

England
Christmas and
New Year 2021



Bob and Molly Hillery

***This was what seems to be coming
an annual pilgrimage to Ilkley to cel-
ebrate Christmas and the New Year.***

England, Winter 2021-2022

Wednesday December 8/Thursday December 9

We left home about 11:30 and drove to CVG where we returned our rental car, checked in, and had two hours in the lounge before our flight to JFK. This flight was on time and, although we had quite a walk once in JFK, it was all in one terminal. Our layover here was over three hours, which gave us time to relax in the SkyClub before our 8pm overnight flight on Virgin Atlantic to Manchester. It was a very short (5 ½ hours) flight so, despite a late departure, we arrived in Manchester 30 minutes ahead of schedule. It had been raining but was dry when we picked up the rental car (a seamless experience for a change) after a very quick trip through Immigration and Baggage Claim. We were on the road to Ilkley by 9am and arrived for a coffee at Caffe Nero about 10:30. Following that we went to the flat, took our Covid tests, mailed them and unpacked - before resting until dinner time. We sneaked out of the flat about 7 to dine at Piccolino, where we were once again greeted like members of the family by the hostess, Noemi.

Friday December 10

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero before doing a Tesco shop and returning to the flat. I went for a 4 ½ mile walk late in the morning on a beautiful but cool day and Molly did her walk around the area of Wells House in the afternoon. Tonight, we ate at Quinta where the Christmas crowds (and noise) were already in full swing. Nevertheless, we enjoyed a good meal and a nice chat with a fellow diner eating out with his teenage daughter.



Saturday December 11

We were up much later today, and it was well after nine before we were having breakfast in Caffe Nero. We had received notification of our negative Covid tests, so we felt comfortable being out. We did a little M&S shop before returning to the flat on a drizzly morning. I managed a 5 ¼ mile walk in the afternoon, again mostly through a fine drizzle. Tonight, we went to the Box Tree for dinner but Joanne and Robert, who were supposed to join us, called off as they both had quite severe reactions to their Covid booster jab. We enjoyed our meal there as usual.

Sunday December 12

We didn't wake until 10:15 so we decided to skip church and go straight to Caffe Nero. We both did walks in the afternoon and went to Pintoh for dinner.

Monday December 13

After breakfast at Caffe Nero and a quick shop at M&S Foods, I went for a 6.7 mile walk and Molly did hers around the block at Wells House. We then stayed home and ate at the flat.

Tuesday December 14

We took our additional Covid test today (the NHS said we had contacted someone who tested positive) and then we both walked into town to mail them and visit Boyes. We then met Joanne at Caffe Nero and spent a very pleasant hour chatting with her and catching up with progress on the farm. I walked back up the hill and Molly took the little bus home. This was a breakthrough day in that she had walked down into town for the first time since her surgery.

Tonight, we ate at Piccolino and met a new hostess – perhaps the only non-Italian on the restaurant staff. We also chatted with a manager who said that Anna may be paying a visit to Ilkley in April – coincidentally the month we plan to be in Italy!

Wednesday December 15

We drove to Harrogate first thing and had breakfast there before doing a little shopping. I went for a three-mile walk in the afternoon but otherwise it was a lazy day. Tonight, we ate at Quinta.

Thursday December 16

After breakfast at Caffe Nero, I drove to Skipton for somewhere different to walk. I walked a total of 4 ½ miles along the canal bank and through Aireville Park. Molly walked locally on Wells Road later in the day.

Tonight, Robert picked us up for dinner at Emporio Italia. Unfortunately, Joanne was busy ferry boys to and from a swim practice, so was unable to join us. It was nice, nevertheless, to spend an evening with Robert who is always good company. It was a little noisy but we had a very pleasant two-hour chat and good meal.

Friday December 17

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and then returned to the flat. Joanne came round with the carpet shampooer and stayed for a coffee and a chat. After that, Molly and I walked into town, me to return after a further two miles and Molly to come back on the bus after doing her shopping. We then stayed home for the rest of the day and had dinner in the flat.

Saturday December 18

We were up a little later today and went down for breakfast at Caffe Nero. I then went for a walk and tried to see the St Margaret choir singing carols on The Grove – but arrived just as they were finishing. I met Molly briefly in town before completing my walk and her getting the bus home.

I tried out the carpet shampooer on the living room carpet; not sure it looks much better but at least now I know how to use it! Tonight, we ate at La Casita.

Sunday December 19

We went to Caffe Nero for breakfast and then to church where Fr Bernard was celebrating his 60-year anniversary as a priest. I then went for a short walk before doing a little more carpet cleaning in the flat. At 6:30 we went to the Lessons and Carols service – which was excellent – and then to dinner at Piccolino.

Monday December 20



We left for breakfast at a little before 8 and when we returned at 9am the master bedroom had been cleared of all tools, materials, etc and had been vacuumed so we are now back in business and can start the process of getting all the furniture back. Molly and I walked into town, and I continued for a 4 ½ mile walk; she returned on the bus with her shopping. Tonight, we ate at the Cow and Calf pub with Joanne and Robert, where we had a good meal and a great chat.

