

England

May-June 2014



Bob and Molly Hillery

This was our “annual” spring pilgrimage to our nephew’s flat in Ilkley, although this visit would be a little different to those long stays in Yorkshire typical of the past several years. First, we started the visit by arriving in England after a ten day visit to Israel, rather than coming directly from home. Second, towards the end of the stay, we would leave for a twelve day river cruise in Russia with two friends from England. In addition, as is usual at this time of year, Molly had her sibling reunion in Warwickshire, together with a few extra days with her sister at her home near Worcester. Finally, we had house guests from Mason for a couple of nights in early June.

As a result, the total of ten weeks away from home not only went very quickly but was “broken up” into smaller segments, one consequence of which was that we were not able to meet with some family and friends that are a usual part of these stays. We hope to catch up with everyone during our next visit.

The time we did spend in Ilkley followed the routine that we have established during previous stays. Molly made her almost daily visit to the shops in town, Bob did some walking and cycling and we both had some very good meals out at our favorite restaurants. We also spent time (and more restaurant visits) with our extended families and with friends in England as well as those who joined us from America.

Finally, the whole of Yorkshire—and especially the area in and around Ilkley—was preparing for Le Grand Depart of the Tour de France cycle race set for July 5, so there was an additional air of excitement for much of our stay.

England, May-June 2014

Friday May 2

Following our ten days in Israel we flew from Tel Aviv to London (Luton airport) on May 2. The flight was a little over five hours but once we left the coast of Israel there was very little to see (due to cloud cover) until we were over the green and bright yellow fields north of London.

We picked up our rental car and headed to the M1 and turned north. It was about 7pm by the time we were out of the airport but still light so we decided to drive as far as possible in the daylight hours. As it turned out neither of us was hungry, having eaten well on the flight, and we just kept going. Traffic was generally light except in a few construction areas, so we kept a good pace and actually drove all the way to Ilkley without a break.

We arrived at the flat before 10:30, had a cup of tea and retired.

Saturday May 3

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero, did a little essential shopping at Tesco and then spent much of the rest of the day at home getting things sorted out in the apartment. It was a beautiful sunny day and the temperature reached about 60F in the afternoon. I took the opportunity to take a short walk down to the river and worked up quite a sweat on the walk back up the hill.

As I approached the flat, I met Joanne and Robert with William and Oliver who had just stopped by the flat to bring us flowers and a lovely “Thank you” card from the boys telling us what each had done with the Disney gift cards we had sent them for their recent trip. They didn’t stay very long but we thought it was extremely nice of them to think about us on our first day here.

We had made a dinner reservation at The Farsyde and so enjoyed our first night out – presumably of many – of our stay in England.

Sunday May 4

We had breakfast at home and then went to church, followed by coffee at Caffè Nero. It was a little more overcast today but the temperature still reached sixty as I went for another short walk around town. We spent the rest of the day at home and ate dinner in the flat – and had what seems to be our usual problems with the hot water system. Fortunately we have a service call scheduled for Tuesday.

Monday May 5

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero on another mild and bright morning. This is a Bank Holiday weekend so today is the day of the Ilkley Carnival. The highlight appeared to be a parade through town, so we thought we would join in the local festivities. We walked to the bottom of Wells Road as the crowd was swelling and were able to get a reasonable view of the participants, the “floats” and a couple of bands. It certainly wasn’t the Rose Bowl, but it was a very pleasant way to spend an hour on a warm day in Ilkley.



After the parade had passed our vantage point, Molly went to do a little shopping and I continued with a walk down to the river (with the crowds who were going to the carnival site) and then back through town and up to the flat.

We spent the rest of the afternoon at home and left for Harrogate around 6pm for a dinner date with Dorothy and David. We once again ate at Quantro and had a very good (and economical) meal and a nice chat catching up on family activities. We left about 9:30 and returned to Ilkley.

Tuesday May 6

We were up at 7 so made a last minute decision to have breakfast at Caffè Nero. We were expecting a call from the boiler service team and that came just after we set off home. The technician stated that he should be at the flat "by ten".

He did indeed arrive about 9:40 and proceeded with his servicing. He found that an air cylinder in the boiler needed to be re-charged and that had been the source of our intermittent problems over the past few days. He also told us that the inspection hatch above the boiler (to access the flue pipe for inspection) should be one that can be opened by the service technician (or anyone) without the use of tools. I spent a little time investigating possibilities online and believe I can find something to work.

