

England

New Year 2014



This was our annual (at least it has been for several years) visit to England for the New Year and into the month of February. It turned out that this was a particularly good move this year as the weather in the Eastern United States was frigid for much of the time we were away.

The UK had its fair share of bad weather with flooding and strong winds over much of the country in January, but we were fortunate in Yorkshire to have mostly moderate temperatures (hardly ever below freezing and rarely above 45°F) and no damaging weather. We had lots of rain, some windy days and some days when it felt much colder than it actually was, but for the most part we were able to do what we wanted outdoors.

Our days consisted usually of a shopping trip into town for Molly and a walk somewhere for Bob—together with frequent visits to our local coffee shop and, of course, many dinners out at the excellent Ilkley restaurants.

We also were able to visit many of our friends and relatives and Molly's brother Robert came up from London to stay with us for a few days. We also had our friends Keith and Zena to stay for one night after our New Year's Eve dinner together in Ilkley.

So, although we are "on vacation" when we stay in Ilkley, we essentially live much as we do at home—but in a somewhat different environment. It really is a very pleasant way to spend six weeks and we feel very fortunate to have the flat at our disposal and to be able to make this "pilgrimage" each year.

England, December 2012 – February 2013

Saturday December 28

Elizabeth picked us up at noon and drove us to Cincinnati airport. We were only ten minutes getting through the check-in and security areas so we had plenty of time for a Starbucks visit before our 2:45 flight to Atlanta. This left on time and we landed to a very rainy afternoon soon after 4pm. As an interesting aside, this was almost exactly the time we had arrived in Syracuse, NY forty seven years ago today after immigrating to the United States. It would be interesting to re-cap everything that has happened in those years – but that's for another day.

We transferred to the International Terminal and spent about 1 ½ hours in the Delta Sky Club before boarding our flight to Manchester. It was still raining quite heavily but the temperature was in the forties, a little lower than the fifty plus we had left in Cincinnati but still mild for this time of year. We wondered if this would follow suit on our arrival in England!

Sunday December 29

We arrived in Manchester after a reasonably smooth ride – just the usual rough spots near the North American coast. It had clearly been raining in Manchester but it was now (8am) dry and cool (36F). We were very quickly through Immigration and Baggage Claim and even the car pick-up went smoothly so we were on our way before nine. The roads were very quiet and, even with a coffee stop on the M62, we were in the apartment in Ilkley before 11am. It was now a very nice day with clear skies and some sunshine so the mid-forties temperature didn't feel too bad.

We settled in the flat, cleaned ourselves up a little and went into town for our first visit to Caffè Nero around noon. The rest of the afternoon was spent in the flat and included a two hour nap for both of us! Around 7pm we went to Piccolino for dinner and turned in around 9:30.

Monday December 30

It was after ten before we got up having essentially slept the clock round. We drove into town for breakfast and then did a shop at Tesco, by which time it was already afternoon – and raining heavily.

I did manage a short walk later when the rain had slackened a little bit but it was still quite heavy at times and there was strong wind blowing. Still, it was nice to get out for an hour.

We had dinner at home and watched some TV before retiring early once again.

Tuesday December 31

It was once again after ten when we got up. We had breakfast at home and then I set out on my walk and Molly prepared for her walk into town to do a little shopping. I walked via Keighley Gate (where the two tall radio masts have been completely dismantled – work was in progress in October) and then via Riddlesden to Keighley. I got the 1:50 bus back to Ilkley and Molly and I went for coffee before returning to the flat to prepare for our night out.

Keith and Zena arrived at the flat about 6:30 and we had an hour's chat before driving into town for our "traditional" (this is the fourth year) New Year's Eve dinner at The Farsyde restaurant. The meal was excellent as usual and the musical accompaniment was less noisy than last year and the saxophonist (plus electronic background) played many tunes that we recognized and enjoyed. We stayed for the singing of Auld Lang Syne and it was about 12:30 before we left and walked up Brook Street to get a taxi home. We sat and chatted for a little while longer in the flat and it was probably 1:30 before we went to bed.

Wednesday January 1, 2014

It was after nine before we got up. The weather wasn't too bad but rain was forecast for later but Keith and Zena nevertheless wondered whether they had made the right decision when they chose not to walk home across Ilkley Moor. They decided that it was the better choice when, about eleven, we went into Ilkley for coffee and it was beginning to rain quite hard. It was still raining when they picked up their car (they had driven to the Farsyde last night and left the car on the road opposite the restaurant) and we said our farewells after a very pleasant visit.

Molly and I stayed home for the rest of the day, although I did manage a short walk around town in between showers. We

ate at home and watched a little TV.

Thursday January 2

Once again it was well after nine before we got up and had a light breakfast before driving to Harrogate to spend our birthday and Christmas gift cards. It was a beautiful sunny day although it was still cool. We spent only about an hour in Harrogate, purchased some clothing, and then returned to Ilkley.

