

## 2023 – A Year on Hold

As COP28 draws to a rather unsatisfactory conclusion, and another Government bill splits the Conservative Party (it puts me in mind of that nice Mrs May's Brexit agreement), it's time to put fingers to keyboard again for our annual missive.

The main story of our year, as some of you will already know, has undoubtedly been my prostate. Following a friend's diagnosis of prostate cancer, with no real symptoms, last year I decided I would ask for a PSA test at my next annual check-up in January. The reading came back a bit higher than normal and my GP sent me for further investigations, which included an MRI scan and a biopsy (ouch!).

Suffice to say it was something of a shock to be told I had cancer that needed to be treated quickly. A subsequent bone scan revealed it had not spread elsewhere, so a course of radiotherapy coupled with hormone blocking injections was recommended. The injections prevent the cancer from growing and the radiotherapy basically aims to fry it (not a medical term).

The twenty sessions of radiotherapy took place in August & September in Liverpool, close enough to travel there daily. The side effects were transient and I'm pretty much back to normal now.. The last PSA test came back as "undetectable", which means less than 0.2 units. So that indicates no active prostate cells of any type, and is as good as we could have hoped for. I have to be monitored quarterly and stay on the hormone injections for another 12-18 months, but I can cope with that.

We're just so grateful it was detected in time; so guys, get your PSA checked!

So that took care of most of our year. We had to cancel a trip to Madeira, but on the plus side we were able to finally take our first ever cruise (at the 4th attempt!). It was Norway for 7 nights and we enjoyed the experience. Positive things were the scenery and the port stops (we would like to see more of the country), and the crew who were so helpful and friendly. The food was mainly very good, but we just found the number of people on the ship a little overwhelming. Probably, I suppose, coming off the back of Covid lockdowns and social distancing.



*Olden, en route to the Briksdal glacier*



*Elise & Maddie (in pram), Oliver, Heath, Reuben, Adia, Poppy, Isaac & Ben.*

We also managed various trips to see family, and the highlight was probably getting all the children and grandchildren together for a day at Brockhole Visitor Centre, by Windermere. They all had fun and it was a very special time.

Lynne is well and has spent most of the year supporting me, and doing some great knitting.

In Sheffield, little Elise is now 18 months old and Susie is back at work full time. Fortunately she and Liam are able to work from home at least 2 days a week. Maddie will be 4 next week and is doing well and in pre-school full time. They seem very settled where they are.

Ben and Ruth continue to juggle work and 6 children (and a mad cockerpoo), with a little help from grandparents.



*Elise and Grandpa*



*Adia turns 11*



*Isaac*



*Heath*

Adia (Ben's eldest) is now 11 and in her first year at high school. Hard to believe. Little Isaac is becoming quite good at bossing the family around and lets you know if he's unhappy about anything!

Peter and Charlotte are still living near Cockermouth and Peter takes every opportunity to practice his landscape photography. He produces some stunning pictures and this year he made it through a couple of rounds of judging in the Natural Landscape Photographer of the Year competition, which was very encouraging. Charlotte had a nasty accident in February when she fell from a horse and sustained a bad knee injury and fracture. Her recovery has been slow but very successful and she now has her mobility back and is pain free.



*Pasties in Keswick.  
Charlotte, Peter & Lynne*



*Elise, Susie & Maddie*

This year we're going to Susie's for Christmas, so it *might* be a bit more relaxing than last year.

All that remains is to wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With our love

Ian & Lynne



*Ruth & Ben, Susie & Liam, Peter & Charlotte*