Late in the morning Molly went for her walk into town and to the shops. I accompanied her down the hill and then walked further down to the river and back along The Grove, actually getting home a few minutes before Molly's bus arrived.

We spent the rest of the day and evening at home.

Wednesday May 7

Breakfast was at home today. There had been some rain overnight but it was now dry, although showers were in the forecast for the remainder of the day. However, we decided to take our chances on repeating our walking/shopping/coffee combination of yesterday and I managed to cover about five miles (and got a little wet) while Molly walked into town and got the bus back.

We were both home around 1:30 and it was on and off clouds and showers, with the occasional brief periods of sun, for the rest of the afternoon while we were indoors. Tonight we paid our first visit to Monkman's for this trip and enjoyed a very good meal.

Thursday May 8

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then spent the morning at home. Around noon, however, Molly decided to walk into town and shamed me in to finally taking a walk over the Moor. I walked up to Keighley Gate (not as tiring as I had anticipated) and then

down into Keighley (6.3 miles total) from where I got the bus back.

Despite overcast skies it didn't rain all the way over the moors and it was pleasantly warm. However, as soon as I got off the bus in Ilkley it started to pour, so I got quite wet on the final half mile back to the flat.

We stayed home for the evening.

Friday May 9

It had rained overnight and more showers were in the forecast – and it was quite a bit cooler, only 45F as we left for breakfast and then on to Skipton. It rained quite heavily at times as we made our way through the smaller than usual market; presumably the weather had put off a few of the stall holders.

So, we dodged the showers, had a coffee, did just a little shopping and then set off back for Ilkley. We returned via a longer route: Bradley, Kildwick, Keighley, Morton and past the Cow and Calf, getting home around 12:30. The rest of the afternoon Molly was busy with washing, etc and I had a short nap before taking a short walk around town via the river.

Tonight we ate at Martha and Vincent. Unfortunately the place was not only under new management but the entire staff had changed since our last visit in February. In addition, my meal was barely warm and the bill came with a charge for a bottle of wine about twice as much as the one we had ordered. So, a disappointing experience and I think we may cross this one off the list for a while.

Saturday May 10

I was up to call Baxi (again) at 8:30 because we had experienced intermittent hot water supply late yesterday. I got the usual run-around (Tuesday would be the earliest they could get there) and had to work through a couple of people before I got a commitment for an engineer visit between 10 and noon this morning. Once again, the stark contrast between responsiveness of the “essential” services between here and the US was evident – but the process to solve an issue is the same: just keep pushing!

Unfortunately no amount of pushing fixed the boiler problems. Three times the technician announced he had identified the problem – and three times we still had intermittent hot water. It was a very frustrating four hours during which I spent time between the technician and a Baxi management representative on the telephone. Around 4pm, the technician left, I think I got a commitment for a replacement boiler, but no absolute date or time for complete resolution.

It was good to simply do nothing for the rest of the afternoon and evening and we ate at home once more.

Sunday May 11

We had breakfast at home and I had time for a three mile walk before we left for church. It was alternately sunny and showery all morning and still unsettled and very windy as we returned home after coffee around 1pm. Despite this I managed a five mile walk via the Cow and Calf and Ben Rhydding, getting alternately soaked and dried out twice. It was a very enjoyable walk even with the showers and I went through some very pretty bluebell woods.



This evening we stayed home and watched a little TV.

Monday May 12

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and shortly afterwards got the new boiler installation details worked out for Tuesday. Around 10am, Joanne arrived and she and I went for essentially the walk I had done yesterday and then we met Molly in town for coffee. Molly and I had another trip to town in the car in the afternoon for a “heavy” shop so that I am stocked up before she leaves for ten days on Wednesday.

Tonight we ate at Panache and enjoyed a very good (and very filling) meal at reasonable cost.

Tuesday May 13

Today was the day that our new boiler was to be installed and, to their credit, two of the three technicians arrived on time shortly after 8am. A third, presumably bringing the boiler itself, arrived shortly thereafter. Obviously both water and gas were turned off so we had filled the kettle ahead of their arrival, not knowing exactly how long the job would take.

We did manage to leave for about 45 minutes and had coffee at Caffè Nero and it was about 2pm before the technicians had finished. Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, at 4pm (after I had taken a short walk), we had no hot water and no heat. Frantic calls got a technician to walk me through a temporary fix but we had yet another service call scheduled for Thursday.

We were very relieved when we were able to get a table at Monkmans and enjoy another very pleasant evening after a tense day.