About 2:30 I walked via White Wells to the top of Ilkley Moor. This section of the Moor is paved in many areas so the going was relatively easy and clean. However, where there were no pavers, the ground was extremely muddy and I was convinced that Keith and Zena were wise not to have walked home yesterday. This is especially true as the Bingley Moor side is always much more water-logged and muddy than the Ilkley side and I suspect that they would have been wading in some pretty messy stuff.

It was still clear when I was up there but, as usual, there was a stiff breeze blowing and I was glad of my winter walking gear. I returned via Keighley Gate and down Keighley Road to the flat. By now it was after 4pm and it was fully dark before I turned on to Wells Road.

Molly and I went to Bistrot Pierre for dinner. It wasn't our first choice but most of the other restaurants in town had taken an extended New Year break. However, the meal was very good – made even better by the use of our loyalty card which gave us one meal free! We returned home about 9:30, watched the News and then went to bed.

Friday January 3

It was bright again as we got up (after nine yet again) and drove into Ilkley for breakfast at Caffè Nero. We then did a little bit of shopping (actually we visited four shops) before returning home.

I took a walk around Ilkley in the early afternoon. It was still cool but there was little breeze in the valley so it didn't feel too bad. I covered four miles but never seemed to get into stride; I guess it was just one of those days. By now the wind had increased considerably, especially up the hillside, and it was nice to stay in for the rest of the afternoon. We had made a reservation at Emporia Italia for 8pm and had a thoroughly enjoyable meal.

Saturday January 4

We were awakened by a phone call from Dorothy who told us that Neville (David's brother) had just spent some time in hospital but was now being released to his nursing home as there was little more that the hospital could do. Obviously this had been upsetting for both him and Linda but hopefully he will feel better when he gets back in familiar surroundings.

We also received an e-mail from our friend Cathy in Syracuse (who we have known since we moved there in the late sixties) to say that David had died on New Year's Day. He has been suffering from Crohn's disease for some years and had deteriorated quickly over the past month. I guess this is another reflection of our age.

After breakfast at Caffè Nero I decided on a walk on the other side of the hill so I drove to Saltaire, fed the meter with enough for three hours and set off on the canal bank towards Bingley. I had planned a simple to and from Bingley sticking to the canal the whole way but at the first cross-point (Hirst Locks) I left the canal and found my way through Hirst Woods, the Hirst Burial Ground and back on to the main Keighley Road via Nab Wood Cemetery.

I then thought I would follow the road to Bingley but as I crossed the road at the top of Branksome Drive (where I had once lived) I spotted a paved footpath leading away from the road in the direction of Cottingley – but still more or less in the direction I wanted to go. This path meandered through a small copse and then climbed to more open ground and eventually fed into a housing estate which was part of the village of Cottingley.

I wandered the estate for a while and then started back down hill and eventually reached the Keighley Road once more – probably no more than ½ mile after I had left it. Rather than simply follow it into Bingley, I turned off at Beckfoot and soon crossed the River Aire into Myrtle Park. From there it was a short walk (past the 1st Bingley Scout Headquarters – a stone building which must be very close to the site of the Scout Hut of my youth and where we held our dances) back to the canal bank. 45 minutes later I was back in Saltaire, having covered 7 ½ miles on a very pleasant afternoon. I think there is something special about a “new” walk, especially one in which no map is involved and where “seat of the pants” direction heading is used.

On returning to Ilkley Molly made me a late lunch and then we stayed home for the rest of the day and evening.

Sunday January 5

For the first time since we arrived we were awake before nine and had a leisurely breakfast at home before going to church. Several parishioners remembered us and greeted us, including the vicar who always seems pleased to welcome us back. Coffee at Caffè Nero followed and then I spent some time looking at reservations for trips later in the year but with little success. I went for a late afternoon walk around town and we went to dinner at Aagrah around 7:30.

Monday January 6

We went to Caffè Nero for breakfast and then returned to the flat to wait for the man who was coming to inspect our gas appliances. Apparently this inspection is a requirement (supposedly annually); I had thought that it was covered by our servicing of the boiler but of course we have a gas fire and gas stove also so we decided to get in compliance.

He arrived on time at 11 and spent just over an hour giving everything a thorough clean and check-up and left us with a statement of compliance.

I went for a walk in the afternoon. I went to Addingham on the Dales Way and trudged through some very muddy and wet fields. However, the weather stayed mostly dry and the only heavy rain I saw produced a wonderful rainbow. I crossed the River Wharfe at Addingham and came back via Nesfield using the country lanes, some of which were covered in standing water almost across the entire width.

In the evening we went to the Wetherby Whaler for a fish and chip dinner and then spent the rest of the evening watching TV.

