

Family News



John Bullwer

John Bullwer, Andrew's dad, passed away in October. He had supported living at home (thanks, Santok) with 24/7 callout from Andrew until July. After a short stay in Hospital, he moved to Magna Care Home in Wigston. Lis and Dave came up from Somerset many times, both visiting John Bullwer and going through our parent's archive together.



Jackie and John Orlebar

Lez's parents: Jackie was immobilised in plaster awaiting a spare part for her elbow for many months, repair due next year, whilst John Orlebar is slower at times.

Home

We've reclaimed the tiny music room which was being used for storage. Andrew hit the garden kerosene tank with the car. We've now replaced the leaking tank with a smaller capacity tank. The side fence blew down and was replaced by our neighbours. The leaning fence has survived for another year - with increased lean. The washing machine flooded the corner alcove. Changes to the plumbing now allow the washing machine to be removed without having to stand on your head first.

Cats

Olie Cat (Olivia) (7) is more social, but dislikes Ben Cat (12). There are occasional fights. They bring us shrew presents home which sometimes escape. We've also been brought a rabbit, but that wouldn't fit the cat flap. Ben has been beaten up by other cat(s). When we are away on holiday our cats are cared for by a peripatetic cat visitor (thanks, Sarah). Ben's previous carer occasionally visits him here. (Hi, Anne).



Olie Cat and Ben Cat



Stoneywell in Winter

Technology

We now have fibre-optic telecommunications, with less contention and it is usually possible to stream video. Andrew's moby failed, taking his phone numbers, texts and appointments with it. After sliding down Halstead Hill in snow, the 2017 gadget of the year is: all-season car tyres.

Music

Lez continues playing oboe with RCB (Rutland Concert Band), with a solo piece at the Summer Oakham open-air concert, a play day in Stamford, concerts at Oakham Castle, All Saints Oakham, and Langham Hall. She went to a woodwind quintet weekend at Alfriston. She is joining LCCB (Leicester Community Concert Band), again playing Oboe. For her birthday she chose a bassoon and is taking lessons. Andrew is trying to play (violin) at the Baptist Church in Oakham.

We've seen Steve Hackett in Nottingham, Peter Knight and Gigspanner in Tewkesbury, and Anderson, Rabin and Wakeman (from Yes) in Nottingham.

Lez

Is still a data manager at Leicester City Council and enjoys playing lots of music.

Andrew

Has been on call for John this year. He's sold books online, with little reward for much effort. He's been to several funerals of friends. He started (very) part-time work, Electoral Canvassing, magazine distribution and gardening work, leaving time to care for John and to help friends (Leanne & Keith and Helen) to move to a new house.

Cars and Bikes

The 2001 Suzuki is gone. Long live the 2014 Suzuki. There were electrical failures and gearbox problems, so we traded it in for a Splash. 68,000 miles. The Smart had 2 pages of advisories at MOT time and needed a new exhaust. Happily, it still carries on. 121,000 miles. "Andrew's" electric bike is still leased from RCC. 2500 miles. Andrew has had his ATB drive-chain rebuilt (thanks, John), but he's been too busy to use it yet.

Away from Home – Holidays, Days out and Fun Stuff



Herstmonceux Castle Gardens

We've visited Stoneywell (Winter and Summer), Hodsock Snowdrops, Leicester Riverside Festival, Melton Show, Barnsdale gardens, Castle Grimsthorpe Park, Pitsford Water and Hinckley town parks. We've had longer breaks in Eastbourne, visiting Herstmonceux Castle and Gardens as well as Pevensey Castle.

We've enjoyed meals at Launde Abbey, the Barn Oakham and Fenwick Leicester's restaurant. We've seen Beasts and Street Cat named Bob at cinemas.

We've been to Melton Country

Park with Lis and Dave. Andrew visited Wollaton Hall and Park, the Hemlock Stone in Nottingham, Richard III's memorial at Leicester Cathedral and went to Kim and Dan's Induction (as Baptist minister) in Southport. He also escaped to stay with Lis and Dave for a weekend.



Our snowy front garden

Health

Lez was poorly at the end of the year. Andrew has seen the dentist several times including antibiotic courses (with the problem finally removed over Easter). He's popped his knee and is using a stick.

Getting organised, Resolutions and Plans



Lez and Andrew

Andrew is working through arrears of jobs at home, has started cooking, and wants to cycle more and spend more quality time with Lez. We both want to declutter our home.

With our love and best wishes

Available online (in colour) at: www.bullwer.co.uk/xmas/xmas.html