

England

Winter 2019-2020



Bob and Molly Hillery

This trip was our usual winter visit to Ilkley to stay in our nephew's flat for six weeks. This year we decided to have both Christmas and New Year in England so we left home on December 18, having had two Christmas celebrations already—in California and West Chester.

The stay in Ilkley was our usual mix of meeting family and friends, walks across the moor and local shopping expeditions, as well as many meals out in the fine local restaurants..

As usual, we had a very enjoyable and relaxing time in our home away from home. This journal is a very brief account of our daily activities, with additional comments about the few days when we did something a little different.

We returned home after a very mild January on the 30th of the month.

England Winter 2019-20

Wednesday December 18/Thursday December 19

We left home at 11am, returned the rental car and checked in for our 2:30 flight to New York. We had had a drink in the lounge and had reached the gate before we were informed of a delay. It soon became obvious that we would miss our connection at JFK, so we were rerouted via Atlanta. Despite a 50-minute scheduled connection here, we made our onward Virgin Atlantic flight to Manchester with ease.



Onboard Virgin Atlantic

It was a long walk to Immigration, then a wait for bags, followed by a wait for the rental car shuttle, but eventually we were on our way. The car's GPS showed three routes, all of which took almost 2 ½ hours (it is usually about 90 minutes to Ilkley), so we picked one at random and followed the suggestions. We went through Manchester, near the university and the Etihad (Manchester City) stadium, before driving via Oldham and Sowerby Bridge along the road that we used to take across the Pennines many years ago.

It was a pleasant morning and we had time to spare so following a nostalgic route was quite exciting and relaxing. Eventually we were directed to Bingley and then via Dick Hudson's to Ilkley.

We checked in at the flat, unpacked, admired the Christmas decorations left by Joanne and then went for coffee at Caffe Nero and a very quick shop at M&S Foods. We both had a nap in the afternoon and went to Piccolino for dinner where several of the staff greeted us like family.

Friday December 20

We had breakfast at home and later walked into Ilkley where Molly did her shopping and I continued for a walk of about 5 ½ miles. It was still mild and quite bright, so I enjoyed being outside. We then stayed home for the rest of the day and evening.

Saturday December 21

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero again and I later did a four-mile walk before spending the afternoon in the flat. Tonight, we had a reservation at the Box Tree where we once again had an excellent meal with great service.



Sunday December 22



After breakfast at Caffè Nero we went directly to church for the 10:45 service. We met our friends Stephen and Joyce as well as the vicar and several others who recognized us from previous visits. We had a light lunch at home and a relaxing afternoon at home. We went to church again at 6:30 for a lovely Festival of Lessons and Carols (packed house) and then ate at the flat.

Monday December 23

Caffè Nero again for breakfast, followed by a brief shop and then a 3-mile walk. The afternoon and evening were spent at the flat.

Tuesday December 24, Christmas Eve.

We had another Caffè Nero breakfast and then stayed home for the rest of a very rainy and foggy day. We had an 8pm reservation at Piccolino for dinner before attending the 10:30 First Mass at St Margaret's. Based on our usual experience of dinner taking at least two hours we arrived a little early and were seated immediately in a packed house. It turned out that we had finished the main course well before 9pm and were beginning to think about returning to the flat before the service but, by enjoying dessert, coffee and an after-dinner drink, it was almost ten before we left.

The service lasted just an hour (not as well attended as we had expected but still a respectable crowd) and we were home and in bed by midnight.

Wednesday December 25, Christmas Day



We had a light breakfast at home and at 10:30 we were joined by Robert, Joanne, Oliver and William. Five of us went for a three-mile walk to the Cow and Calf and back on a bright, clear cool (but not cold) morning. We were back by 12:30 and at a little before 2pm Molly and I drove down to Ilkley for our Christmas Dinner at Quinta.

We had an excellent meal (turkey and all the trimmings), as well as Christmas pudding, wine



and port. The place was packed, and everyone seemed to have a good time. We were home about 5pm and promptly slept until an early bedtime!