Tuesday January 7

We once again had a late breakfast at Caffè Nero and then drove to Guiseley to get some office supplies and a new set of lights for my bike. I doubt that I shall be doing much biking this trip but I shall be ready for our visit here in May.

Molly walked into town for her usual shopping trip while I walked during the afternoon. Today I stuck to the streets of Ilkley and covered about four miles, arriving home just a few minutes before Molly. We spent the evening at home.

Wednesday January 8

We had breakfast at home and then I set off for my walk. I drove to Baildon Moor and parked near the golf course and then walked just over three miles over the top of the moor and past the Trig Point. It was very windy and wet and muddy under foot so it was rather hard going, but at least it was mild with temperatures well into the forties.

I returned to Ilkley and met Molly for coffee after she had finished her shopping.

Tonight we made our first visit to Monkmans on this trip and enjoyed an excellent meal as usual.

Thursday January 9

It was a beautiful, cool (high thirties) morning as we ate breakfast at Caffè Nero – an ideal day for a walk over the moors. So, about 11 I set off up Keighley Road, past the Gate and then to join the canal bank at Morton. From here it was all on the level and I continued as far as Shipley before getting the train back to Ilkley. Actually I added an extra mile by getting off at Ben Rhydding and walking home from there, covering a total of 11 ¼ miles for the day. It had stayed dry for most of the time but the sun was less obvious than it had been earlier in the day; nevertheless it was a very enjoyable walk.

Molly had done her usual walk into town to do some shopping and was fighting off a nap when I got back about 4pm. I was less successful and slept until it was time to have my bath and get ready for dinner and an evening at home watching TV.

Friday January 10

This morning we made our first pilgrimage to Skipton for breakfast and a stroll around the market. It was a cool but dry morning as we walked around and as we drove back via the “old roads”, stopping for a coffee in Bingley. It was still dry when we got back to Ilkley so I went for a walk. I climbed past White Wells and then followed the lower path to the Cow and Calf rocks. My intention had been to walk back via the road but a path called me so I followed it instead. It turned out to be a very tough up and down trek on extremely muddy paths and rocks. It was actually quite dangerous in places and I

was glad when I got back on solid ground at the tarn and returned home from there.

This evening we drove to Harrogate to meet Dorothy and David for dinner at Orchid. This is an Asian restaurant that we had enjoyed with Joanne and Robert in October and tonight's meal was equally good in terms of both food and service. We ended the evening with coffee in the lounge immediately above the restaurant.

It was about 11 when we got home.

Saturday January 11

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then spent the rest of the morning in the flat. It was bright and mostly sunny with temperatures just above freezing so at noon I decided to leave on a walk and enjoy this break in the weather.

The view from the flat towards the Cow and Calf Rocks



Beautiful Ilkley Moor And the Canal Bank



I walked up to Keighley Gate and then down to Riddlesden, joining the canal bank a little further towards Keighley than I would normally do for a walk to Keighley. I then continued along the canal bank all the way to Silsden. It was very pleasant walking for the most part but the final two miles into Silsden were very muddy which made the going a little tough. However I made it and caught the 3:35pm bus from Silsden to Ilkley and arrived back at the flat about 4:15 after a very nice afternoon out.

Tonight we met Keith and Zena for dinner at "Cheerful Chili". This is an old farm house on Otley Chevin that prepares only vegetarian meals. However, there is a good selection and everything is home-cooked right there.

We had one of the tiny rooms with a table just big enough for four to sit comfortably; Keith brought two bottles of wine and we each had a starter and a main course. Every-

thing was very good and, although the service was very leisurely, we thoroughly enjoyed the meal and we had a good long time (over three hours) to chat. It was almost 10:30 by the time we were on our way home and the temperature had fallen to around freezing.

Sunday January 12

It was 29F when we got up this morning and there was a layer of frosty cloud stretching along the Wharfe valley. We wondered if there had been any gritting performed as the church we attend is on a rather steep street – as are most streets around Wells House!

It turned out that the roads had not been gritted but were fine for driving, although the surface and the sidewalks were a little slippery as we walked from the car.

We followed church with coffee at Caffè Nero and then went to Guiseley to purchase a couple of household items for the flat. It was after 2pm before we got back so we spent the rest of the afternoon and evening at home. The temperature never rose more than a degree or two above freezing and mist descended on the moor before dusk.

Monday January 13

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then returned to the flat. Joanne arrived right on 10am as we had arranged to take a walk together from Ilkley. We went via White Wells to the Twelve Apostles and then via the cairn at the top of Ilkley Moor to Keighley Gate. From there it was an easy walk back to the flat where we had a coffee with Molly.