Tuesday December 21

After breakfast and a Tesco shop, Joanne came to the flat with a new carpet shampooer which she had just purchased and wanted to “do a test drive”. It was certainly easier to operate than the last one and between us we cleaned about half the master bedroom. After she left, I went for a short walk and, after lunch, Molly did her walk on Wells Road. Tonight, we ate at Pintoh once again.

Wednesday December 22

It was below freezing as we went to breakfast this morning and did another little shop at Tesco. At 11 we both walked into town, and I continued for a short walk while Molly shopped and returned on the bus. Tonight, we ate at La Casita.

Thursday December 23

We ate at Caffe Nero, and we both walked into Ilkley late for our “daily” short walk and shopping activities on a drizzly morning. We stayed home for the afternoon and ate at the Ilkley Cow tonight.

Friday December 24 (Christmas Eve)

After breakfast at Caffe Nero, we waited for a couple of hours for the rain to stop before our walks. Unfortunately, it never really did stop, so we got a little wet. When we returned, our neighbors at Flat 22 had left us a bottle of their olive oil (from Italy) and a couple of small Christmas stockings. At 7:30 we went to Quinta for our Christmas Eve dinner. The restaurant was full but not overly noisy, so we enjoyed a very good, leisurely meal. We had a few minutes at home before leaving for the 10:30 Midnight Mass at St Margaret, which was a lovely service. It was after midnight before we got to bed.

Saturday December 25 (Christmas Day)

We were home for a light breakfast (everywhere was closed!) and about 11:15 were joined by Joanne, Robert, Oliver, and William who had just completed their Christmas day walk. They stay for about an hour and had drinks with cheese, mince pies and cookies.



At a little after 2pm we left for Ripon for Christmas Dinner with Dorothy and David. It was – as we expected – an enormous meal with turkey and all the trimmings and about six different vegetables. All followed by Christmas pudding!

Sunday December 26 (Boxing Day)

We went out to breakfast rather late and drove through about 1-2 inches of snow that had fallen overnight – just a few hours late for White Christmas. We skipped church and stayed home for the rest of the day and evening on a rather foggy and gloomy day.



Monday December 27

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and then stayed home. Dorothy and David came round about 12:30 to bring our Christmas present that they had forgotten to give us on Saturday. It was another foggy and drizzly day, so I once again skipped my walk – the third day in a row!

Tonight, we ate at Piccolino.

Tuesday December 28 (55 Years since our immigration to the USA)

We arrived at Caffe Nero to find it closed due to a member of staff testing positive for Covid, which meant they had to perform a “deep clean”. We went to Avanti just across the street instead. Later we both took walks and tonight we picked up Linda at 7:15 for dinner at the Craven Heifer. It was a very pleasant evening, topped off by a drink at Linda’s home. It was about 10:30 when we got home.

Wednesday December 29

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero on a rainy but mild morning. We both walked in the afternoon when it had cleared up – but was very windy – and we went to La Casita for dinner.

Thursday December 29

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and did a small Tesco shop before taking our walks later in the morning. We then stayed home for the rest of the day and ate in.

Friday December 31 (New Year's Eve)

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero, went for walks and then stayed home on a very mild and generally bright day until Keith and Zena arrived at 7pm. We spent the next five hours with them, chatting first in the flat and then enjoying the NYE Dinner at Quinta. It was great to see them again after such a long time (two years in the case of Zena, last July for Keith). Molly and I watched the somewhat abbreviated fireworks display before retiring.

Saturday January 1 (New Year's Day)

We went to Caffe Nero for breakfast at 9am and we both did walks later in the day. I had started feeling a cold come on yesterday and it was a little worse today. I am hoping that a cold is all that it is and will be treated with a bedtime hot toddy. We stayed home for the day.

Sunday January 2

I felt that my cold was no worse today after a reasonable night's sleep. We decided to skip church (for the congregation as much as for me) but we did get to Caffe Nero for breakfast and to Pintoh for dinner. No walks today.

Monday January 3

I felt quite a bit better, and we went to Caffe Nero for breakfast. Joanne came over about 10:15 with a few Covid test kits so I took attest immediately - negative. We both went for our walks – actually I did two shorter ones for a total of about 4 miles. We ate at Piccolino.

Tuesday January 4

After breakfast we went to the Pudsey shopping center where there is a large M&S store. However, the selection of men's clothing was no better than we had found at Harrogate, so I came away empty handed again. Molly and I did walks in the afternoon on a bright day but one where the temperature hardly got above freezing. We ate at home tonight.

Wednesday January 5

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and at noon we left for the Smokehouse for lunch with Dorothy and David and Keith and Eileen. We spend over two hours chatting (not a brilliant meal) and then came home for a while before dinner at the Square and Compass (similarly uninspiring!)

Thursday January 6

After breakfast I went for a 5 mile walk via White Wells and the Cow and Calf, partly in snow and totally in very cold and windy conditions. Tonight, we ate with our neighbors Jen and Phil at the Ilkley Cow and followed it with a drink in their apartment.

