

# Letter From Lisvane

## Christmas 2021

So - what have we been doing this past year? That's a really good question...

Lisvane is changing, that's for certain. At the end of our Close, the old house bequeathed to the church was demolished, and a new church community centre is being built. This is going to take a while, and has been taking a while, but the walls are now at least going up. New housing estates are being built not too far away; some already have houses being lived in whilst the rest of the estate is still being finished.

At the bottom of our garden, the old smithy site (the smithy was demolished years ago) is having a 4/5 bedroom house built on it. There isn't a garden to speak of given the size of the plot. We've lost the fence put up 20 years ago, as the gradient of the land, and the need for a retaining wall, meant a new one had to be installed, a cantilevered reinforced concrete retaining wall. This meant we had a temporary wire panel 'fence' in place, and that the ground did slump a little after a heavy rainfall. However, we've now got a new fence and a new border which is being treated as a blank canvas - most of what was there went when the old fence came down.



Bran is still retired, though in the early Autumn she helped out at a local school with a garden based on the 23rd Psalm. Recently she's been helping make puppets for nativity scenes ("Does this look like a crown to you?") and has even stitched fairy lights into a blackout curtain. (Probably a contradiction in terms, but there you go.)

She's now invigilating the miniature donkeys which are accompanying the puppets on their visits to various Cardiff primary schools. An interesting change of vocation, though she does report there is still some element of kicking and biting.

David is still working, more-or-less full time from home. There's the odd dash into the office for those rare things that can't be done remotely, like helping collate letters and put them in envelopes, or putting labels on envelopes. A new facility involving the ability to print almost directly into the postal service is being actively considered. Otherwise no more commuting, no dicing with the rush-hour Cardiff traffic.

We're both fully vaccinated, and by the time you read this, boosted too. The first jab we both suffered a little, Bran more than David. The booster was for David like being punched in the arm - not the actual jab, but the after-effects starting near on an hour later. Otherwise our health has remained remarkably good, possibly because of lack of contact with school kids and work colleagues!

We haven't got away much this year. Our February trip to the Lake District was not even booked thanks to various lockdowns, though Bran managed to get away with friends for a week in June. They had a lovely cottage in Pooley Bridge to themselves, and much walking was done, along with boat trips.

We did manage to get up to Aberystwyth a good few times, both together and separately, to check in on the house and oversee repair works. It's a good place to get away from it all, so it is being made use of.



David even managed to get away to Norfolk this year, back to Walcott and the Seals Hotel (formerly the Keswick). It was a bit ironic that the day he went up was the day the infamous British petrol panic buying crisis struck, but he managed to find petrol in Norfolk the day he arrived, and then did only 30 miles or so in the car before heading back to Wales. He did a lot of walking, quite a lot of it on beaches, saw some seals, and on the last night saw a glorious sunset with a complete double rainbow. On the way home he



stopped off at a local butchers for bacon and sausages, and was remembered as “that bloke from Cardiff”.

We couldn't get away to France this year - too many tests required, passes, uncertainty etc - but we're hoping that in 2022 we'll be able to go again. Although, our ability to stuff the car full of wine has been curtailed by Brexit regs.

The Norfolk trip was the first long distance trip in our new car - we'd only picked it up the Tuesday before. We've now got a Toyota Corolla hybrid, which is good fun to drive and has more bells and whistles (and a few odd beeps) than we know what to do with. So they've been turned off. This is our first automatic, so it's taking a bit of getting used to. There's also the small point that Bran thinks it has a passing resemblance to an Imperial Stormtrooper...

The Skoda Octavia, which had served us well for 10 years, met a bit of an ignominious end. There was an unfortunate meeting with a builder's van, but this was swiftly repaired. What really did for it was Covid and Brexit and the 3-month wait of a master brake cylinder.

There's been a renewed interest in Lego - or to put it correctly, David has renewed an interest in Lego. Apart from a new Toyota, we've now got one of the new Land Rovers - that took a month to build on and off. There's a bonsai tree and a Christmas Wreath, which necessitates a second glance from anyone who comes to the door.

Gwen has had a good year too. Though she's 11 now, and hasn't climbed the curtains in a while, she's still limber if not quite so lithe as she used to be. We always find it amazing how regulated her body clock is - 6:30am is start of breakfast nagging time (despite the fact she'll not get fed till near 8), midday is start of lunch nagging time, and 4pm is start of dinner nagging time. These times are consistent over the yearly clock changes - no idea how she does this. After both of us being at home now more or less permanently for the best part of two years, she's got used to three meals a day, and we've had to adjust her diet accordingly. Otherwise the danger is she'd become a big furry balloon.



Our main reason for cheerfulness is that our own families have stayed pretty healthy - here's hoping that you are too!

## Best Wishes to you all for Christmas and for 2022

Our address remains unchanged at  
7 Church Close, Lisvane, Cardiff (Wales) CF14 0SL

The phone number is still 0(+44)29 2075 5253

Our email addresses remain [branwen@dpabbott.com](mailto:branwen@dpabbott.com) and [david@dpabbott.com](mailto:david@dpabbott.com)  
and David's website is still <http://www.dpabbott.com>

Gwen's interest in computers has expanded to know when a video conference is in progress, then to make as big an entrance and impact as her small body will allow.