

One Way Ticket. We managed to drive to Italy for the 2nd half of August, but our faithful 16 year old Fiat Ulysse decided to give up on us in the land of her brand, so we had to fly back. Here she is being rescued from a garden centre near Verbania where the alternator belt had come off, but the problems - and repair estimates - soon escalated beyond economic sense, so she had to be scrapped.



Rudolph's Collar. Santa needs to make a chain collar for Rudolph, his antlered assistant. After much searching in the polar distribution centre, Santa finds four pieces of gold chain, each with three heavy links, which he remembers Rudolph's great-grandfather wearing in old photos of Christmases past.



Now he can see that together the links are enough to go round the reindeer's neck, but - oh dear! - only three links will open! On Christmas Eve, with his sled already stacked high with presents and ready to slide, poor Santa still can't see how to join the pieces of chain together! Can you help him?

SOHWIZE TIOS

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This year – unsurprisingly - there's a dearth of holiday snaps to share, but we can bring you our latest family news and much more, including - in the centre spread - a special family baby quiz with hidden message! Once completed (or guessed), you'll find the latest arrival, William's great niece **Clara**, born in Edinburgh in September, the fourth of that generation of the family!

They say tsunamis lure you onto the beach as the sea recedes while the wave is still a long way off, and so it was with 2020, with everything going so well in January and February while Covid was still a long way off. And then it hit.

So began a grim year of lockdowns. We all got the social distancing habit in wave 1, but then the UK government came up with "eat out to spread covid to help out" in August that undoubtedly hastened wave 2, so it was back to lockdown. At last things picked up in November, with an adult being elected to the White House and, as we went to press, positive news from several vaccine trials.

Grim it may have been, but clouds have silver linings, and for William this was exploring more of North London, including new routes through Queen's Wood, the little known New River (more inside) and the River Lea.

Bridge News. On a lockdown walk along the Thames path, we were surprised to find Marlow Bridge that not only looks like the Széchenyi Chain Bridge in Budapest (in fact it was the prototype for it), but was built by the same engineer, William Tierney Clark. Our family connection is with the construction manager (of the Hungarian bridge) Adam Clark (no relation to Tierney), through marriage. Specifically, Grandad's great uncle Géza Hajós, brother of his maternal grandmother Hermina Hajós, married Nelly Clark, the grand-daughter of Adam Clark.



What we've learned from Covid. When plants are pruned, they need even more pruning later. The important people are not the ones we thought were important. The more pot-plants are re-potted, the more they need re-potting. A lockdown in time saves tens of thousands. You can only do so much pruning and re-potting in a town garden, but a re-potting in time might just save your mind.

Sale of Villa Gelsomina. In March, just 6 days before full Italian lockdown, we completed the sale of our villa in Italy. Having designed and built the villa and rented it for 15 seasons, and recognising the immense amount of work to continue to rent, run and maintain the five apartments, pool and grounds, we decided the best days of holiday renting were already behind us, and with a heavy heart accepted an offer from a big Swiss family. The project brought us and many clients immense pleasure, but we will particularly treasure the times we shared it with friends and family. We won't forget the views and those sunsets - but we had a few jigsaws made up of some of our favourite shots, just in case. Here's one of Monte Rosa we did one long October afternoon (and evening!) in Manchester...



With the sale of the villa, William really is retired, though he still rents three apartments for others at the lake, and we've kept our own apartment in Vacciago.

Parakeet Update. Further to the report in the 2019 *Schwitzer Times* on how ring-necked parakeets had taken over Hampstead Heath, this year they are literally everywhere: on our lockdown walks we have seen and heard these noisy parrots all over Highgate, Central London and out in the countryside. Takeover complete!



Enfield Loop. The New River Path is varied: often along the grassy banks of the canal, but at Bush Hill Park we walked between parts of a golf course, then down to Enfield Park. Beyond the M25 you walk next to fields. We particularly liked this section through the old part of Enfield – not least because the Crown & Horseshoes is rather conveniently located right on the canal...



“Neither New nor a River”. In the Autumn, William and Edward walked four sections of the New River, the little-known waterway completed in 1613, part financed by King James I to bring fresh water from Hertfordshire to London, which still provides 8% of London’s drinking water. The original course ran for 39 miles from Ware through Waltham Abbey, Enfield, Southgate, Palmers Green, Hornsey (passing in front of Hornsey Church Tower with Joan’s memorial tree), through the streets known as the “ladder” off Wightman Road, and on via Duncan Terrace in Islington (the park down the middle of that street marks where the canal once flowed), to Rosebery Avenue. From there the water flowed in wooden water mains (interlocking drilled tree trunks!) into London. There are a number of engineering feats along the way, including aqueducts over brooks and the M25. Not all sections are walkable, but the New River Path is marked to provide a continuous walk even where the canal is underground or inaccessible.



Parallel Path, noun (rare). Secondary path running parallel to an established route, the effect is similar to a double rainbow, though the cause is probably different. Parallel Paths are known to appear during pandemics, with many examples seen in 2020 on Hampstead Heath, Parliament Hill Fields and Primrose Hill. Photo shows an extremely rare treble path near Highgate Ponds.



Pandemic Problems No. 94



“OK, which one of you just called me an asshole?”

Edward worked from home for the Department for Education from when the pandemic hit, and mid-year took up regular daily walks. In the summer inter-lockdown period he invested in a barbecue for his balcony.



Yasmin's make-up work ebbed and flowed as the various restrictions on beauty therapy and weddings came in and lifted, giving her time to develop the business. She was eligible for government self-employed support, and bookings are good for 2021. Here she is as the subject of a photo-shoot herself for a change!



How far do we reach? The *Schwitzer Times* continues to reach parts other newsletters simply can't get to. Here enjoying last year's edition are Yasmin in Manchester, Aunt Cuki on the train somewhere between Vienna and Budapest, Cousin Tamás Hajós & Zsuzsi in Budakeszi, and Remo as far away as Hampstead.



Garden Fun. As the pandemic began to ease, like many we cautiously invited friends into our garden for meals. Here we are in June making pancakes in the garden in Highgate with friends Elizabeth (capturing the moment) and Remo.



Brexit Revelations No. 173. "Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former" (Einstein).

St Michael's News. Edward's school friends from age 4 have kept in touch, despite their different careers. Here are some of them, only 24 years since Reception Class! From left around table: Alasdair, Tommy, Hugo, William, Edward, Alfie and Max.



What does Online Graduation look like? In January, William began tutoring two maths students, continuing online through lockdown. One student achieved a First, here is Saida (top left, with baby) at her graduation, beautifully done in groups, so you only saw those graduating - and could hear the applause!



