

# ***England***

## ***Winter 2016***



*This was what has become our annual winter visit to our nephew's flat in Ilkley. As with previous visits, it was essentially a "home from home" so we followed a routine of relaxing, almost daily shopping trips, walking, visiting with friends and family and—of course—enjoying the many good restaurants in the town and the local area.*

*As such, our journal is basically a listing of activities for our record and will offer little interest to anyone but us. We have included the words for that purpose and have included a few photographs taken primarily on Bob's walks.*

*Despite being somewhat repetitive, we thoroughly enjoyed our six weeks in England and even enjoyed the rather wet and windy conditions that predominated for the first several weeks. Ilkley is such a pleasant town and the area around is beautiful.*





*The beautifully redecorated living room at Wells House*

*Snow on the hills  
beyond Ilkley*

*The Rive Aire at  
Saltaire on a sunny  
day*







*On a walk near Bingley on  
the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.*

*A cool, crisp day for bowls*







*Ilkley Moor*







## ***The Bingley Three Rise Locks closed for gate repairs***



***December 2015***

Many parts of England suffered severe flooding in December 2015, just three weeks before we arrived. Although Ilkley was by no means the worst affected, the River Wharfe did break its banks and water covered all of the low-lying parts of the town near the river.

My daily walk often took me down these steps from the "Old Bridge" (the new one was built in 1899!) and someone pointed out to me the markings depicting flood levels here in 1936 and in 1866. He also said that the most recent flood had reached the third step, so it wasn't very much lower than those recorded in the stonework. Certainly it would have covered my path!

# *England, January 2015*

## **Saturday January 16**

We had picked up a rental car on Friday to use to get to the airport today in time for our 1pm flight to Detroit. Unfortunately we were told that the flight was running about 20 minutes late but not to worry about the connection in Detroit. In fact, there was a later flight to Amsterdam from there that would still get us to Amsterdam in time for our onward flight to Leeds, albeit with a somewhat tighter connection time.

After much deliberation and review of alternatives, we chose to change our routing to leave Cincinnati at 2:05 for JFK, where we would have an almost two hour layover before leaving for Amsterdam. This would give us a shorter - but plenty adequate - layover there and we could still get our originally scheduled flight to Leeds.

We left for New York on time and even with time taken for de-icing, we arrived at JFK shortly after 4pm. The KLM flight to Amsterdam left from the same terminal (although quite a walk away from our arrival gate) so we had time for a little relaxation in the Lounge before our departure at 5:50pm. We were on our way!

## **Sunday January 17**

It was a 6 1/2 hour flight to Amsterdam so we had time for just a few hours' sleep after dinner. However, we felt reasonably awake on arrival and found the KLM Lounge for a light breakfast and sit down. Our onward flight to Leeds left at 9:25 so we didn't have too long a layover before the final one hour flight.

This was delayed about fifteen minutes due to a frozen toilet (!) but was soon fixed and we were on our way across the North Sea to Yorkshire. We had left a cold but dry Amsterdam and were told that it was cold (around freezing) at Leeds-Bradford but we certainly didn't expect the blanket of snow that covered everywhere we could see as we broke through the clouds. The runway had obviously been ploughed and the main streets looked clear but there were probably a couple of inches of fresh white snow on the walkways and especially in the rental car parking lot. It actually looked attractive and the white-coated trees were really pretty – although we were more interested in getting to Ilkley!

However, our bags arrived, the car was ready and cleared of snow, so – other than feeling a little chilled – we were ready for the final ten miles to the flat. This was an easy drive and we decided to stop at Caffè Nero for our first of many visits, before driving the last ½ mile to the flat.

