

# The English Letter

June 2019

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I write this from Ilkley, being our second stay here since I last updated this brief overview of our time back in the UK.

But first let me talk about the first stop in April.

It slipped by very quietly and with little or no pomp or indeed grandeur or elevated ceremony.

Melanie had finally accepted the invitation made by Alex some 20 years before.

By this I refer to one of [getting married](#).

It was never going to be a “normal” affair as we boarded the train from different stations to link up for the journey to Bradford registry office.



Those “flowers” you see are in fact made up of the pages from a favourite book of Melanie’s, namely, *The Colour Purple*.



A picnic lunch on the moors and a champagne charged buffet dinner finished the day although there was much else, both before and afterwards. But in keeping with the spirit of the event I will say no more.

I did say last time that Andrea had planned another trip [to Wales and this Easter break](#) was soon upon us. Although we were all involved in the selection of the location the finer details were carefully researched and organised by her.

This is good because it does tend to revolve around the capabilities of the two younger members being Courtney and Andrea. It thus takes us to adventures that we might not have selected as 70 odd year olds, with damaged joints.

This realisation was immediately brought to being with the challenging walk, scramble and climb in order to reach Worms Head before we had even reached our destination in Pembrokeshire.

Pictures never really do justice to the experience but I try my best with a picture or two as the three of us tackled this journey to the island that could only be reached during low tide. This also meant that we had a time limit. Bev had decided that this was not for her and settled for the tea room and views.



The arrow points to our destination which we duly accomplished as witnessed by the other pic from the top of the head.



Our base was the YHA at Manorbier.



As you can see this is a modern building, which is unusual, but it sits close to the cliffs and the Pembrokeshire Coast path. As ever we enjoyed our self-catering stay at a YHA.



I will not go into any details other than to say the weather was great and we managed to visit St. David's, Pembroke Castle, Tenby and the island of Caldey. In between there were the walks along the coast from the YHA.

St. David's Cathedral is the final resting place of the patron saint of Wales.

Viking raids finally ended with the destruction of the Cathedral in 1087 but the Normans had it rebuilt. Thanks.

A tour of Pembroke Castle was impressive and we started to appreciate the history of early arrivals of people to Wales and the different tribal backgrounds that today sees a quite softer accent in this SW part of Wales.



Manorbier has its own castle and beach with coastal walks as seen here.



I do need to talk about the trip to Caldey Island as the enormous tidal variations necessitated some ingenious means of gaining access to the ferry.



A 2 hour walk around the island was undertaken using the impressive monastery as the focal point.

But back at Monorbier we managed some more walks including this impressive view of us on top of the near -by summit. Yes, look closely and you will see us there.



I am writing this and watching the Cricket World Cup at the same time. I am not going to talk sport but ahead of us are the Ladies Soccer World Cup and the European Nations Tournament. We also have a part in the French Open. I am a slave to this bombardment of world class events on TV and other electronic devices.

I have also noticed that we have received some visitors from the USA. [Donald Trump](#) is a controversial and divisive figure but has been regally received as befitting a guest of the Queen. He will have talks today with [Theresa May](#) but as we know she will step down next week as the process of electing a new leader of the Conservative party begins.

In the background lurks [Brexit!](#) Unresolved for now. The European elections showed a clear rejection of both Labour and the Tories as people moved to parties who had a clear message. This meant Farage and the Brexit Party came top followed by the “remainers” of the Lib Dems. Yet the numbers seemed to indicate that more votes went to those parties who wanted to remain.

The new PM (and country) will have to tackle the conundrum that is Brexit v the best interest of the UK.

I do not know the answer although I am a remainder until such time as the truth can be told about the options and consequences facing us.

The timing of the Trump visit is not arbitrary as the Allies gather to remember and pay homage to all those connected to the [D Day](#) landings. NATO and the EU need to be seen with the perspective of peace in Europe during this time.

So...I have talked a tiny, tiny bit of politics and will now touch on another no, no, being The Church.

When you travel around historic UK it is impossible to not visit old churches e.g. St. David’s and castles e.g. Pembroke and they even get a look in back here in the old Roman occupied town of Ilkley. But this gentle mink and manure outpost of Leeds and Bradford attracted us for different reasons. [Ilkley](#) is a cultural spot and we were enticed into the local church by way of a £3 ticket to

attend poetry readings that had been converted to music and song. They were all about the moon because in 1969 mankind landed there for the first time.

I should add that the £3 also covered the cost of a glass of wine at the interval. It was an excellent demonstration of how churches can relate to the community, even secular in nature.



Yes, we are back again.

This time to dog sit as Melanie and Alex head off to France.

Ilkley has a little cinema that has popped up over the last year or so and is modelled quite differently from those built before the arrival of Sky or Netflix. Armchairs or sofas provide the lounge like conditions as one sips a coffee and nibbles a slice of cake on the small table provided.

We had been given tickets to the Silver screening at 11 am that, as the name implies, is aimed at those who have a few years behind them. We have already booked for the next Silver event in about 10 days' time.

But I do want to mention the film we saw. It was [Tolkien](#).

We thought it was wonderful in so many ways from the horror of WWI to the view of a GB that offered a look into the old values of honesty, duty, courage and a belief that one could change the world for the better. Along the way was the most interesting story of Tolkien's time during this period and the arrival of his novels. By coincidence (perhaps not) he was born in Bloemfontein South Africa.



But before they departed for France they did get us two oldies up to the [Yorkshire Dales](#) for a walk with Tamba. Tamba is now an old dog by way of years, and thus our pace was hers



which suited us only too well. Some pics record the day with the weather cooling as we headed upwards. The sign post talks of the Three Peaks, of much fame, but it is included merely to indicate where we were.



Whilst up here in Yorkshire we took a day out to see fellow [Old Camdenian](#) Richard Brown and his wife Jo. We talked of old times when we met up in SA and the general state of the world with no remarkable conclusions. But I mention this because Richard presented the OC's with an old Camdenian blazer, cap and tie which I quickly got him to model resulting in this pic.

That's all folks.

May you all be healthy and happy wherever you are.

Alan and Bev June 4 2019.