Wednesday May 14



It was a beautiful morning and we believe an upcoming “heat wave” may have started. This was the day that I took Molly to Worcester for a stay with Fran and for her sibling reunion, so it was nice that we had a clear, non-rainy day for the 180 mile drive.

We arrived in Worcester about 1:30 and, after a welcome cup of tea and some cookies, I set off back at 2:30. I made good time until I got into Leeds right on rush hour so it was almost 6:30 before I arrived back at the flat.

The view from the apartment on a beautiful day

I stayed home and cooked a “ready meal” for dinner.

Thursday May 15

I was up around seven so had an hour to kill before yet another boiler service call so I prepared my bike for the “heat wave” to come (pumped up the tires, oiled the chain, etc). Then I spent the next 4 ½ hours watching and waiting as the technicians (two came) worked on the boiler. I also tried to get clarification as to what a “non-Baxi” service would entail in order to keep the new boiler warranty in good stead. This proved far more difficult than it should so I typed up what I *thought* it should consist of and asked them to read and, if necessary, correct. This caused a great deal of umbrage, one techni-

cian took the document, left the apartment, apparently talked to his boss – and then told me that they were both now “off the job”. They then left – with a radiator thermostat cap still on the floor – and, as I found out, bath water still running between hot and luke warm. Needless to say, we have more phone calls and more work to do but at least I know a temporary fix for this error code.

I did manage a short walk and a cup of coffee at Caffè Nero and am now “on call” again for Friday morning to see if/when someone else will come out. Meanwhile, a Customer Service representative did e-mail me a copy of what he claimed was the service manual but it appears to be little more than a glorified Users’ Manual.

I walked to Bistrot Pierre for dinner and had a good meal, the experience being spoiled a little by a credit card glitch (they wanted to charge in \$\$ at an exorbitant exchange rate) that I think we experienced here once before. Still, it was a night out and the walk there and back under clear, warm skies just added to the experience.

Friday May 16

I was in conversations with the Baxi people again first thing so it was 9:30 before I left home on a beautiful morning to have breakfast and relax at Caffè Nero. I took the long way round going and coming so got my miles in for the day.

Around noon it was still a gorgeous day – sunny and warm – so I donned my bicycle gear and did the first stage of the Tour de France. Well, maybe not the whole of the first stage; but I did cover probably 10 miles of the actual route. I went via Bolton Abbey to Hesketh Park and then back (following Le Tour route in reverse) on the main Skipton to Ilkley Road. In total I did 22 miles at an average speed of about 10mph – approximately one third of the pace the riders will maintain.

I stopped for coffee in Ilkley before the final $\frac{3}{4}$ mile pull up the hill to the apartment – I call this the Cote de Wells Road!



I napped for a while and then started thinking about what to do for the rest of the evening and where/what to eat. In the end I decided on pizza at home and enjoyed it with a glass of wine and some TV.

Beautiful flowers from Elizabeth and family for Mother’s Day.

It’s a pity Molly was away—but they still looked good on her return to Ilkley

Saturday May 17

It was another beautiful morning as I walked to Caffè Nero for breakfast and then slowly back up the hill. There was perhaps a little more of a breeze than yesterday but cycling still seemed like a good idea so I changed, packed a few essentials and set off.

I crossed the river at Ilkley and cycled on the back road (passing and being passed by dozens of cyclists) so that I could catch a glimpse of the Otley Show Grounds, on this their 205th consecutive event. There were fewer people on this side of the river than I had imagined but the grassy parking area was filling up quickly. As I crossed over the river and cycled through Otley I saw why the other side had been so quiet – there were hundreds of families walking to the show grounds from wherever they had found a place to park the car and the line of people stretched for well over a mile. Obviously the Show was going to have a good day.

I slowly climbed the hill to Guiseley and then down Hollins Hill to Shipley before negotiating Saltaire and on to Bingley. Here I had “lunch”, sitting outside in the warm sunshine. From Bingley I followed the old road to Keighley and had planned to take the Silsden way back to Ilkley. However, I felt reasonably fresh as I passed the turning at Steeton (the traffic didn’t make it easy to negotiate a right turn anyway) so I went all the way into Skipton.

From Skipton I left on a quiet road but soon joined the A65 and followed the same route as yesterday back to Ilkley. I had a final cup of coffee before the ascent to the flat, reached after about five hours and a distance of almost 42 miles.

I phoned Molly to make sure everyone had arrived at the reunion (they had), made a reservation for dinner at Piccolino and promptly fell asleep. I did wake up in time to clean up and make my dinner date and had a very good meal – in a very crowded restaurant.

