

Dear Friends,

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Advent 2019



We wish you a very happy Christmas season, and hope that you have good memories of 2019. Facebook chose photos to remind us of our year. The selected photos are blighted cherry leaves; 12-year-old Polos; '81 things to do with potatoes', and a booklet called 'Decisions, decisions'.



If that doesn't tell you enough about what we've been up to, try our quiz. Guess which of us:



1. Gave a talk on plastic pollution?
2. Was asked if they were over 21 when shopping?
3. Wrote a packing list with a whole column for toiletries?
4. Ate snails?
5. Got hurt by a grape?
6. Published a book?
7. Travelled unnoticed by train to Cardiff and back, before being discovered by a young man working in Nottingham?
8. Made the Premier Radio news headlines for a day?
9. Acquired a large old family bible?
10. Sold a house?
11. Share clothes with each other?
12. While we are guessing, can you guess how we took a 14-hour journey and changed our watches both forwards and backwards on the same day?



Answers overleaf

We think there was a bit more to our year than that as well. What about the electric toothbrush which decided to turn itself on every hour during the night, waking us up, until we threw it into the garden? Or Jamie performing as Cogsworth the clock in 'Beauty and the Beast', or sailing on the River Trent when it wasn't too high? Or Dave as the high priest in a surprising production of 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. Or the woefully misinformed 'Where is the public toilet?' phone app?



Or Debbie answering French street vendors in Spanish. Or, on a trip teaching for the EU, saying 'Dobra Dan' to a passenger next to her on a train from Prague to Slovakia, then sitting in silence for 4 hours as that was all the Czech she knew, until just before the end of the journey both realised they spoke English. The other lady turned out to be an American who was teaching English with a Christian organisation in Ostrava, just as David's sister did years ago. She who was delighted to find an English speaking Christian she could speak to about how to decide whether to stay there for longer. If only it wasn't nearly the end of the journey.



Answers to the quiz

1. Jamie
2. Debbie
3. Dave
4. Dave
5. Jamie choked on a grape, and Debbie was burnt by a grape. Dangerous things!
6. Debbie co-wrote a book with Tony Horsfall, called 'Resilience in life and faith' (BRF). Contact us if you would like a reduced price copy.
7. Dave's phone; most grateful to the kind young man.
8. Jamie (campaigning to reduce flying in short-term missions).
9. None of us. Thanks to friends' help we returned a bible to one of another family's descendants.
10. Dave sold his aunt's house in Malvern after she suddenly passed away last Boxing Day. Dave and his sister were glad to be able to be with her at the end, the last of their mother's sisters (pictured in the 1990s), all much missed.
11. Debbie borrows clothes from both Jamie and Dave.
12. We also travelled by train to the south of France on the day British Summer Time ended. We moved our watches an hour backwards, then an hour forward again at night when BST ended. Always keen to add to our list of countries, we briefly visited Monaco and Italy.



Long train journeys are related to our attempt to avoid flying where possible to reduce our carbon footprint. Our Climate Action also included taking part in a funeral for the planet and a 'die-in' at the Greenbelt festival, led by Extinction Rebellion and Christian Aid together. Do read the IPCC report to find out why we're concerned. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>

Also at Greenbelt, Debbie went to a Murray Watts play about how awful round-robin Christmas letters are.

That must be a suitable point, having avoided politics (did we?), for us to stop and instead invite you to let us know about your lives.

We are sincere in sending you our best wishes at this time when we remember how God was made manifest in Jesus, a man for shady times.



If you're up for a challenge in how you celebrate Christmas, try <https://adventconspiracy.org/>

With love,

David, Debbie & Jamie Hawker