Joanne at the Twelve Apostles and the Trig Point marking the top of Ilkley Moor (402 meters)

I had been a little concerned about my ability to keep up with someone so much younger and fitter but, although I was breathing hard as we ascended past White Wells, I did manage to keep up and we were able to maintain a conversation all the way around. It was a really enjoyable two plus hours and the weather was perfect.

The rest of the day was spent lazily in the flat and we once again ate at home.

Ilkley Moor is really just one portion of the larger Rombalds Moor, which is home to lots of smaller moors named after the towns and villages surrounding the moor. Therefore on Rombalds Moor are found Addingham High Moor, Ilkley Moor, Burley Moor, Hawksworth Moor, Morton Moor and Bingley Moor. The Moor has been home to man for a very long time and while it is mainly used for recreational purposes now the moor was once home to hunters of the Mesolithic age (11,000 - 9,000 BC) and then farmers of the Neolithic age (7,000 - 2,000 BC). Bronze age and early Celtic people then made their mark on the moor by making carvings into the stone, many of which remain today.

Tuesday January 14



The view walking down Hollins Hill and the Salts Mill from Roberts Park

We once again had breakfast in Ilkley and then I went for another walk – this time from Guiseley station down Old Hollins Hill to the River Aire and then on the canal bank as far as Saltaire. I did one circuit of Roberts Park in Saltaire and then walked down the main road to catch the train back to Ilkley.

While in Roberts Park I noticed a plaque commemorating a famous cricketer from my youth who had started his playing days here in Saltaire but later played for Surrey and England. At that time, the Yorkshire County cricket team was made up entirely of Yorkshiremen and I wondered why this Yorkshireman had spent his career with another county team. As usual, Wikipedia was able to provide an answer.

James "Jim" Charles Laker (9 February 1922 – 23 April 1986) was a cricketer who played for England in the 1950s, known for "Laker's match" in 1956 at Old Trafford, Manchester, when he took nineteen wickets in England's victory against Australia.

Born in Frizinghall, Bradford, West Riding of Yorkshire, he was known as an elegant off-spin bowler. He consistently performed well against Australian cricket teams, and formed a successful partnership with Tony Lock, a left-arm orthodox spinner. He was also part of the Surrey side that dominated the county championship with seven consecutive titles from 1952 to 1958.

Laker was brought up by his aunts in Saltaire. Before the outbreak of World War II, he was called down to the Yorkshire nets, where he impressed enough to earn approval as a batsman. War brought a temporary end to his cricketing plans but after the war, Laker settled on the outskirts of London, and was recommended to Surrey. After *Yorkshire granted permission*, he was registered at the Oval, meaning he never played for his native county.



In the meantime while I had been walking, Molly had walked into town and had her hair cut so when I got back we drove down for another visit to Caffè Nero and to Tesco to pick up a few bottles of wine.

We then spent the evening at home and watched a little TV.

Wednesday January 15

We had breakfast at home on a cloudy but dry morning which was much warmer than we had experienced lately as temperatures were already in the mid-forties.

At a little after ten, Dorothy and David arrived. Dorothy had suggested a walk in the Bingley area and David had come with her so he could pay a visit to his brother in the Care Home in Silsden. Dorothy and I left about 10:30 and drove over to Bingley for our walk.

The weather stayed dry and in fact we had occasional periods of sunshine as we climbed Druid's Lane and reached Druid's Altar where we had some great views across the Aire Valley. The ground was wet underfoot and was very muddy in places (far worse than I had ever experienced on this walk) but it was warm and we both enjoyed the stroll through St Ives Estate.

We left the estate and walked along the lane to Beckfoot where we had one last muddy stretch to cross the river and back into Myrtle Park. We changed our boots and lingered over a coffee in The Loft before driving back to Ilkley.



Dorothy at Druid's Altar (above)

St Ives Estate (below left) and the River Aire at the Beckfoot Ford

(Not a good place to cross today!)



Meanwhile David had seen Neville and then had taken Molly for coffee in Ilkley. When Dorothy and I returned they were still in animated conversation over a cup of tea. About 3:30 Dorothy and David left to return home and I am afraid that the couch called me for a two hour nap.

At eight, Molly and I went to Martha and Vincent for dinner – our first visit there on this trip – and another excellent meal.

Thursday January 16

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and later I went for a relatively short walk around Ilkley. On my return I did a little DIY in the flat (bedroom door carpet strip) before we went for another coffee. Then we stayed home for the evening; Molly watched a movie on TV and I worked on our India journal.

Friday January 17



*Fields near Draughton and
a rainbow over the canal*

We had breakfast at home and then I prepared for a walk. I caught the 11 am bus to Draughton and then walked over the hills – via country lanes – to Bradley and then to the canal bank for the final 1 ½ miles into Skipton. The bank was extremely muddy so I was pleased that I had stuck to the roads to get over the hills; there are a number of footpaths I could have taken but I can only imagine how deep the mud would have been.