Sunday May 18

I had a very lazy day today. I had breakfast at home, walked to church, then to Caffè Nero and then back home. My only other exercise was another short walk around town which included watching the big crowds enjoying the warm and sunny day (76F) down by (and in) the river and an ice cream sitting near the bandstand on The Grove. I ate at home and watched a little TV.

Wells Walk; a small but pretty park on the walk into Ilkley



Monday May 19

I walked into town for breakfast and at 10am, Joanne arrived for our planned walk. It was still warm and there was a heat haze earlier that was beginning to burn off so it looked like a perfect day for a walk through the Bolton Abbey Estate.

We parked at the Strid Visitor Centre and walked downstream, past the Strid and as far as the Abbey on the west side of the river. We crossed over here (on the bridge rather than the stepping stones) and then walked upstream, crossing once again to stop at the Cavendish Pavilion for a drink and a snack.

Then we crossed back to the east side, where we had a steep climb before some magnificent views of the river either side of the Strid. Then it was down to the river's edge to cross for the last time, using the beautiful Victorian stone aqueduct, usable as a footpath.

This rather ornate Victorian (late 1850s) structure was built to carry water from Nidderdale to serve Bradford's growing needs for the woolen industry. I had thought that the functionality of the "bridge" was no longer there as one walks over a solid, dry turreted structure but a little Googling suggested that the stonework was built merely to hide the steel water pipes and, indeed, may well still do so. The Victorians certainly knew how to make a utilitarian structure look magnificent and this one is as architecturally pleasing as its bigger road bridge neighbor just a half mile further north at Barden.

The Strid

The spectacular Strid is where the broad River Wharfe suddenly becomes very narrow and the water rushes with great force. The Strid gets its name from the fact that it is said to be a Stride wide, but there is danger here. It is wider than it looks and the rocks are usually very slippery.

The Strid was formed by the wearing away of softer 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.



The large turreted bridge which crosses the River Wharfe north of Strid Wood is the aqueduct. The splendid castellations hide the pipe that carries water from the reservoirs at the top of Nidderdale to the cities of West Yorkshire.

From the aqueduct it was a short walk back to the car after a beautiful six mile walk through some magnificent Dales scenery.

Joanne dropped me off at home. I took a nap and later went out for dinner for another enjoyable and filling meal at Panache.

Tuesday May 20

This was another (final?) morning for the Baxi boiler technician to fix the hot water and heating system in the flat, so I was up and breakfasted before eight as that is the earliest time they could appear. It turned out that I got a call soon after eight but it was 9:15 before the technician arrived. He spent about 1 1/2 hours working on the boiler and trying various heat settings and did claim that he heard some purging of air from the system – which was good news! He also reset the tap and central heating water temperatures to run more efficiently.

After the technician left I went down into town, walked round a little, shopped at Morten's and had a coffee. Then I came home, did a little fix-up work, worked on my journal and went for dinner at Emporio Italia. Great meal but got a little wet on the walk back up the hill.

Wednesday May 21



I walked to Caffè Nero for breakfast and then picked up a couple more carpet strips at Morten's before walking back up the hill.

My main exercise today, however, was to come on the bike. Soon after ten, on a sunny and mild morning, I set off down the hill, crossed the river and took the back road to Otley. From there I went via Leathley to Pool, along the



My third day cycling on the Tour de France route in Yorkshire

Tour de France route to the bottom of Harewood Bank. Then I went on the A61 for a quarter mile before turning into Weeton Lane and through the village to Huby.

I couldn't resist a look at my brother's old house (now sold) and was surprised to see workmen there and, with the front door wide open, it was obvious that a major re-fit was taking place.

I climbed to the top of Huby and then crossed the main road again to use the back lane to Pool. From here it was Tour de France route all the way back to Ilkley, where I had coffee before the final ascent of the Cote de Wells Road.

I napped and then cleaned up to drive to meet Keith and Zena for dinner. We had a very good Indian meal at Shama in Bingley and then returned to their home for a nightcap and a long chat. It was almost eleven before I left to drive home.

Thursday May 22

As had been forecast, it was raining heavily as I got up about 7am and it looked set to continue in the same vein for the rest of the day. I had breakfast, did a little work on the computer and then decided how to spend my day. I had a couple of carpet strips to lay, but that shouldn't take more than an hour, so what to do for the rest of the time before dinner this evening with Joanne and Robert?