Once inside we saw the work that Joanne had organized: new carpet throughout, wallpaper on some walls in several rooms, fresh paint and a number of other improvements that made the rooms even more attractive. Unfortunately – as she had warned us this past week – there was also evidence of new (or returning) leaks on several areas of newly decorated wall and ceiling. It really is a shame that the directors can't seem to get a fix for these leaks, which we have experienced firsthand over the last two years. We recognize that part of the problem is a flat roof, compounded by the fact that this is a listed building but I am sure that the permanent residents here must be at their wits' end.

We unpacked and found things that had been put away during the decorating and/or as the leaks developed and generally got settled in – and then took a three hour nap! Dorothy called later in the afternoon to arrange a dinner date for later in the week and then we both got cleaned up and prepared to go out for dinner at Piccolino around 7pm. We had a very good meal and a number of the staff seemed to recognize us from previous visits.

## **Monday January 18**

We were up very late (after 9:30) and went straight to breakfast at Caffè Nero. The snow had melted in the town, although there were still patches of white on the hills, which were now mostly covered in fog. After breakfast we did a Tesco shop and then I went for a 4 mile walk – my first in a week. It was slow (even for the hills of Ilkley) but at least I got out for a while.

The remainder of the day was spent in the flat and we stayed home for dinner.

## **Tuesday January 19**

We were up late again and stayed home for breakfast on a dreary morning. About 11 I left for a walk and Molly walked into town to do some shopping. We were both back at the flat by 1pm and went for coffee together. Then we stayed home until our 8pm dinner reservation at Monkman's. It was another good meal and we were pleased to hear that the owner's wife, Joelle, is recovering nicely from breast cancer but still has a series of radiotherapy treatments to undergo.

## **Wednesday January 20**

It was a bright and sunny morning as we ate breakfast at home. Around 11 I left for a walk over to Keighley and Molly went into Ilkley to do some more shopping. My walk was a tough one (I blamed it on my cold and the fact that this was my first "real" walk for over a week) and my legs were wobbly by the time I got the bus back to Ilkley. The 40-minute rest helped and I was able to make it back up the hill to the apartment with a total of almost 7 ½ miles covered. I promptly took a two hour nap and regained enough strength to enjoy dinner at home and a couple of hours of TV before bedtime.

## **Thursday January 21**

We were up a little earlier today and drove to Caffè Nero for breakfast. Later in the morning we walked down to town together and I continued for a slightly longer walk while Molly shopped and returned home by bus. Once I returned, we stayed home for the afternoon until it was time to drive to Harrogate to meet Dorothy and David for dinner at the New Park restaurant.

It was a very good meal (we all had fish and chips) and a good time to chat and catch up. It was after 10:30 by the time we left for the 35 minute drive home.

## **Friday January 22**

We had a light breakfast at home and then drove to Skipton. It was raining as we arrived but it soon stopped so we had a pleasant stroll up and down the High Street and a coffee at Caffè Nero. We were somewhat disappointed in the market; it appeared that a number of "regulars" hadn't shown up and there were perhaps 50% of the normal number of stalls.

We drove back via, Crosshills, Steeton, Keighley Tarn, Keighley and Bingley on what was now a rather fine day with temperatures pushing 50F. I decided on a short walk later in the afternoon and then we spent the rest of the day in the flat until Robert and Joanne picked us up at 7:30. We had a good meal and excellent conversation at Quinta and, once again, it was after 10:30 before we were driven back to the apartment.

## **Saturday January 23**

We were up about nine and had breakfast at home. Molly then walked into town and I walked along the north ridge of Ilkley Moor, past the Swastika Stone until I had covered a little over two miles. I walked into a strong southwesterly wind on the way out – and was essentially blown back home coming off the Moor.

Molly and I had coffee at Caffè Nero in the early afternoon and then stayed home for the rest of the day and evening.

## **Sunday January 24**

We had breakfast at home and then went to church, where we were warmly welcomed back by the Vicar and several in the congregation. We then drove to town for coffee and I went for a walk in the afternoon. It was extremely mild (over 50F) and dry but there was obviously rain in the area and we are told to expect gales by mid-week. The River Wharfe was already high as I walked by so we may see some flooding later in the week.