I had a coffee in Skipton while waiting for the return bus and another with Molly when I got back to Ilkley.

Tonight we went to dinner at The Farsyde.

Saturday January 18

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero on a dull morning and then returned to the flat to spend time indoors. About 2pm we walked into Ilkley, had coffee and then Molly and I went our separate ways to do some shopping. We arrived back at the flat about the same time – 3:30.

I did a little more DIY and then spent time on the India Journal before we left to drive to Joanne and Robert's house. We met Toby, Oliver and William briefly as the two younger ones were going to bed and then we left in Robert's car for Marton cum Grafton and the Punch Bowl Inn. Joanne had selected this for a family dinner with Dorothy and David, Amanda and Chris as well as the four of us.

It was a good pub meal and we had some good conversation, although it is sometimes a little difficult with a table of eight. However, about 2 ½ hours passed very quickly and Joanne insisted on picking up the bill because "we had all been so helpful at the time of her father's death last September". It was an unnecessary but nevertheless very kind gesture.

Molly and I arrive home soon after eleven.

Sunday January 19

We went to church and then for coffee. It had started out a dull and showery morning but brightened up considerably by noon. I went for a walk via White Wells to the Cow and Calf Rocks and then down footpaths and lanes into Ben Rhydding. It was a new area for me and a very pleasant walk, covering a total of five miles.

We stayed home for the evening.

Monday January 20

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then returned home for a couple of hours before Molly's brother Robert arrived from London. We met him at 11:30 and immediately went for another coffee! We then spent the afternoon and evening at home chatting, although I did manage a walk on the north edge of the Moor past the Swastika Stone and return via Heber's Ghyll. We ate at home this evening.



Tuesday January 21

We had breakfast at home and around noon we left for a little drive out. We spent about 45 minutes walking around the quaint streets of Otley before driving via Hawksworth to Bingley for a light lunch at The Loft. We then drove via Keighley, Silsden and Addingham to home after a pleasant four hours out on a cold but sunny day.

Tonight we dined at Emporio Italia.

Wednesday January 22

We had breakfast at home and right on 10am Joanne arrived for another walk. Molly and Robert also walked into Ilkley and had a Betty's lunch and did a little shopping while Joanne and I were out on our six mile hike.

We walked along the north ridge of the Moor, past the Swastika Stone and continue until we found a steep path down to Addingham Moorside. This was also very muddy and quite treacherous in parts but we finally made it to the road. From there it was paved roads, bridleways and footpaths until we were on Queen's Drive only a half mile away from home.

We had a cup of coffee in the flat and then Joanne left to pick up kids from school, etc. Robert and Molly returned at 2:30 and we stayed home for the rest of the day.

Thursday January 23

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then drove to Sheffield to see Richard and Elizabeth. We arrived about noon and satyed until 3pm and enjoy not only a good chat but a very nice light lunch prepared by Elizabeth. It was good to see them and find them both in good spirits.

Tonight we had our final dinner together with Robert for this trip at Monkmans.

Friday January 24

We had breakfast at home and late in the morning took Robert to catch his 12:10 train to Leeds and then home to London. Molly and I had coffee, did a little shopping and made a reservation at Martha and Vincent for this evening.

I spent a fruitless several hours on the phone to Delta trying to make airline reservations for future trips so it was nice to relax over a very good dinner.

Saturday January 25

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero on a fine but cool morning, after which I decided on a walk. I took the bus to Utley near Keighley and walked across the Keighley Golf Course, crossed the canal and then crossed the Riddlesden Golf Course. From then on I just followed my nose until I came onto the Ilkley Road and followed it over the top to home. For the last 3 miles or so it was blowing a gale and sleeting so I was absolutely wet through and cold when I arrived home after a seven mile walk.



I had a hot bath and got changed and Molly and I went down into Ilkley for coffee. She had been down earlier to do some shopping and had also got caught in the rain and wind so it was nice to return to the warmth of the flat where we stayed for the rest of the evening.

Sunday January 26

It was snowing quite heavily after we had finished breakfast and we considered not venturing out to church. However, although it was beginning to whiten the tops of the hills, the roads seemed perfectly fine so we did indeed go.

When we came out of church it was cold and almost sleeting but we still went down to Caffè Nero for our usual drinks. The weather didn't seem to change much – wet and cold – until sometime after one when it actually became bright and sunny. This was my cue to set out on a walk and I went via White Wells to the cairn on top of the moor and back via Keighley Gate. The areas that are not paved (very few now) were very muddy and essentially streams rather than foot-paths. It was also very windy on top and at that point I was walking directly into the gale so it was quite cold. Nevertheless I enjoyed the walk and got back just as it was going dark – and managed to stay dry the whole time.

Tonight we drove over to Silsden for a good Italian meal at Stefanos.