In the end I did very little; the carpet strips did take more than an hour (partly because I had to get one additional from Morten's); I did get a short walk; and I did a little on my Israel journal.

The evening meal with Joanne and Robert at Monkman's was extremely enjoyable; good food and a nice long chat; it was 10:30 before I walked back up the hill to home.

Friday May 23

It was another rainy morning so I didn't feel much like walking but I wanted to get out for a while. Since I hadn't yet been on a train this trip, I got a cheap day return to Bradford, had breakfast at Caffè Nero there and then walked past some of the places I recognized from my youth. By getting off the return trip in Ben Rhydding, I did manage to squeeze out a few miles of walking.

On getting back to the flat, the DIY bug got to me again so I patched the holes in the bedroom ceiling (put there by me at the time of the leak in February) and applied a stain killing paint.

I had recently been told that work on this part of the roof would have to wait until there were additional funds in the kitty (work on the turret parts of the roof is to start next week) and so painting (by Rachel) could start anytime they had "a few jobs" for her. I had little faith that this would happen while we were in residence so I decided to do a patch job.

Although the patching was a little rough and the satin covering was a gloss rather than the flat of the rest of the ceiling, the whole effect was somewhat better than the staining. However, I thought that a coat of ceiling white might be in order sometime – but not today.

I stayed home and ate the rest of my pizza this evening.

Saturday May 24

It was overcast but not raining so I decided this would be the day when I would attempt a walk all the way to Skipton, which is a goal I have had for some time. It's a nine mile journey by road but my best estimate of the cross country route was about 12 miles. I have done the entire stretch in parts but never the whole distance in one shot.

So, soon after 10 I set off up the hill and onto the northern ridge of the moor, past the Swastika Stone and to the extreme western edge of Ilkley Moor. Here it started to rain; not much at first but there were lots of dark clouds around.

I continued on tracks until I reached the main road between Keighley and Ilkley (a bus route) by which time it was raining heavily.

So I decided on turning back towards home with the intent of catching a bus whenever I felt so inclined. A combination of letting one go intentionally, misreading a timetable and getting so wet as the rain built in strength that I didn't think it sociable to take public transport – all led to me walking the entire distance home. I had covered 10 ½ miles, so I may well have made Skipton had I just kept going. Some other day, perhaps.



turned to do the job. I felt it looked better; not perfect but OK until the professionals get to it.

By this time it was getting towards evening so I made a dinner reservation at the Wheatley Arms, one of the few places I

***The path on the North Ridge of
Ilkley Moor***

Despite being tired, I still decided that the bedroom ceiling would benefit from a coat of matte paint so I drove into town to get the paint (and roller), had a coffee and then re-



thought I could get in at this late hour on a Saturday. It turned out to be a decent pub meal and it was especially nice to just sit in pleasant surroundings and enjoy the food and a glass of wine.



***Beginning to get a little
bleak on top of the Moor!***

***Below: Addingham's trib-
ute to Le Tour
(It will pass here twice)***

Sunday May 25

It was 9:15 when I woke today – far later than has been the norm and a little troublesome as I had to drive to Worcester to pick up Molly from her sister's at the end of her 10 day absence for the sibling reunion. Nevertheless I quickly got ready, had a reasonably leisurely breakfast at Caffè Nero and set off over the Pennines. It was quite busy the whole way (this is a Holiday Weekend) and there were some very heavy downpours so it was almost 2pm by the time I reached Fran and Alan's home.



They were just sitting down to tea and scones so I happily joined them, chatted for a while and then Molly and I set off back north.

The roads were much quieter on the return journey and we made it non-stop in almost exactly three hours. It was tiring but it was good to be back together – and all we had to do this evening was drive down to Piccolino for a good meal.

Monday May 26

Today was a Bank Holiday and it started out as a very nice day; warm and sunny. We had breakfast at Caffè Nero, walked around the few open shops and then returned to the flat. Molly did a number of household chores, I took a walk to the top of the Moor and in the evening we went to a new Tapas restaurant in town. Despite having had a huge crowd the night before that had depleted their menu somewhat, we were able to find five dishes that

we shared with a bottle of wine. Another good addition to the Ilkley restaurant scene.

Molly's Sibling Reunion

Molly's reunion with her siblings and her stay with her sister Fran apparently followed the routine established in recent years, with lots of reminiscing, good meals and the recitation of various poems and prose that they (only) continue to find amusing. The had generally good weather and were able to spend time outdoors at their rented house and, later, during the stay in Besford. Further details have not been divulged but there are a couple of photographs (much like all those of previous years) that capture the "good time had by all".