Tonight we went to Panache for a very good Indian meal.

## **Monday January 25**

This morning we drove to Harrogate to visit M&S and spend our gift cards from Dorothy and David. We successfully found needed items – a sweater for me and a robe for Molly – and had breakfast at Café M. We then drove home via Leathley and Otley on a very warm (almost 60F) day.



I went for a short walk in the early afternoon and we both went for coffee about 2:30. We then stayed home for the rest of the day and evening.

#### **Tuesday January 26**

It was a windy and showery morning – but still mild – as we ate breakfast at home. Despite the chance for heavier rain, we both decided to take a short walk; Molly to do a little shopping and return on the bus and me to walk a little further around town. We joined up for coffee and later went out to La Casita (tapas) for dinner.

#### **Wednesday January 27**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then did a Tesco shop. It was very windy (but still mild) with on-and-off showers but I managed a walk down to the river – which has risen noticeably since yesterday and is moving very rapidly. We had another coffee in the afternoon and then stayed home for dinner.

#### **Thursday January 28**

It was a much brighter morning as we ate breakfast at home. There was a little sunshine, no rain, but it was still windy. I found out just how windy it was as I walked over the moor to Keighley later in the morning. Nevertheless, I made good time and met Molly at the bus station there just after she had arrived from Ilkley. We had coffee (Costa) and did a little shopping before getting the bus back to Ilkley. Molly made it in good time to catch her local bus to the flat while I walked up the hill. We were both back in the flat by about 1:30. Molly said that she enjoyed the ride to and from Keighley so we may do this again sometime.

Tonight we went to Emporio Italia for the first time on this visit and, as usual, had an excellent meal in very Italian café surroundings.

#### **Friday January 29**

It was another windy day with on-and-off rain showers but we did manage to get in a walk after the electrician had been to fix a faulty light switch.

We were scheduled to have dinner with Keith and Zena this evening but unfortunately they had to cancel as Keith came down with a cold. So, we stayed home for the evening and hoped to be able to meet them next week.

#### **Saturday January 30**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero on a very cold (just above freezing) and windy morning. There was a brief snow shower as we ate but then the sun came out. This pattern repeated throughout the day but, again, we managed to get in our walks.

This evening we drove to North Rigton for dinner at the Square and Compass with Dorothy and David, Joanne and Robert and Amanda. Unfortunately, Amanda's husband Chris had to stay home and babysit. Nevertheless, we had a very good meal and some pleasant conversation. We were in the restaurant for almost three hours.

#### **Sunday January 31**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero about 8 – it seems we are now well and truly over any jet lag! We went to the 10:45 church service at St Margaret's and then came home for the afternoon. It was misty (we kept losing sight of the moor) and there were periods of showers and the temperature didn't get much above 40F all day. We did manage to get to Piccolino for dinner!

#### **Monday February 1**

We had breakfast at home and left for our walk into town about 9:30. Molly went to M&S and I continued around Ilkley for a total of 5 miles. There were two heavy showers but the wind was so strong that I soon dried out.

We went for an early coffee and then spent the rest of the day and evening at home.



## **Tuesday February 2**

Joanne came to the flat about 10am and she and I went for a short walk around Ilkley, ending up at Caffè Nero where we met Molly for coffee. In the afternoon Molly and I did a little shopping and then stayed home for the rest of the day.

## **Wednesday February 3**

It was a beautiful day for our drive to see Roy in Cumbria. There had been a dusting of snow on Ilkley Moor and on the hills across the river and it was cold enough that the higher elevations for the entire drive were covered in white. In addition, it was sunny and bright all day – easily the best day we have had so far in that respect.

We arrived at Roy's home shortly after 11, had a coffee and later drove to a local pub for a very long lunch. In fact, we each had the all-day breakfast (enormous) and it was almost 3 by the time we returned Roy to his home. We left Lindal a little before 4pm and were home in Ilkley soon after 5:30 after a very pleasant visit.

