

Bridge House
Red Shute Hill
Hermitage
RG18 9QW

December 2021

Happy Christmas,

We hope that you, your family, and your friends are all well and managing to survive the tedium and restrictions imposed by Covid.

In November, the two of us visited our holiday home in France for the first time in nearly two years. The house had survived remarkably well, but we had two years of weeds to clear from the garden. The gravel drive had so many weeds it was almost indistinguishable from the lawn! But it was good to be back in the house and the outside was looking presentable by the end of our stay.

We had the first dump of snow a couple of days before we left. It was only about 1ft deep but the snow plough from the village had pushed a mound of snow from the main road into the entrance of our drive making it impossible to escape without doing some serious snow-shifting. Thank goodness we invested in a snow blower a few years ago.



A neighboring
farmhouse
through the
snow



In October, most of the Schofield family met up for the first time, in a long time, to see 'Amal meets Alice' in the streets of Oxford – a couple of giant puppets that were constructed by the same people who made the 'War Horse'. It depicted the journey made by Amal, a 9-year-old Syrian refugee girl, who made the trek, on foot, from Syria to re-join her family in Manchester. Jo was invited to the event as she had done some work for the organisers. Alice was chosen for the Oxford venue because 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' was written by Lewis Carol while he was living in Oxford.

In July, disaster struck Tim and Jo's home during heavy rains with a flood that turned their ground floor into an unwanted swimming pool. The family have been living in a mobile home in the grounds of the house (thankfully paid for by the insurance company) while work is carried out by builders. The villagers of Brettenham have been very kind, rallying round doing what they can to help.



Mike's brother, Paul, came to stay with us in the summer and was put to work in the garden! Here he is shredding hedge trimmings...

Paul has been writing his Memoirs over several years now and Mike gave him a hand proof-reading, formatting and ghost-writing. By the time Paul was ready to return home, the book was looking much more 'finished'. Tim was with us at the time, and he designed a book cover on graphic design software for Paul. Mike then printed the entire book and cover to give Paul an impression of what the finished publication would look like. One thing led to another and now Mike has a new hobby of 'book-binding' (hard-back and paper-back books) and reckons his books are of equal quality, at least, to any you can buy!

In other news, Jon and Blanca have bought a house in Oxford and are now getting to grips with decorating, renovating, and gardening. Jon's family will join his siblings' families over Christmas at Grandma and Grandpa's house in Hermitage, before flying to Spain to be with Abuela and Abuelo for the New Year. Janice's flat-packed greenhouse finally arrived in time for the start of the growing season. We had great fun assembling it, but less fun re-assembling it correctly! Lucy and Amelia have out-shone Janice with vegetable gardening with the help of their grandad in Malvern



Here is Wilf exercising in a local park



Oscar and Olivia have attained their green and yellow belts in Karate



Issy showing off her scarf knit by Grandma



Some of the Schofield's in Oxford, it is hard to believe that Issy and Amelia are now teenagers

Until next year, we wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy, safe 2022.

Mike & Janice