Thursday December 26, Boxing Day

We had breakfast in Caffè Nero (alone for the first half hour) and then stayed home until about 1pm, when we left to join Dor-

othy and David at their home. We were there almost eight hours, had some great conversation, and a wonderful meal typical of the spreads that Dorothy is famous for.

Friday December 27

We had breakfast at home and later I walked into town continuing for a four-mile walk. We then spent the rest of the day at home until going to Pintoh for a very good Thai meal.

Saturday December 28 (53 Years since we emigrated to the US)

Breakfast at Caffè Nero was followed by a walk, some shopping for Molly, and then we spent the afternoon and evening at home.

Sunday December 29

After breakfast at Caffè Nero we went to church for the 10am service (only one today, rather than the usual three). I then went for a five-mile walk over the top of the moor on a beautiful mild afternoon.

Tonight, we ate at the Ilkley Cow and both enjoyed our meals.

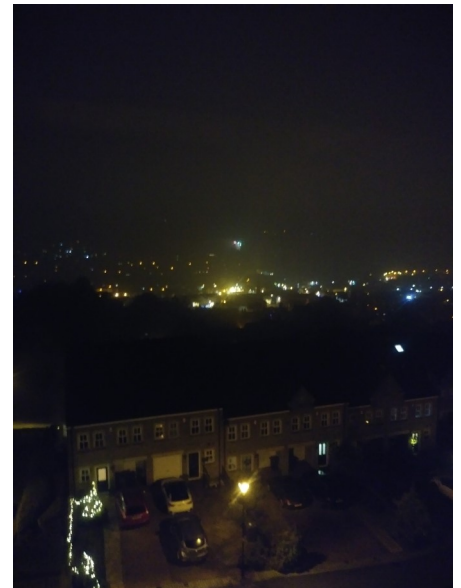
Monday December 30

We drove to Harrogate for breakfast and some M&S shopping on a beautiful sunny morning with clear blue skies. We were back in Ilkley about 1pm, I went for a short walk before it clouded over and then we stayed home for the rest of the day and evening.

Tuesday December 31, New Year's Eve

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and later walked into Ilkley for a little shopping and a short walk – bringing my total for the year to 920 miles.

At 5:30 we drove to Eldwick to pick up Keith and Zena for our evening together. We stopped at the flat briefly to drop off their bags and went to Quinta for our 8pm reservation. We had a great meal and a very nice chat, at least at times when the (rather poor) singer wasn't performing! It was almost midnight when we left, getting us back to the flat to watch the Ilkley fireworks across the valley and to toast the New Year.



Wednesday January 1, 2020, New Year's Day

We all had breakfast at the flat and then Keith and Zena donned their walking togs for their walk home across Ilkley Moor. I joined them for the first 1 ½ miles and then returned home via Keighley Gate. Five miles for me – a good start to 2020.

At 4, we drove to Dunkeswick for dinner with Joanne and Robert and family. Oliver and William were there, of course, as well as Toby and his girlfriend Imogen. We played one game of Trivial Pursuit and then had a wonderful dinner, prepared by the two younger boys and Robert. It was a very pleasant evening and we felt honored to have been invited.

Thursday January 2

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and later walked into Ilkley for a little shopping and a walk. We then spent the rest of the day at home.

Friday January 3

Joanne and Robert, with Oliver and William, picked me up at 10 and we drove to Malham for a walk to Gordale Scar and Malham Cove. We met Toby and Imogen, and Robert's sister Gillian and husband Mike, in Malham and the nine of us set out on a beautiful day. The route via Janet's Fosse and the foot of Gordale Scar was crowded with walkers and parts of the cross-field walk were very muddy. The top of the cove, with its deep crevices and smooth rock surface, seemed particularly prone to a mis-step but everyone made it across and down the equally slippery steps back to the River Aire.

We ended up at a pub in Malham for lunch and a rest before the drive home. Molly and I went Emporio Italia for a late dinner. Photographs taken on this walk are presented at the end of the journal.

Saturday January 4

Today was a usual Saturday – breakfast out, a walk and dinner at Pintoh. I felt I was starting a cold and took a hot toddy as a precaution.