Monday January 27

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and looked out at the heavy rain – falling as snow on the top of the moor. However, by

about eleven it had cleared up sufficiently that Molly ventured into town on her daily shopping routine. Not to be outdone, I decided on a walk over the top towards Keighley. In fact what I did was essentially the reverse of my walk on Saturday and I walked via Keighley Gate to Riddlesden and then across Keighley Golf Course to Utley.



Nice Views over the Aire Valley

Here I decided on another climb up Green Head Lane (past my old primary school) and then across Hollins Lane to Steeton, with great views across the Aire Valley all the way. After a little rain at the outset, it stayed dry for the remainder of my 9 mile walk, which ended in Steeton where I caught the Ilkley bus home.

Along Hollins lane I went past Steeton Tower, a tall, dark tower built in celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and which I must have walked past dozens of time in my youth. In fact, it was on the "cross country" running route that we took from school when the rugby pitch was too wet for a game – I know that I WALKED past the tower then!



Steeton Tower (see box next page) and (left) a flooded road that I had to ford

Jubilee Tower was built in 1897 on a commanding knoll, called Hawkcliffe, by Henry Isaac Butterfield, a local textile bigwig, to mark the 50th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria. He had lived nearby at Cliffe Castle and both structures have a similar austerity to them. The tower was intended as a dwelling and was home to Butterfield's gamekeeper for a while. It was sold by the family in the 1940s and has had just a handful of owners since then.

A 21ft square structure with one room on each of the four floors cannot have proved the most practical of living spaces and a surely exasperated, previous owner added a castellated east wing in 1950. This juts from the base of the tower; originally pebble-dashed, but the current owners have since rendered it which has improved its appearance. "It's integral and very useful. It means the whole building now behaves more like a normal house."

The tower's walls are in local stone and come in castle-thickness; but for a spectacular spot of re-pointing by a team of rope-access workers, the exterior of the structure, with its carved inscriptions beneath the battlements, has stood the test of time.

After I returned to Ilkley we had another visit to Caffè Nero and then stayed home for the evening.

Tuesday January 28

Today I had to drive to Manchester to return one car and get another – a quirk of the insurance that I can get! The weather was wet but warm enough that there was no snow on the Pennines and there was even a little sunshine near Manchester. The transfer went smoothly and I was gone less than five hours, which allowed for a coffee visit later in the afternoon when I returned. Molly had already done her daily walk into town.

Tonight we ate at Bistro Saigon for the first time on this trip.

Wednesday January 29

We got up quite late, went for a light breakfast at Caffè Nero and then drove to Harrogate where we were to meet Dorothy and Christine for lunch. We did a little shopping in Harrogate (WH Smith and M&S) before meeting up for lunch. We had a very enjoyable two hours and had a good chat with both before driving back to Ilkley. We were home for the rest of the afternoon and had a late reservation (8:30) at Monkman's for a special "fish night". It was excellent.

Thursday January 30

We once again had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then I set out on my walk. For the first time this trip I walked right across the Moor to Dick Hudson's and, despite it being rather muddy on the Bingley side, I reached there in under two hours. I then walked down the road into Eldwick and followed Sheriff Lane until it became a muddy track and then a path before finally reaching the Lower Coach Road near Roberts Park in Saltaire. From there I walked on the canal bank to Shipley and got the train back to Ilkley.

Molly and I had another coffee shop visit and then spent the rest of the evening at home. This was probably the coldest daytime temperature we have seen since it only got to about 38F but there wasn't much breeze so I felt reasonably com-

fortable even on the hilltops. Molly said that she had felt cold on her walk to the shops as there was a stiff breeze in the town when she was there.

Friday January 31

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero yet again and at 11 left for Skipton. Here we picked up Keith and Eileen and drove (through rain and sleet) to Kirkby Lonsdale where we met Roy for lunch together at the Sun Inn. It was a very pleasant two hour meal and chat and then we drove back – again mostly in sleet but with a reasonable covering of white on all the hilltops.

Tonight we had a late (8:30) reservation at The Farsyde.

Saturday February 1

We had breakfast at home on a beautiful clear and sunny morning. Around 10:15 Molly set off to Ilkley and shortly afterwards I drove to Swinsty for a walk around the Swinsty and Fewston reservoirs. I have done this walk on previous trips and it is a relatively flat and easy 6 ½ miles. Today it was beautiful at the start although there was a very strong wind blowing which made it feel cold in the exposed areas. The wind also brought in clouds and, eventually, a little rain but it was still a very enjoyable walk.



When I got back to Ilkley Molly and I went for a coffee and then stayed home for the rest of the day as the weather significantly deteriorated.

Sunday February 2

We went to church after having breakfast at home and then drove into town for coffee. I went for a walk around town in the afternoon and we went to Bistrot Pierre for dinner.

