

Christmas
2019

2019 was a good year for the Derbyshire branch of the Chisman family - although it has now become the Derbyshire & Leicestershire branch. Henrietta and I got married!

So a very good year for us, and we hope for a *Merry Christmas*, and a happy and prosperous New Year for ourselves, and for all our readers.

A Wedding

Well, not perhaps "A Wedding" so much as "The Wedding", or at least as far as our two families were concerned.

Having had to postpone our nuptials last year, Henrietta and I finally got married on May 30th this year.

We had hired Dovecliff Hall early on, so the venue was already sorted, but by January this year, that was about it.

But all was well, and almost everything was done by family.

Daughter Jo (an event planner) took the whole business in hand.

The invitations came from all Henrietta's grandchildren and were designed mostly by me and Henrietta.

Granddaughter (and chief bridesmaid) Lucy was organising the bridesmaids dresses,

Alice, her 13 year old younger sister, was making the cake.

Dan (son Aaron's Chinese partner) decided that she would like to learn flower arranging and do all of the flowers - church, and venue.

Six of the seven granddaughters were to be bridesmaids, and the grandsons plus my granddaughter Asha were to be ushers.

Son Neil would walk his mother down the aisle.

Aaron would give the "father of the bride" speech welcoming me to the family.

The table names were to be produced by my granddaughters Sophia and Asha.

Vicki would make the buttonholes.

My friends Mike and Earl would be the drivers.

It truly was a real family do and that made it very personal.

However, despite all this effort, 53 days before the wedding:-

The bride had a dress but no hat and no shoes.

The groom had shoes but nothing else.

And three of the six bridesmaids were waiting for their dresses to be returned to China for larger sizes.

Were we worried? Of course not. It wasn't going to be one of those weddings.

In the event, of course, it all came together beautifully and went off without a hitch.

The Knowle Farm *Newsletter*





Various members of the family treated this wedding with rather more gung-ho than perhaps the bride and groom felt was necessary. For example, Naresh decided to organise my stag do. Various friends, my brother, and my new family were invited, but it was a work day, so in the end only about half a dozen of us went to Thorpe Park for the day. And it was a great day. Friends were persuaded onto roller coasters that, normally, they would have run a mile from. And,

in the evening, we had a great meal at a pub in Windsor - at which Naresh had organised a "Terry Chisman Look-Alike" competition. Simple enough you might think. Blue jeans. Blue check shirt. Beard optional. Job Done. As judge though, I had to fail each of them in turn. One **plain** blue shirt, one **green** shirt, one shirt with **short sleeves**. In the event, the prize went to - ME!

A great day, enjoyed by all. And, no, we didn't win the Tiger!



Back in the Saddle

Some of you may know that Liz and I were glider pilots. I started at 16 (Liz a little later) and when Mike and Earl said that they fancied trying their hands at the sport too, a holiday was booked.

We flew at the Long Mynd in Shropshire and although the weather was variable, we got three good days in, staying up for an hour at a time. It's like riding a bike they say, once learned never forgotten - but also like a bike, I was a bit rusty.

I think they may be hooked, and we hope to repeat the exercise again next year.

Then the train to Salzburg with breakfast served at your table (and ordered by a phone app if desired).

Salzburg was lovely. Mozart, Mozart, the Sound of Music and Mozart again. Because we (well Henrietta) was planning on doing the Sound of Music tour, I felt I should at least watch the film before we went. In the event, I found the technical titbits from the guide interesting, and Henrietta loved it all. Inevitably, the entire coach (minus me) sang the score from start to finish.

We also went to a Mozart dinner concert where the orchestra were in full Mozart era costumes (and the wine list majored on bottles between €200 & €1,200!)

The final trip in Salzburg was to the Kehlsteinhaus, left (aka the Eagle's Nest) - Hitler's getaway in the Alps - which was amazing. That's snow you can see in the picture (left) but it was very beautiful. This was followed in the afternoon, by a trip down one of the salt mines for which Salzburg ("Salt Mountain") is famous.