Sunday January 5

We went to church and afterwards I walked into town to pick up some cough medicine for a scratchy throat and developing cold. We stayed home for the rest of the day and I retired very early.

Monday January 6 (Twelfth Night)

We had breakfast out, but I skipped a walk, still battling the cold. We had a visit from Ian Shepherd telling us that there was a water leak somewhere in or near our flat and the apartment below had suffered significant damage. A plumber was called and tried to find any culprit in the flat but eventually concluded that the broken pipe was an incoming water supply to the affected flat 16.

We were invited to join Joanne and family at Piccolino for Oliver's birthday party and had a very pleasant meal.

Tuesday January 7

After breakfast, Molly and I walked into town and I continued on a walk to Ben Rhydding and up towards the Cow and Calf before returning home, where we stayed for the rest of the day.

Wednesday January 8

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and then I went for a short walk. Soon after noon we drove to Grassington to meet Peter, who had driven down from his home in Newbiggin. We walked into the village from the car park and went in the first open café we came across. We had a light lunch and two hours chatting and catching up. We couldn't believe it had been 5 years since we last saw Peter – at Brian's funeral.

Tonight, we made our first visit to La Casita on this trip and had a very good meal.

Thursday January 9

I went for a 5 mile walk and then we had another relaxing day in the flat (Molly was starting a cold) and in the evening had a great meal at Quinta with Linda. We were with her about 3 hours and the time just flew by.

Friday January 10

I took a very short morning walk and then we left for Ripon, stopping briefly to see Joanne on the way. We picked up Dorothy and David and drove to Grantley Hall about 20 minutes away. This is a huge stately home in enormous landscaped grounds and has recently been bought by a friend of Dorothy and David. We were there for afternoon tea in the traditional English style. The food was very good, and we enjoyed the service and the ambiance of this beautiful building.

Afterwards we spent about three hours chatting at Dorothy and David's home before driving home.



Saturday January 11

It was another day for a short walk and a little before 7pm we were picked up by Joanne and Robert for our special treat at the Devonshire Arms. Unfortunately, the experience didn't match that of our previous visits. The food was still excellent, but the service and ambiance had deteriorated. We hoped that it was a one-off. We still had five hours of great conversation.

Sunday January 12

We opted to stay home from church rather than infect the whole congregation. I went for a short walk but otherwise we spent the day at home.

Monday January 13

After breakfast at Caffè Nero, I went for a 5+ mile walk through some very muddy areas, following some heavy rains in recent days. We then stayed home for the afternoon and evening.

Tuesday January 14

Another walk and dinner at Monkman's for the first time this trip.

Wednesday January 15

Joanne came over for a walk on a very nice morning. We met Molly for coffee and covered 4 miles in all. Tonight we ate with our friends Joyce and Stephen from church and had a three-hour meal and nice chat at Emporio Italia.

Thursday January 16

We had breakfast at home and then I set off for a walk over to Keighley. It was fine and bright – although very windy – until I was approaching Ilkley on the return on the bus. Fortunately, the rain that came wasn't too heavy for my walk back up the hill.

We ate at home tonight.

Friday January 17

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero and about 11:30 set off for the Smoke House for lunch with Dorothy and David and Keith and Eileen. We had a three-hour meal and chat, during which most of the world's problems were solved, and then returned to Ilkley.

Tonight, we had an excellent meal at the Box Tree – far better than our experience at the Burlington Room last week, and about the same price.

Saturday January 18

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero on a bright but cold morning; it felt colder than any day we have experienced so far due to a

stiff breeze and near freezing temperatures. I did manage a short walk before we went to dinner with Joanne and Robert at the Square and Compass.

Sunday January 19

We had a Caffe Nero breakfast and then went straight to church. Unfortunately, the visit by Cat and her family had been cancelled so we stayed home for the rest of the day. The temperature hovered around freezing the whole day. We ate at Quinta.

Monday January 20

Today was a five-mile walk and then a lazy day at home.

Tuesday January 21

Four miles today followed in the evening by dinner at the Royal Baths Chinese Restaurant in Harrogate with Dorothy and David. Very good, three-hour chat.

