

2008 - A Year to Remember, or Forget?

Another year without a summer, and as if the continuing threat of climate change wasn't enough, we now have to deal with global financial meltdown. It's enough to turn a Grumpy Old Man into a Miserable Old Git. So, what have we been up to this year, I hear you ask?

Lynne & Ian- The start of the year was marked by Lynne's Mum reaching the point where she wasn't able to remain in her home. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and has moved into a care home where she is quite settled for the time being. However, she wants to keep the house (in her own mind she thinks she might go back there one day), so Ben has moved in as tenant/caretaker.

In June we had a few days away in the Lake District and found a lovely little B&B in Muncaster with breakfast entertainment provided by a host of birds vying for space at the feeders only yards away from the window. We did lots of fairly gentle walking and enjoyed ourselves immensely. Sadly, "Britain's Favourite View" offered an unparalleled vista of mist. I knew we should have visited The Cumbrian Goat Experience instead. Maybe next time...



Outdoors, Lynne has developed a desire to start growing veg, and has turned over a corner of the garden to a veg plot. It's not very big, but it's a start. She has had some successes (carrots, courgettes, peas, parsnips) and some failures (broccoli, butternut squash), and the onions and leeks are still a work in progress. She is also a convert to composting, which is working

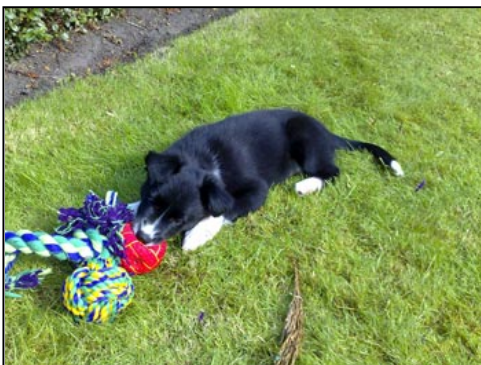
really well!

After last year's painful episodes Ian finally passed the troublesome kidney stone just after Christmas. Having the appearance of an under-developed lentil, it was a bit of an anti-climax. Still, as they say, better out than in. 😊

Work continues unchanged for us both - though the Practice where Lynne works has moved into new premises a little nearer home.

Ben - After a year in a 'proper' engineering job, Ben decided that driving a desk and a

computer was not what he wanted out of life, so he has gone back to a job caring for young adults with learning difficulties and signed up for an Open University degree in Psychology. He is finding it hard work, but rewarding.



Not content with this major change he has also got himself a dog, in the form of a young Border Collie called Kia. She is very lovable but needs a lot of exercise and attention, which is proving to be

difficult unless family and friends help out. Time will tell if this is a tenable situation.

Susie - Graduated this year from Sheffield where she has been studying Maths with French, and has decided to give accountancy a try, so Lynne is looking forward to some help with her tax return before long.. She is staying in Sheffield, where she is sharing a flat with two friends, and starts a job in January with a firm called PKF . So she has effectively left home now, and has even cleared her room.



Peter - Has claimed the biggest bedroom now, and set about making it his own. This seems to involve covering every surface with discarded clothing, recording equipment, or musical instruments and accessories. He is still thoroughly enjoying doing his BTEC in Music Technology, and from September we have been doing the rounds of Universities with him.

He still enjoys skateboarding and has a nice little job doing coaching at the local YMCA which funds for his social life! His band has started doing gigs, but unfortunately not for money yet. 😞

Fortunately there has been no recurrence of his low platelet problem of last autumn.



So that completes our round up of the year. We've enjoyed catching up with everyone we've managed to see, and hope that next year we'll be able to see even more of you. And it only remains to wish you all Season's Greetings, and a Happy New Year.

With love from

Ian, Lynne, Ben, Susie & Peter

(Web version available with a couple more pictures at www.duckdown.me.uk)