Friday January 7

There was another modest covering of snow again this morning, but we managed to get into town for breakfast. I was able to get a short walk in later in the day, but it was quite icy and too risky for Molly. Tonight, we dined at the Box Tree with Joanne and Robert – another 4-hour meal and nice conversation.

Saturday January 8

I felt a little under the weather this morning and stayed home after we returned from breakfast. I alternately slept and sat but we managed to get to dinner at Emporio Italia.

Sunday January 9

I felt a good deal better this morning, but we decided to skip church again and spend another day at home – after breakfast at Caffe Nero.

Monday January 10

We had breakfast at Caffe Nero and dinner tonight at Panache. Other than that, it was a “recovery” day with no walk but we did visit Cat and her new baby Leila in Barnoldswick. She is a lovely baby and we enjoyed cuddling her on our one hour visit.



Tuesday January 11

After breakfast, I decided to walk over the top to Keighley on a beautiful, chilly morning. As I approached Riddlesden, I decided to turn towards West Morton and then followed the canal bank to Bingley from where I took the train home. Tonight, we had a lovely evening at Picoillno with Toby.



Wednesday January 12

It was another nice day for a walk, so I went via White Wells and “the steps” to Clevedon and then back via the golf course and Crossbeck. Tonight, we ate at La Casita.



Thursday January 13

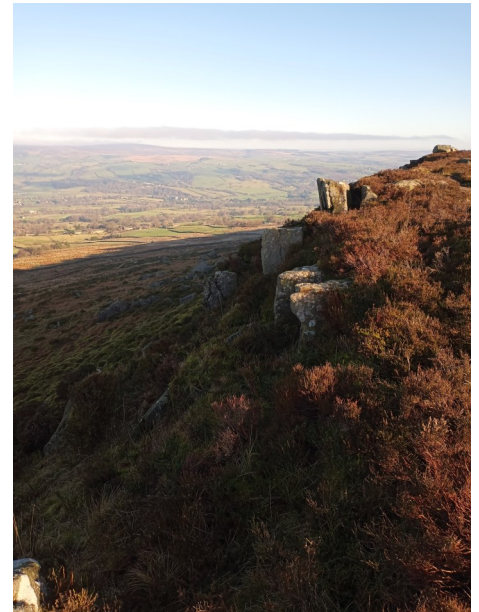
After breakfast at Caffe Nero, Molly went into town again and I walked down to the Dalesway just west of Ilkley and back to the flat. Tonight, we ate at Quinta.

Friday January 14

Today started out a little foggy but it soon became a beautiful winter morning as I started my walk along the north ridge of the moor. As I dropped down through the fields near Addingham Moorside, it was extremely muddy, as it was on the Lippersley Lane bridleway – over the top of my boots in places!



Tonight, we drove over to Dunkeswick to pick up Joanne and Robert for a very pleasant evening at the Clocktower Restaurant at Ridding Park.



Saturday January 15

I woke up early with a piercing stomachache which modified to a “kick in the gut” pain after I got up. We still managed to meet Keith and Zena for lunch at the Box Tree (their treat, very nice) but then we just sat around for the rest of the day and had a very early night.

Sunday January 16

My stomachache was somewhat better this morning but we decided to stay home from church once again so that I would be fully fit for dinner at Linda’s. We went there soon after 6pm and had another lovely (big) meal before getting home about 10:15.

Monday January 17

After breakfast at Caffe Nero, I went for a four-mile walk and then we stayed home for the rest of the day, beginning to get things cleaned and sorted ready for our departure.

Tuesday January 18

After breakfast at Caffe Nero (with a surprise visit from Joanne), I went for an almost five-mile walk. We then did our final cleaning and washing jobs, packed our cases and generally get the flat ready for our departure. Tonight, we ate at Quinta and then we drove to the Hollins Hall hotel for the night.

Wednesday January 19

After a (rather poor) breakfast at the hotel, we drove to Leeds Bradford airport for our tests. After mine was completed, I was told to expect the results within 48 hours! Here we go again: apparently, I had ordered the wrong test once more. Fortunately, they were able to accommodate us and do the repeat test – they even processed a refund on Molly’s untaken test. By the time we got back to the flat, the results were available (negative) and we were able to upload for our flight.

We had a final coffee at Caffe Nero and then drove to Manchester, Here a scratch was noticed on the wheel so we had some debate about what that would cost, etc and the usual contradictory remarks by the Hertz staff. We finally got away and took an Uber to the hotel. Tonight, we had a good Italian meal at San Carlo in the hotel.

Thursday January 20

We took the 8:15 shuttle to the airport and checked in (fine) and went through Security (lots of baggage checks). We had time for a very light breakfast in the lounge and then boarded. The Virgin Atlantic flight to Atlanta was smooth and we had a good lunch and

afternoon tea on what seemed like an easy flight. Arrival in Atlanta was simple, and we were in the Delta lounge within 30 minutes for a drink before our final leg home.

We picked up a car and drove home (below freezing) to arrive at 8:30pm after a very pleasant six weeks in England.

