my sister came down for a few days and we had a weekend away with friends in Warwick.

As we all know only too well lockdown came on 23 March and the weekly family Zoom quizzes became the norm. None of us had ever heard of Zoom before but who could live without it now?

Lockdown obviously changed all our plans for the year, which meant not seeing friends & family and not celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on 7 June. Instead we had cake and Prosecco in the garden with some of the family. It wasn't till early September that Chris & Eryl got away for a long weekend at Orestone Manor near Torquay. It also meant we had to cancel plans for the family to also celebrate Sophie's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Whilst lockdown resulted in most things being cancelled, it threw Chris into overdrive in the village. By the time lockdown started he had led a team of volunteers running a call centre from home for anyone in the village to ring if they needed any form of help. As well as Waitrose shopping runs 3 times a week for around 40 shielding residents, there are teams doing pharmacy runs and post office runs. Over 200 people in all volunteered to help in a

whole variety of ways. For a number of months during lockdown hot meals were supplied every Saturday to over 100 residents. Stay at Home street parties were also arranged on 8 May to mark VE Day, 13 June to mark Queens Birthday and 15 August to mark VJ Day. These really cheered the village up. Each of these were accompanied by providing 200 free afternoon teas to all in the village 75 or over. The support hub is still running and on 20 December we are providing free Christmas Lunch to over 120 residents. It has been a supreme village response in exceptional times.

Some happy news arrived in July firstly with the birth of our niece Rebecca's first baby boy Klay Harley Wells, making my sister Wendy a Nanna for the first time.



8 days later on 16 July our daughter Samantha gave birth to a little boy Theodore James Onslow. Samantha and Neil quickly adapted to parenthood and began planning an extension to their house to provide Theo with a dedicated play room! Work finally started on this extension last week.

With things on the Covid front looking improved towards the end of summer, we arranged to go up to Essex to see them in October. Little did we know that literally 2 days before our visit that Essex would ask (yes ask!!) to be placed in Tier 2. We went ahead with the visit but had to rearrange everything to meet outdoors in a pub garden. At least we got to meet them all before Lockdown 2 arrived. It was also at this time that we jointly made the sad decision to cancel our plans to rent a 7 bedroom farmhouse near Moreton-in-the-Marsh for Christmas – we have reschedule to 2021 – fingers crossed!

Finally, of course, a mention for Toby. We have thoroughly enjoyed looking after this young man every Wednesday & Friday to enable Stephanie and Tux to continue working. He's a real character and as you can see from this photo a real boy managing to find the muddiest puddles to jump in!

This exceptional year has sadly meant we've not been able to see Eryl's dad and Janice, but they remain safe and well in deepest Wales.

That's about it for another year. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a much happier and healthy New Year and look forward to a wonderful wedding in October 2021.