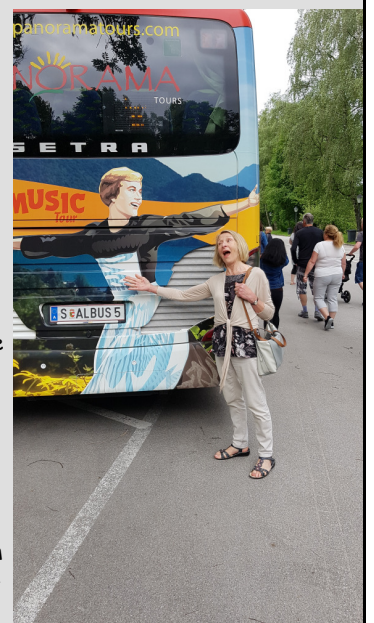
Then on to Vienna where we had a veritable feast of culture. An evening of Austrian music, visits to the Kunst Historisches Museum to see works by Klimt among oth-

ers, the Albertina for a wonderful collection of impressionist art, the Belvedere for more Klimt, and finally the Volksoper to hear Offenbach's "Orpheus in the Underworld" - (the can-can comes from the overture)

The finally, what I had planned as the finishing touch, dinner in one of the cabins on the famous Vienna Wheel (remember the scene from "The Third Man"?)

As your cabin reaches the bottom, the door opens and another delicious course is served, and the meal lasts about 90 minutes.

A memorable last dinner.



A Honeymoon

No wedding is complete without a honeymoon, and Henrietta and I had a splendid one. We decided to fly to Budapest (a place Henrietta has always wanted to see), then take the train to Salzburg

(for a little Mozart), and finally on to Vienna (for Sacher Torte - well, for me anyway).

What a trip it was. We spent three days wandering round Budapest by public transport as it is completely free to EU citizens over the age of 65. Nothing was organised, just freestyle sight-seeing.



A China Adventure

As a 15 year-old young woman, Henrietta read *The Good Earth*, a novel by Pearl S. Buck that dramatizes family life in a Chinese village in the early 20th century. It so mesmerised her that she determined there and then that one day, she *would* visit China. Just before her late husband, Gerry, died, he made her promise that, although they had never managed it, she would one day go.

Well, in October that long held dream came true. We went to China.

Now, I am very happy to organise holidays - indeed I love it - but organising something in China is a step to far for me, so we went to Audley Travel - a company specialising in individually guided tours - and they organised a great trip. We had our own English speaking guides, one to meet us at every station, take us round, and put us on the next train.

We flew to Beijing, where our guide took us round Tiananmen square, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace. We drove two hours out of the city to visit

part of the Great Wall that is less visited and had a few hours in almost splendid isolation on the Wall (in contrast to the more popular places where there are so many people that you have to keep to the right.)

We then went to Xi'an on China's splendid new high speed train (top speed 300kph - or about 190mph) where we saw the Terracotta Army. The Army is amazing, and the sheer size is difficult to catch in a photo. The figures are life sized, individually made and decorated, and there are estimated to be 8,000 soldiers, 500 horses, 130 chariots, and 150 cavalry horses. They are guarding the Emperor's tomb, and because the location



proved. An exiting last stop, and a very different place to the rest of China.

Our main impression of China was simply the size of everywhere. The population of Beijing alone is 21.5 million (the *entire* UK is about 67 million). Xi'an - a modest sort of place by Chinese standards has a population of 6 million, only a little smaller than London. Huge cities.

had to be kept secret, the thousands of artisans involved in it's creation had to die when it was finished. It was not a great time to be alive.

Next, again by high speed train, we moved on to Chengdu for the Panda Research Station - and who doesn't love Pandas. We saw many pandas - premature babies, infants, adolescents, and many adults. It was delightful.

Then on another train to Guilin where we had a river trip and a quiet day in a delightful little hotel by the river, and finally on to Hong Kong.

We were a little worried about the demonstrations (which our guide referred to as "activities" in order not to scare tourists away) but friends with friends who live there all reported that it was quite safe - as indeed it

Another surprise was that the Chinese we met and spoke to are not as upset by living under what we perceive as a rather despotic regime as we would be. They were generally accepting, and seemed happy. And although there was undoubtedly poverty, we saw none of the grinding, dehumanising, poverty that we saw in India for instance.

And, everywhere you look there are huge, huge infrastructure projects underway. The high speed rail network is expanding dramatically, and in every built up area you pass on the train the skyline is filled with high-rise tower blocks. And for every existing block, there is another under construction. Huge building works.