Monday February 3

We had breakfast at home and Joanne came to the flat around ten for another walk. We walked across the river, up through Middleton Woods (very muddy) and then via fields and a slight error in map reading to Nesfield. From there we walked on the road to Ilkley where we met Molly for coffee.

Molly and I stayed home for the rest of the afternoon and evening.

Tuesday February 4

Breakfast at Caffè Nero was followed by a walk over to Keighley while Molly walked into Ilkley for her daily shopping routine. The weather stayed dry and we even had a few sunny spells. We also went for another coffee when I got back and then stayed home for the rest of the day.

Wednesday February 5

It was dull this morning and threatened rain but I decided to try another walk on the Spen Valley Heritage Trail in Bradford. I had done part of it last summer and found it interesting so was looking forward to another stretch. However, just as I arrived at my parking place, the heavens opened and, after sitting for a while hoping for an improvement, I gave up and drove home. I came via Shipley, considered Bingley or Baildon but the rain just kept on coming so I ended up coming home.

In the evening we drove over to Addingham to pick up Linda (David's sister-in-law) and took her to Monkman's for dinner. She really seemed to enjoy the meal and the company – as did we – and she invited us into her home when we took her back. It really is a very nice little bungalow and she has several paintings and ceramic pieces that her husband Neville and her daughter had done. They were very professional and we had no idea that Neville had this talent before his illness overtook him. It was after 11 when we got home.

Thursday February 6

Breakfast at Caffe Nero on a nice morning before setting out on a walk. Today, while Molly did her usual rounds in Ilkley, I walked via White Wells, the Cow and Calf Rocks and on to the Moor. From there I slipped (literally at one point) to Bury Woodhead and then via roads and another muddy path to Menston and Guiseley. I got the train back but still had a little reserve energy to take a long way back from the station.

Tonight we met Joanne and Robert at the Burlington Room of the Devonshire Arms for dinner. I had just sat down in the lounge with a drink when I realized that I had forgotten my wallet. I decided that I had time before our 8pm sitting to dash back to the flat but the maître d' intercepted me and very kindly said that I could come back tomorrow ("or anytime at your convenience") to pay. So we were able to enjoy the excellent eight course tasting menu and a bottle of wine, followed by coffee in the lounge. It was a very pleasant evening and four hours went by very quickly.

Friday February 7

After breakfast at home I drove over to Bolton Abbey to pay the bill from last night and then left the car in their lot while I took a walk along the river bank to Barden. The paths through the Bolton Abbey estate are very well maintained and, although there was one short shower, for the most part it was dry and even sunny at times.

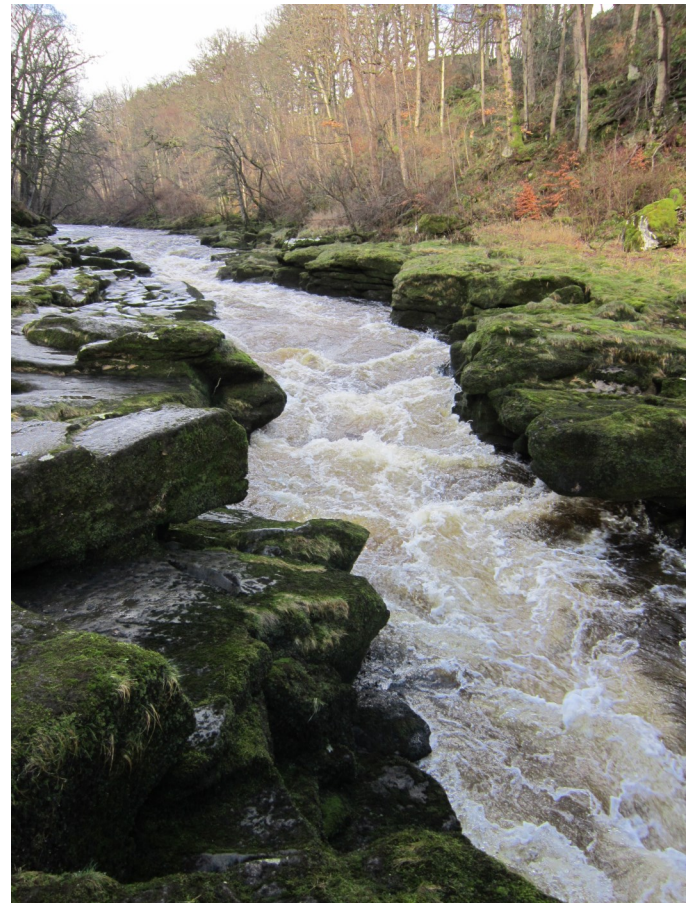


Bolton Abbey was technically a priory, despite its name. It was founded in 1154 by the Augustinian order, on the banks of the River Wharfe. The land at Bolton, as well as other resources, were given to the order by Lady Alice de Romille of Skipton Castle in 1154.

