

The Notley Review 2021

Well, who'd have imagined that 2021 would be almost as bad as last year?! Thankfully, there have been a few highlights this year, so I've been persuaded to expand a little on the "2020 Cancelled" message of my previous review...

In March, Mark and Catarina moved out of Knaphill into our new flat in Woolwich – we now have a WhatsApp group for 'Landlords and Tenants'! Mark spent a good part of the year working front of house at The War of The Worlds Immersive Experience in London. (*Highly recommended, particularly for fans of Jeff Wayne's musical version.*)

He is now on a second tour with the Pied Piper Theatre Company, performing in Robin's Winter Adventure to children around the South East; the tour finishes at the Lyric Hammersmith in February.



Adam is still at the AA – one day at a time! – and he still runs a lot. In October, we cheered him on in his second London Marathon, as he set a PB of 2:38:46! And at the end of November, Liz, Paul and Tom were supporting him in the Marathon des Alpes Maritimes, from Nice to Cannes. He didn't quite break 2:45 but he was the first Brit over the line, finishing 35th overall.



Laura was made redundant from McLaren in summer 2020, and took a temp job, which soon became permanent, at the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (part of the NHS), in the autumn. She was beginning to realise that she wasn't cut out for work in the public sector when McLaren asked her back in June.

I'm still with Boomi, but we're no longer part of Dell, so my apologies to anyone I've offered a discount on a laptop! Laura and I are both working (mainly) from home which means we occasionally meet up for lunch.

Another year without a foreign holiday, but that didn't stop

us getting out our hiking gear for another walk with Peter and Rachel. We headed for Northumberland, and spent six days walking the 96 miles of St Oswald's Way from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to Heavenfield, on Hadrian's Wall. Excellent company, stunning scenery, great weather, plenty of good fun, and a few sore feet!





To recover from the walking we spent a few days in Berwick in an excellent Airbnb right on the town walls.

For a while Laura was planning our retirement up in the North East. With the power still out, two weeks after Storm Arwen, she's had second thoughts.

Despite the ever-changing restrictions, we did manage to meet up with some of our Exeter University buddies at Peter and Julie's new home, in

July; and then again to celebrate Laura's birthday at the aforementioned War of The Worlds Immersive Experience in October. We survived!

Continuing on the Exeter theme, we're just back from a few days in the city, celebrating our 35th Wedding Anniversary. Apart from a couple of flying visits, this is the first time we've spent any time there since our university days – we hardly recognised the place. Nice to get out onto Dartmoor too. And, you've guessed it, Laura is now planning our move to the South West!



This time last year we'd been imaging a Christmas with Liz and family, and maybe Dad too, in France. Dad is still in Thailand, and we haven't seen him in almost two years. We did get to see Liz and Paul at a family wedding in October, which was great, but needless to say the plans for Christmas didn't materialise.

We haven't seen much of Laura's family either. We did have a lovely couple of days with Evelyne, Fiona, et al, in Cheshire back in May (that's Zeke and Echo in the photo), but a trip up with Debbie, over from Canada, in September, was scuppered. Despite being fully vaccinated, Laura and I both caught Covid; we saw Debbie for 5 minutes, quite literally, on our doorstep.

And so to this Christmas. Hopefully, the four of us will be all together – last year's festive lockdown left Adam stranded in Warwick, on his own, eating macaroni cheese for Christmas dinner!

To close, we wish you all a very happy Christmas, and have our fingers tightly crossed for a better 2022.



With love,
Richard, Laura,
Adam & Mark

xxx

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