***Certainly the flowers
were pretty!***

Tuesday May 27

We breakfasted at home and then drove to Harrogate so that Molly could spend her birthday gift card in M&S. The forecast had been for rain pretty much the whole day but it stayed dry for the two hours we were in town. It also stayed dry for the drive home and for

a late afternoon walk that I took around Ilkley. We ate at home this evening and watched a little TV.

Wednesday May 28

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and, despite overcast skies with periodic showers, Molly was able to get into town later to do some shopping without getting soaked. Similarly, I took a walk across the river to Middleton and did a circular path that brought me back into Ilkley – again without getting too wet.

In the evening we went to Monkman's for their Fish Night and had a very enjoyable meal.

Thursday May 29

It was very misty on the hilltops as we once again drove into Ilkley for breakfast. I decided on a walk over Ilkley Moor to Dick Hudson's (the first time on this visit) and then continued via Eldwick and Shipley Glen to Shipley, where I got the train home. It was very misty on the moors (100yard visibility) and this made things damp but it was still a pleasant walk. With the rain we have had the past few days, the Bingley side of the moor was very wet underfoot and most of the time I was walking in a shallow stream.

Molly managed her daily shop without getting wet and then we spent the rest of the day and evening at home.

Friday May 30

It was a much nicer morning than the previous two and I planned a walk along part of the Dales Way while we ate breakfast at home. I walked down to the Old Bridge and then on the road on the north side of the river as far as Nesfield and a little beyond. Here I took a path which led to a suspension bridge over the river to reach Addingham.

From Addingham I followed the Dales Way back to Ilkley where I met Molly for coffee after she had completed her shopping trip. She got the bus home and I walked, both of us arriving at the flat about the same time.

We stayed home for the afternoon and at 6:15 left for an evening meal with Dorothy and David, Amanda and Chris and Joanne and Robert. We had a very enjoyable meal at the Punch Bowl in Marton-cum-Grafton and, as a result of the rather slow service and our chatting, it was after 10:30 before we left for home.

Saturday May 31

It was a bright morning as we had breakfast at Caffè Nero so I decided that today was a day for a bike ride. I left about 10:30 and went via Silsden to Skipton and then on to

Grassington. Here I stopped for a snack and a use of the facilities on what had turned into a cool and very much overcast afternoon.

I then headed east towards Pateley Bridge but stopped short of Greenhow and turned downhill to Barden and Bolton Abbey. The climb from Grassington was a tough one and I must admit to about a ¼ mile of pushing towards the top of a 16% grade. Once again I thought of the Tour de France riders who seem to sail up 25% grades and can even stay on the bike up even steeper hills in the Alps.

Nevertheless, it was now time for a good downhill stretch to Barden but there were a few more short climbs before I reached Ilkley – and the Cote de Wells Road to get to the flat. A welcome cup of tea and a 1 ½ hour nap helped the recovery after a 41 mile ride and it was especially nice to have a good meal at Emporio Italia to cap off the day.



*It's steeper than it
looks—honest!
But beautiful country-
side.*

Sunday June 1

It was a gorgeous sunny and mild (almost 60F) morning as we ate at home and then lazed around until it was time to leave for church. We followed this with coffee at Caffè Nero and then returned to the flat.

In the afternoon I went for another bike ride; this time around Ilkley Moor in an anti-clockwise direction – Addingham, Silsden, Keighley, Shipley, Guiseley, home. It was warm and sunny the whole time so a much more pleasant ride than yesterday's and I got another 30 miles under my belt. We stayed home for the evening.

Monday June 2

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then took the 9:40 train to Leeds. We wanted to get some books for Sammy so we headed for Waterstones (where we got several) and then to WH Smith where we found three more. We had coffee sitting outside on a very pleasantly mild day – much better than forecast.

We were back in Ilkley by about two and stayed home until about 6:30 when we drove to Addingham to pick up Linda for dinner at La Casita. It was a very nice meal and we had another good chat with her. She is a remarkably cheerful person despite her husband's significant dementia problems.

Tuesday June 3

It was an overcast morning and I decided to go for a walk on another part of the Spen Valley Heritage Trail in Bradford. I parked at Oakwell House near Birkenshaw and walked, mostly along streets but with some fields, for a total of six miles. It stayed dry and actually got quite warm and humid towards the end. Molly and I went into Ilkley for coffee when I returned and then stayed home for the rest of the day.