It really is a very pleasant and relatively easy walk on both sides of the River Wharfe. The Strid – famous for its narrow width and surging waters – was running very swiftly (as was the entire river) and it was easy to see how so many people have lost their lives in attempting to jump what appears as a “long stride”. Its width must be a little deceptive but the slippery rocks also contribute to its difficulty – and once in the water, there is little chance of survival at most times of the year.



*The River Wharfe on the Bolton Abbey Estate
And (below) the infamous Strid*



The spectacular Strid is where the broad River Wharfe becomes suddenly narrow and the water rushes with great force. The Strid was formed by the wearing away of soft rock by the circular motion of small stones in hollows, forming a series of potholes which in time linked together to form a deep, water filled chasm.

In the afternoon Molly and I went for coffee at Caffè Nero and about six we left for dinner with Dorothy and David at Quantro in Harrogate. We had a very good, inexpensive meal and a three hour chat, so it was again after eleven before we were home.

Saturday February 8 (Molly's Birthday)

We were woken up at 1am to the sound of dripping water! At first I thought that we could hear water dripping onto the bedroom ceiling from the flat roof above (there have been several leaks over the past year) but then Molly realized that it was actually dripping FROM the ceiling onto the bed. This was the first time that we had actually seen water come through – all previous experiences had simply left a stain.

So, we got plastic bin liners, towels and buckets and did what we could before retiring to the other bedroom.

By morning the rain had stopped and so had the dripping. However, since we are leaving here on Tuesday we decided to get some additional containers, larger drop cloths and waterproof the room as much as possible in case of further leakages. I sent an e-mail to the Management Association explaining the issue and we can only hope that someone will check from time to time and empty any filled containers.

I went for a walk over Ilkley Moor to Bingley in mostly dry but VERY windy conditions. I got the train home from Bingley and Molly and I went for coffee.

At 8pm we had a dinner reservation at Martha and Vincent and enjoyed a very good birthday meal.

Sunday February 9

We went to church and then for coffee before spending a quiet day at home, watching Olympic coverage for several hours.

Monday February 10

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then had a visit from Ian Shepherd of the Wells House Management Team regarding our leaks. He wasn't all that comforting, saying that they are now working with yet another contractor and remedial action would be taking place over the next several months.

I went for a final walk over the Moor for this trip: up Keighley Road to Keighley Gate, across to the cairn and then back home via White Wells. It was a gorgeous morning and early afternoon but there had been a frost overnight and some of the paving stones on top were a little treacherous. However, it was a great way to complete 200 miles of walking since we arrived here in late December.

Tonight we went to Piccolino for dinner for our final night in Ilkley.

Tuesday February 11

We had breakfast at home and then completed the final washings and tidying up in the flat before returning to Caffè Nero one more time before our journey over to Manchester. . The journey over the Pennines was uneventful although there was some snow accumulation at the higher elevations but, fortunately, none on the roads. We were in Manchester and checked in at the airport Marriott by about 3:30/

It was then that I checked my e-mails and found a new e-ticket from Delta which had us traveling home on Thursday (not Wednesday) and via London and New York, Rather than via Atlanta. We had heard of a winter storm problem in Atlanta so assumed this was the problem but were a little disappointed that Delta had chosen to re-issue a ticket without any additional explanation.

To cut a very long (telephone) conversation short, we did eventually manage to get the proposed new itinerary but for Wednesday – the day we had hoped to be home. Hence we were able to then make our way to the Plough and Flail pub in Mobberley for our usual farewell dinner.

Since we were now scheduled to travel via Heathrow 2 ½ hours earlier than our plan, we decided it would be a good idea to turn in the car tonight to avoid any possible delays in the morning. This we did – and all went smoothly – so we went to bed early in anticipation of a 4:30 wake-up on Wednesday.

Wednesday February 12

We were up in plenty of time for our 5:15 taxi to the airport and, after a minor hitch at check-in all seemed OK for our flights to Cincinnati. We were a little concerned about the 75 minute transfer time at Heathrow but were assured that we would have plenty of time. Indeed after our Manchester flight left only a few minutes late and arrived in London ahead of schedule, we were beginning to think that all would be well and even considering this route for future travel plans.

However, security at Heathrow was very slow and the fact that my bag was diverted for extra screening certainly didn't help. There was nothing amiss in my carry-on but there was essentially only one agent checking all bags diverted and, of course, these did require a thorough search and swab. Consequently, it was only 10 minutes before flight time when I was finally "released" and I had a mad dash to the gate to catch up with Molly who had been able to not only get our boarding passes but had also explained the situation and was preparing to hold up the departure!

In any event, we made the flight and had a good, on time flight to JFK with only a three hour layover there, and one more flight before we were in Cincinnati.