We went to La Casita for dinner and had just a few items from their tapas menu as the heavy lunch was still with us!

## **Thursday February 4**

After breakfast at home, Molly walked into Ilkley and did some shopping and I set off for a slightly longer walk around Ilkley.

We had a mid-afternoon coffee at Caffè Nero and went to Monkman's for dinner.

## **Friday February 5**

After breakfast at home, I set off for a walk over the moor to Keighley. It was an overcast day with a fairly strong wind but it stayed more or less dry for the 2 ½ hour walk. Molly left the flat about 45 minutes after I did, walked in to Ilkley and caught the bus to Keighley where she had an hour of shopping before we met up again for coffee. We returned together by bus.

Around 7pm Keith and Zena arrived at the flat and we all went to dinner at Bistro Pierre. It was the first time we had seen them on this trip and will be the last as they leave for South Africa on Monday. It was really nice to catch up over the meal and also during after-dinner coffee at the flat.

## **Saturday February 6**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then spent the rest of the day in the flat as rain continued throughout the day and there were periods when the mist closed in on the hills and even over the town.

Around 6:45 we were picked up by Joanne and Robert and drove to the Burlington Room for dinner. As usual we each had the tasting menu (about eight course) and, as usual, it was an excellent meal; great food and excellent service. It was 11pm before we left to return home after a super evening out.

## **Sunday February 7**

We had breakfast at home and went to church for the 10:45 service. Immediately afterwards we drove to Skipton to meet our old Ilkley barista, Cat, and her boyfriend Steve. We had a lovely chat for almost 2 hours before driving home and spending the rest of the day in the flat (except for a short walk).

Monday February 8 (Molly's birthday)

We had breakfast at home and stayed in on a very wet and windy morning. Around 1pm it cleared a little so we took advantage and walked into town. Molly did some shopping and got the bus home while I walked a little further.

Tonight we had a birthday dinner at Quinta.

## **Tuesday February 9**

We went to Caffè Nero for breakfast and I went for a walk later in the morning. It was quite cool and there was the odd shower – which seemed to wipe out the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Toss on The Grove.

We had another coffee trip mid-afternoon and then stayed home until 6:30 when we went to Harrogate to join Dorothy and



David for dinner at William and Victoria. It was a very nice meal and we had another good conversation until almost 10:30. So, it was after 11pm by the time we were back in Ilkley.

### **Wednesday February 10**

We had breakfast at home and went to the 10:30 Ash Wednesday service at St Margaret's. Following that we had coffee at Caffe Nero and then drove to York for a couple of hours of shopping and walking along the ancient streets. Even six weeks on after the Christmas floods, the river was very high and many buildings were still under water by several feet. Obviously it must have been much worse a few weeks back.

We were back in Ilkley soon after five and went to Emporio Italia for dinner at 8pm.

### **Thursday February 11**

We had breakfast at home and then I started my walk via White Wells, the top of Ilkley Moor and Keighley Gate to Keighley. Molly went a little later on the bus and we met for coffee before returning to Ilkley. We then stayed home for the rest of the day and evening.

### **Friday February 12**

We went to Booth's for a fried breakfast (Roy's recommendation – very good) and later I went for a walk and Molly went to the hairdresser. We went for coffee later in the afternoon and for dinner at La Casita at 7:30. Unfortunately, there was a mix-up with our reservation and, rather than wait until 9:30, we decided to try our luck somewhere else.

We went to the Siam Square restaurant on the main road. This has been on our list for some time but we have never made it. However, we were glad that we finally tried it because it was a very good meal and reasonably priced. We also got a chance to try our two words of Thai, which seemed to go over well with the staff.

### **Saturday February 13**

We were home all day except for walks to do some shopping and a little extra. We even walked to coffee in the afternoon and then spent the rest of the day and evening at home.