Wednesday January 22

We drove to Silsden about 11:30 to pick up Susan for lunch at the Fleece in Addingham. Joanne and Robert joined us for a light lunch and a very nice chat. Susan has had a couple of falls and uses a stick at times but otherwise seemed very well.

Tonight, we ate at La Casita.

Thursday January 23

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and later I went to Skipton for a three-mile walk along the canal bank and through Airedale Park. Very pleasant.

Tonight, we ate with Phil and Jen, our next-door neighbors. We had a very nice meal at Monkmans and finished the evening with a nightcap in their apartment. It was midnight by the time we retired.

Friday January 24

Breakfast at Caffe Nero was followed by a visit to WH Smith and, later, by a walk into town. Molly did a little shopping and I continued for a five-mile walk through Middleton.

Tonight, we ate at Piccolino and said farewell to Anna, who is returning to Italy. She sadly lost her father in October and is returning home to take care of her ailing mother. She promised to keep in touch.

Saturday January 25

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero. I then went for a six-mile walk along the north ridge of the moor. Around 4pm, Fran and Alan arrived, and we went to Emporio Italia at 8:30.

Sunday January 26

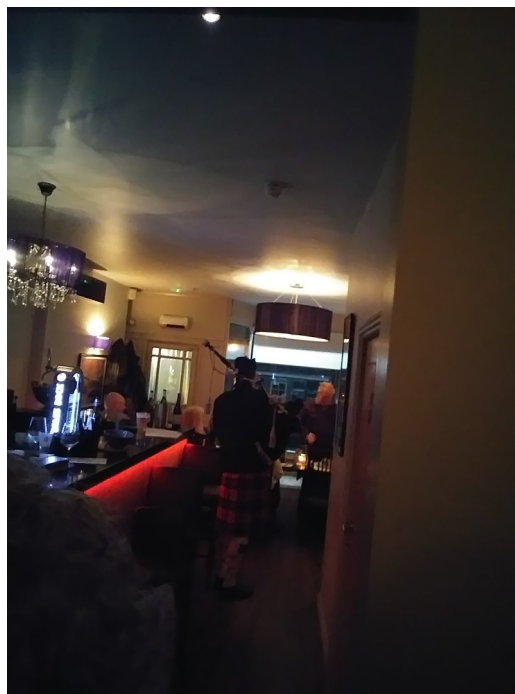
We had a coffee at Caffe Nero and then took the train to Leeds to meet Elizabeth and Matthew and Peter. We had a 3-hour lunch and then returned to Ilkley.

Tonight, the four of us went to the Burns' Night Supper at Quinta – complete with bagpiper and the usual haggis, tatties and neeps.

Monday January 27

After breakfast, Fran and Alan left to have lunch with Alan's sister in Sheffield and then on to home.

I went for a walk of about 5 ¼ miles and then we went for coffee. At 6:30 we left for Rudding Park where we had another great evening with Joanne and



Robert.

Tuesday January 28

We were up before eight as we were expecting a call from the Baxi boiler technician to set a time to come and inspect a leak. He called soon after 8 and set a time between 10 and 1. We used the morning to do a vacuum and general clean up. At 10:10 the Baxi technician arrived and by 11am the boiler problem was diagnosed and fixed. We went for a coffee to celebrate and I went for a (wet) walk in the afternoon. Tonight we ate at Bistro Saigon.

Wednesday January 29

We had breakfast at Caffè Nero, returned to pack and finish preparations to leave and were on the road to Manchester by noon. It was an easy journey and we arrived at the airport Marriott before 3pm. We ate at the fine Italian restaurant in the hotel.

Thursday January 30

We were up about 8:30, had a coffee in the lounge and caught the 9:45 shuttle to the airport. Check-in and Security were very quiet which gave us time for some breakfast in the Virgin Atlantic Lounge before our 12:30 flight to JFK. We left and arrived on time, had a 4-hour layover in New York before our onward flight to Cincinnati. We were home by 10:30.



A Walk to Malham Cove