It was a punishing schedule, but we wouldn't have missed a minute.



SNAP! Of the Year



Ancient Joke of the Year

There has been recent news about the shortage of archaeologists.

1. "It will result in less skulldiggery" says one reader.
2. Another says that when his daughter studied archaeology he passed on the advice that it is the only career where the rule is that when you're in a hole, keep digging.



More Wedding

Below, from a book of cartoons called "Love and Passion for the Elderly" kindly given as a wedding present by a friend. This is one of the less rude ones.



Naughty but Nice

The following Limericks were submitted to The Times just after Boris was made PM and was being compared to the Donald.

They are a little rude, but The Times deemed them fit to be published, so I deemed them sufficiently funny to be included here...

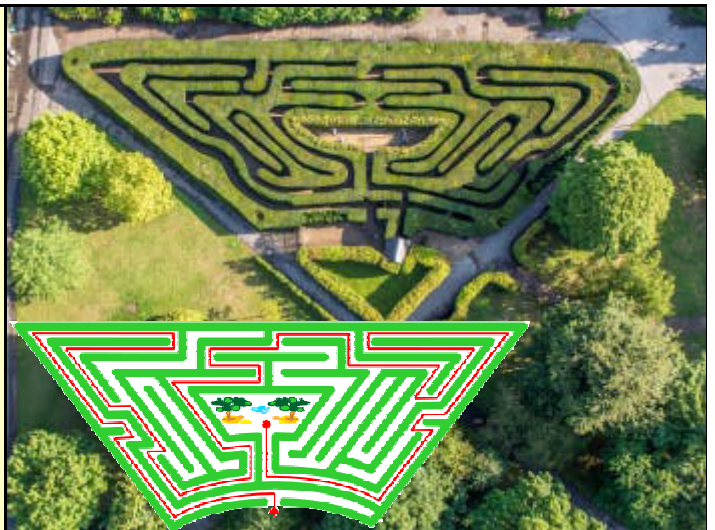
*When Boris and Donald first start
To sit down for a real heart-to-heart
The PM may strain
When he has to explain
That in England a "trump" is a fart.*

*Though Trump is reputedly thick
His responses are often quite quick
So he'll sit in his seat
And compose his next tweet:
"In the US a Johnson's a prick."*

Spot the Error

Yes, Henrietta travelled to her wedding in the front of the car with the chauffeur, rather than where she should have been, in the back with the man who was going to give here away.

Trying to talk Henrietta out of the idea that I needed a new suit for the wedding - "The idea of getting a new suit at 75 is just ridiculous".
Henrietta - "The whole idea of getting married at 75 is just ridiculous".



Leading Astray

We visited Hampton Court this year and decided to try the maze. Now, obviously, just walking into the maze and trying to get to the centre was not worth even thinking about so:-

The guide to Hampton Court that they give you at the entrance has a map of the maze, so I tried to follow that, only to find, to Henrietta's amusement, and my chagrin, that the map isn't right. I suppose I should have thought of that!

So - time for some technology. I opened up Google maps on my phone (which shows where you are) and I overlaid it with the satellite view of the area. Great!

There was the maze, and this time the map was correct because it was a satellite photo of the actual thing.

However. Those of a technical bent will realise that, while military satellite navigation is incredibly accurate (to less than a foot I believe), that available to us civilians is less so. To about 5 feet.

Now, no doubt some of you will be beginning to see the problem. The hedges in the maze are considerable thinner than five feet, so although I had an accurate map, I still couldn't tell **exactly** where I was - was I this side of the hedge (in which case go this way), or that side of the hedge (in which case go the other way).....

Technology failed me. Quite a blow.

Sobering Thought of the Year

Stonewall's transgender stance threatens women's rights, said leading lesbians and gay men in a letter to The Sunday Times. An impassioned post from Ruth Stewart summed up your reaction: "Stonewall seems to encourage people with penises and testes to do what they have done down the ages: try to dictate to people born with wombs and ovaries how they must think... Stereotypical male behaviour that most men have dropped. But not, it seems, the supporters of Stonewall."

Happiness Is...

My 24 year old niece hugging an elephant in Thailand as she travels the world.