### **Sunday February 14**

We went to church (shortly after our decorator came for the second day) and then for coffee. I walked over the moor on a cold but bright afternoon (with a late snow squall) and then we stayed home for the rest of the day. All local restaurants were completely booked both Saturday and Sunday for the Valentine's Day weekend.

### **Monday February 15**

It was a cold (about freezing) but bright morning as we drove to Caffe Nero for breakfast. There was a dusting of snow on the ground - not enough to cause any driving problems but sufficient to make the hillsides look very attractive. Following breakfast, I drove to Saltaire and walked from there to Gilstead and back along the canal bank. It was a very pleasant 3 ½ mile walk.

Molly meantime had walked to the shops and she arrived home by bus just a few minutes after me. We immediately went for coffee and then drove to the Cow and Calf to spend a little time admiring the view across the valley before returning home.

Tonight we ate at Piccolino.

### **Tuesday February 16**

It was another cold but sunny day so we followed our plan to go to Keighley after breakfast at home. I walked via White Wells, the top of The Moor and Keighley Gate and met Molly who had walked to Ilkley and taken the bus to Keighley. She had done her shopping by the time I sat down in Costa so we both spent about 30 minutes there before taking the bus back to Ilkley. We then stayed home for the rest of the afternoon and evening.



### **Wednesday February 17**

It was raining hard again as we went for breakfast to Caffe Nero. However, it dried up a little towards noon so we walked into Ilkley and I continued for a while longer.

At 6:15 we left to pick up Linda and returned to the flat where we were joined by Dorothy and David. We all left for our 7:30 reservation at Quinta in celebration of David's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a very pleasant evening and it was almost 11pm by the time we left and took Linda home to Addingham.

### **Thursday February 18**

We had a very light breakfast at home because, after our walks, we were picking up Toby to take him to lunch at the Square and Compass in North Rigton. We spent almost 2 hours with him over a leisurely lunch and enjoyed our conversation. We returned to the flat for the afternoon before our 7:30 reservation at the Box Tree restaurant.

We had a very good meal with excellent service in elegant surroundings. After coffee in the lounge following the meal it was almost 10pm.

### **Friday February 19**

We had breakfast at home and then I drove over to Bingley to take a walk and see the damage done by the December floods. The effect had obviously been quite dramatic and even now, two months on, a number of establishments were sand-bagged and it looked like it would be a while before they could get back to normal. I also saw the three-rise locks drained for work on the gates which was just beginning.

On returning to Ilkley Molly and I went for coffee and then relaxed until dinner at Monkman's.

### **Saturday February 20**

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and then drove directly to Sheffield where we met Fran and Alan, Robert and Elizabeth for lunch at Meadowhall. Afterwards we drove to see Richard in his care home and spent over two hours with him, celebrating his birthday. He seemed like he was in good spirits and joined in the joking and tale-telling with everyone else. It was a very pleasant time and good to see everyone again.

We arrived back in Ilkley shortly after six and went for dinner at 8 to Siam Square where we had another good Thai meal.

### **Sunday February 21**

It was extremely windy and wet this morning as we drove to church and then afterwards to Caffe Nero.

We spent some time preparing the master bedroom for the decorator's visit tomorrow (we hope). I took a short walk around Ilkley later in the afternoon. We went to the 6:30 Choral Evensong service and then went to Piccolino for dinner.

### **Monday February 22**

We were up and out by 8am and had breakfast at Caffe Nero. It was cold (mid-thirties) with a strong wind blowing but it was very bright and sunny.

Today was the day that work was to start on the replacement of the cattle grid on Brodrick Drive so most residents (including us) had left cars on the road as work was due to commence at 8am and cause closure of the road. I guess the key word on the sign announcing this works was "thereabouts" (referring to the start date) as nothing had happened when we got back home and indeed by 10am!

