

The Fourth Estate 2014

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Permanently No Cards!



As usual we didn't send Christmas cards last year and donated what we would have spent on them to ActionAid. This year the money we'll save will be donated to the destitute refugees and asylum seekers in Bolton who are being cared for by BRASS (Befriending Refugees and Asylum Seekers) - <http://www.brassbolton.org>. Why not help too by either donating to BRASS yourself or by giving to another deserving charity?

Growing Up Far Too Quickly

That lovely little baby, Mr. Jack Morris is now a 4½ year old fulltime school boy and hasn't been on the naughty mat yet (or so we're told!). In fact he seems to be doing rather spiffingly and us old codgers get to take him swimming on a Sunday morning whilst dad is off tandem cycling around Lancashire and mum is doing whatever mums do on a Sunday morning!



And Not a Sprout in Sight

So where's the fun European destination for New Year? Did we hear you say Barcelona, Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris? In fact we headed for Brussels and had a wonderful few days seeing 2013 out and 2014 in. The food, the sights, the people (and wonderful beers and chocolates) were excellent and we'd



highly recommend it. Our visit made us very pleased to be European!

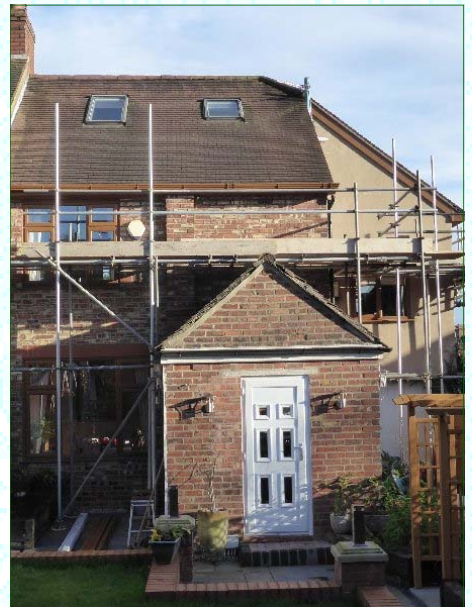
A Haven of Peace?



About two years longer than planned and, of course, way over budget we present (roll of drums) - John and Noelene's new garden, complete with raised beds, patios to catch the morning and evening sun, a greenhouse, new fences and (still to be built) a wildlife mini-wetland and outdoor kitchen. And we've already had delicious home-grown organic veggies!

Not Again!

If you've been around the real Fourth Estate in the last few weeks you'd have seen a familiar site. Yes, the house is "scaffolded" again. But thankfully nothing major this time — just plastic (yes, you purists, "plastic") soffits and fascias being put in so that yours truly won't have to break his neck clambering up ladders to paint in future. As if I would, anyway!



And we're also trying to get everything done in time for the great day in December 2015 when the old codger will be FREE from the demands of work — YEAH 😊

Talking of "Old Codgers"

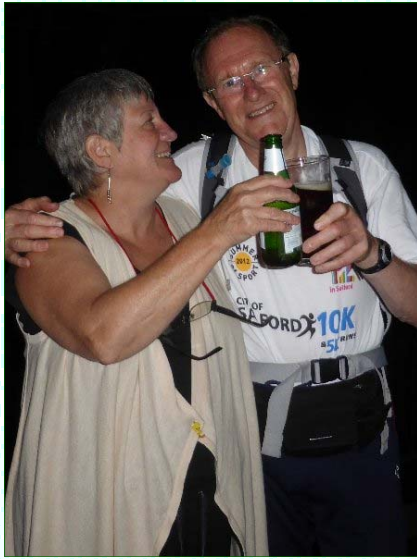
The 1985 IBRG London Marathon team were reunited at a conference in Lodz, Poland this September and although we don't run a great deal these days we do enjoy the sport of "talking about running" over a beer or three! *"Age shall not weary them"*



Left to right — John, Malcolm, Dennis, Glyn

Around and Around

Long distance footpaths this year but as long as the legs and joints keep going so will the old fart! So this year's challenges were day walks - 35 miles of the Fairtrade Way, the 42 mile Oldham Boundary Trail and the 52 mile Bolton Rotary Way — the complete Bolton Boundary in a day, starting at 5:00am and finishing at 11:00pm in the dark! It "Bolton sunshined" (i.e. rained) most of the way too. So a huge thanks to the support team of The Boss, Mr. G. and Mrs. B. and for the well deserved beer at the end! Who knows where those feet will take me in 2015.



Travels

Now let's see — well, after Bruxelles for new year, we enjoyed the Spanish spring sun with the Titters, Goughie and Mrs B. in March had a pleasant long weekend with them and Dawn and Jon in the Lake District to celebrate someone's further "coming of age" (yes, okay John's officially a pensioner now!) in June and in July the six of us headed to the isles for 12 days in the utterly sublime Outer Hebrides. Finally, in October, the two of us had a few days in Athens tacked on to the autumn IBRG (www.ibrg.org) conference.

With a very special event (i.e. the general election) next May there's an embargo on holidays other than a trip to Bilbao over Easter. But it seems that in July we'll be celebrating Ed Miliband becoming PM on a boat in the Norfolk Broads —

somewhere we've always wanted to visit but have never been to. We've been given to understand that it's compulsory to moor close to a good pub each night! 😊



Maybe Next Time

Well, we continue to fight the good fight. Noelene is now coordinating the Bolton West general election campaign (Labour majority 92!) and John stood for council for about the 13th time in the ward where we live (yes, the guy on his right with the blue rosette won yet again!). But we are undaunted and with John having been selected for a possibly winnable seat the revolution could start here on May 7th!



Sounds and Tales

It's been a good year for all sorts of music and events including Fairport Convention, Mike and the Mechanics, Runrig's 40th anniversary tour, Rick Wakeman's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and Jeff Wayne's *War of the Worlds* amongst the best music. Noelene saw the Iranian comedian Omid Djalili, we went to a benefit for the Working Class Movement Library with Maxine Peake, Sheila Hancock and Mike Joyce and saw Dawn French's wonderful one woman show full of wit, some pathos and some righteous anger! Noelene did another cookery demonstration (she's aiming for Masterchef, you know) at the Farnworth World of Food event and met John Torode at the Bolton Food Festival.

Want to Read More?

Yes, we've run out of space again but there is much, much more on our new Fourth Estate website - www.23fourth.org/2014. Our love, best wishes, a very happy Christmas, a peaceful New Year and we look forward to keeping in touch, or even seeing you in the flesh in 2015.