Wednesday June 4

Today was forecast to be the wettest day of the week – and it lived up to its billing with a steady downpour, sometimes very heavy, lasting all day. Joanne and I had planned a walk but decided to cancel. Instead we met her for coffee in Harrogate and had a 1 ¼ hour chat before we did a little shopping and returned home. We ate tonight at Panache.

Thursday June 5

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then I decided on a walk over the top to Keighley. There was a light shower on the moors but it got drier and warmer as the day progressed. Molly made her daily pilgrimage to the Ilkley shops.

Just before 4pm we drove to the station to meet Peter, Leslie and Lauren Bridges who were to stay with us for two nights on their European tour. They had just spent three days in London and took the train to Ilkley.



Welcome to Ilkley!

We took them straight to the flat and we had tea and chatted before going to the Busfeild Arms in Morton for a pub meal, which they seemed to enjoy.



Friday June 6

It was a beautiful sunny morning and, before our scheduled day out in the Dales, Lauren had wanted to take a walk on the moors. So, she and I left at 8:15 and walked via White Wells to the Cow and Calf Rocks and then back via the lower path. It was a three mile hike and a nice way to start the day.



A morning walk on Ilkley Moor

***Top: Lauren standing on the
Cow; Calf top right***

***Left: the moor and (above) the
path back home***

After we had all breakfasted we got in the car and drove first to Skipton where we walked over the canal, through the market and had a coffee at Caffè Nero.

Skipton is a market town and civil parish in the Craven district of North Yorkshire, England. Historically in the West Riding of Yorkshire, it is located on the course of the River Aire and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to the south of the Yorkshire Dales, 16 miles northwest of Bradford and 38 miles west of York.



A beautiful sunny day in Skipton.

Note the tribute to the Tour de France:

not sure where the band was from!

We then drove on to Kettlewell and for a short distance over the very steep hill that leads to Richmondshire. We then came back to Kettlewell, followed the narrow road on the north side of the Wharfe after which we



spent almost two hours in *Grassington*, where we had afternoon tea sitting in an outside patio of a tea room.



We drove back from Grassington via Greenhow, Barden and Bolton Abbey and got back home about 6pm after a beautiful day out. The Bridges appeared to be very impressed with the countryside around here.

We had a dinner reservation at Monkman's but Lauren decided against joining us. The restaurant was packed so the service was a little slow and it was almost 11pm by the time we got home after a very pleasant evening.

Saturday June 7

We were up before seven to get the Bridges to the Leeds Bradford airport for their 9:30 flight to London and then on to Paris. We had intended to have breakfast with them at

the airport but all the food places were beyond Security. So, after they were checked in we said our farewells and Molly and I returned to Ilkley for breakfast at Caffè Nero.



The morning had started out bright and sunny but it had just begun to rain by the time we got back to the flat. The forecast was for rain and possible thunderstorms all day so it looked as though it was beginning to come true. Indeed it did rain very heavily for much of the day (a day

The view (?) from the flat on the day following the Bridges' visit

when we stayed at home).

By very late afternoon the rains had passed and it turned into a very pleasant evening as Dorothy and David arrived for our dinner date at the Farsyde. We had a very leisurely meal and a good chat and it was 11pm by the time they dropped us off at the flat and left for home in Ripon.

Sunday June 8

We followed our normal Sunday routine of breakfast at home, church, and then coffee at Caffè Nero. The afternoon was very pleasant so I took an eight mile walk across the moors – tiring and muddy but a nice walk, nevertheless.



***Ilkley Moor with its views, boundary stones and Trig Point
cairn marking the top of the moor at 1400 feet***



To finish the day, Molly and I had dinner together at Piccolino.

Monday June 9

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then I left for a walk with Joanne. We met at the car park between Swinsty and Fewston Reservoirs and set off on a warm and bright morning. We went all the way round Swinsty Reservoir under clear skies, but then heard a few rolls of thunder. We decided to continue round Fewston Reservoir – which perhaps was a poor judgment. The rain started in earnest and, after another three miles, we were absolutely soaked. Still, we had a pleasant chat, it wasn't cold and all we had to do was get in our cars and drive home.

Molly and I stayed home for the rest of the day, during which it brightened considerably and eventually turned into a nice evening.

Tuesday June 10

We had breakfast at home and then I left on a walk while Molly went into Ilkley for a haircut and a pedicure. I walked almost to the Cow and Calf via White Wells and then followed footpaths until I reached the paved section that goes across the top of the moor. I then followed this past the cairn and Keighley Gate before returning home via Keighley Road – a total of about six miles.