Also today, the decorator was to come and work on the living room and the bedroom but she stopped by at the appointed hour and said there had been a hitch. Her assistant was "tied up on another job" and wouldn't be available until the afternoon. So, again, we wait!

As it turned out, the plasterer didn't show until after 5pm and the projected completion date of tomorrow (February 23) has now slipped to Wednesday of NEXT week – and counting! Similarly, we received an update on the cattle grid late this after-

noon after a total absence of activity during the day. It is now anticipated that work will start on Wednesday, in part to allow trash pickup tomorrow. It seems odd that this weekly event has only today been figured into the schedule. Amazing!

We had a two hour coffee and "sit on the moor" break this afternoon to take advantage of the bright sunshine and then stayed home for the evening.

### **Tuesday February 23**

It was another bright, sunny and cold morning as we ate breakfast at home and waited for the decorator to arrive. She came around 9:15 and almost finished the painting of the living room but left before doing anything more in the bedroom. I am afraid that we get a different story every time we talk to her and the estimated completion date moves; it now stands at the middle of next week!

When she had left, I started a walk towards Addingham with the plan to get the Keighley bus at some point to meet Molly there for coffee. I actually got as far as Cringles Park (6 miles) before I got the bus. I met Molly in Costa and we returned together.

The decorator came shortly after we got back and again almost finished the living room. She has left the masking up as she says she'll be back again tomorrow to finish!

We ate at Emporio Italia and had another great meal and an interesting chat with Luigi!

### **Wednesday February 24**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and about 8:40 I left on my walk. I took the train to Guiseley and then walked down through a very pleasant wooded area to Esholt and then up to the top of Baildon. From there it was all downhill to Shipley from where I got the train home. Molly and I then went for another coffee and later went to dinner at the Moody Cow. The meal and service were OK but there was far too much food to enjoy properly. The place wasn't very full so we wondered just how long they will be around in Ilkley.

### **Thursday February 25**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and came back expecting the painter and plasterer to be hard at work. However, although some tools, etc were outside our door there was no sign of the workers as I left for my walk about 9:45. Molly said they arrived about ten and she left for her trip to Keighley about 10:40.

Meanwhile I was walking towards Addingham on another cold but sunny morning and thoroughly enjoying the great outdoors. My timing was such that I got all the way to Silsden (7 ½ miles) before catching the bus to meet Molly for coffee in Keighley. We both returned on the 1:20 bus to Ilkley and were back in the flat by 2:30.

The painter and plasterer had left with a promise by the painter to return on Monday to paint the ceiling; no estimate given on when the bedroom wall would be completed. However, we had told her that we needed Friday and Saturday to get the flat ready for us to leave so whatever state it was in by close of business today it was to stay that way until we were gone.

I then spent an hour re-assembling the bed and then Molly put back all its bedding so that, no matter what further decorating is or isn't done, at least the room (and the others) would be ready for anyone who might stay.

At six we left for Ridding Park where we were to have dinner with Joanne and Robert. As usual, we thoroughly enjoyed their company and had a very good meal.

### **Friday February 26**

We had breakfast at home and then started the cleanup of the flat ready for leaving tomorrow. I managed a short walk and we had time for afternoon coffee. We also had another very good meal at Quinta.

### **Saturday February 27**

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and then continued with preparations to leave Ilkley. Again I had a short walk and we



packed and left for the Hollins Hall Marriott about 2:30. After checking in we relaxed with our complimentary wine and at 7:30 left again for Ilkley for our final meal at Monkman's for this trip. Mike was pleased to see us and gave us a dessert wine "to go with your pud" and told us that Joelle is doing well and has even spent some time in the restaurant.

### **Sunday February 28**

We were up and checked out by 7:30 and had plenty of time to return the car and check in for our flight to Amsterdam This and the other legs (to Detroit and then to Cincinnati) went smoothly, were on time and our bags arrived with us. We arrived to a rainy 65F but were soon home in Mason after another good visit to England.