I then drove into Ilkley to meet Molly for coffee; we did a little Tesco shopping and then returned home for the afternoon.

Tonight we celebrated our anniversary (eleven days early) with dinner at the Box Tree restaurant in Ilkley. This is Ilkley's most famous and long-standing restaurant (open since 1962) and has a Michelin star – but we had never been before this evening.

We had a very good “Gourmand” meal with excellent service and the very civilized drink in the lounge first and coffee there afterwards to finish the evening. We were very impressed but, on balance, thought it not quite as good as the Burlington Room at the Devonshire Arms – but equally expensive!

Wednesday June 11

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then returned home to pack for our 12 day trip to Russia with Keith and Zena. We left home about 2:30, picked them up in Eldwick and then drove to Manchester in preparation for our early Thursday morning flights to Moscow. We had a cup of tea in Eldwick and had dinner at the Plough and Flail, after which I turned in the car and we all went to bed.

***Thursday June 12 to Tuesday June 24:
OUR VISIT TO RUSSIA***

Wednesday June 25

I was up about 7am and Molly followed shortly thereafter. We had breakfast at Caffè Nero, did a little essential shopping, and then came back to the flat.

I went for a walk-cum-shopping (flat items) in the late morning and then we both caught up on our jobs for the rest of the day. We went to Monkman's for dinner.

Thursday June 26

Breakfast at Caffè Nero again followed by another walk around the Ilkley streets. Other than that it was a relatively lazy day until we went out for dinner with Joanne and Robert in Harrogate. It was 11pm by the time we got home.

Friday June 27

We had breakfast at home and then I walked over to Keighley, returning by bus. Molly and I then went for coffee and later went to Ridding Park where we had dinner with Dorothy and David to celebrate their upcoming 50th wedding anniversary. Again it was after 11 by the time we got home.

Saturday June 28

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero, we both then walked into town where Molly did a little shopping and I walked a few miles in my new boots. After that it was a lazy day at home until we left for dinner at Panache.

Sunday June 29

We had breakfast at home and then went to church. This was the first mass celebrated by the newly ordained priest so the service was longer than usual and included individual blessings for the whole congregation by him. We left afterwards for coffee and I went for a walk around Ilkley later in the afternoon. We also started clean-up work for our departure tomorrow and then had our final dinner in Ilkley for this trip at Piccolino. A good meal and a beautiful sunset added up to a nice way to end our extended trip.



Monday June 30

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and did some Tesco shopping for Mark who is coming to the flat later in the week for the Tour de France.

On returning to the flat we completed washing, etc and left shortly before 2pm. We had a final coffee at Caffè Nero and then started our drive to Manchester. I decided to drive via Keighley and not follow one of our normal routes. However, apparently my memory (or road signage) failed us so we did a huge circle between Oxenhope and Hebden Bridge. We did find ourselves eventually and finally reached Rochdale at which point we joined the M60 and were soon at the Marriott in Hale Barns.

We had about 2 ½ hours in the hotel before our usual ritual dinner at the Plough and Flail in Mobberley. We were back at the hotel and in bed by about 10pm.

Tuesday July 1

We were up before seven, checked out of the hotel and I dropped off Molly at the airport with the bags while I returned the car. Check-in and Security went smoothly so we had plenty of time for a light breakfast in the lounge before our 10:05 departure for Atlanta. It was a warm and sunny morning as we took off – but perhaps not quite as hot as the 90F we expected when we would arrive in Atlanta, almost nine hours later. And it was almost as hot when we arrived home in Mason around 7pm.

Once again we enjoyed our visit to England and the daily life in the apartment in Ilkley. When we left, the tempo was building for Le Grand Depart—the start of the Tour de France cycle race that would begin in Leeds on Saturday July 5 and pass through Ilkley that day as well as nearby Addingham on the way to a Stage 1 finish in Harrogate. Sunday would see Stage 2 pass through Addingham again at the start of a very hilly region ending in Sheffield.

As we have noted throughout this journal, the UK and Yorkshire in particular were determined to make this most northerly section of Le Tour a tremendous success and, weather permitting, it would provide a great “commercial” for this very beautiful part of England.

To conclude, we have included two pages that map the first two Stages—as well as Bob’s coverage of the same—as our contribution to the overall excitement.





Stage 1

Stage 2

My coverage

*Le Grand Depart, July 2014;
Stages 1 and 2*