

Christmas 2018 Newsletter from the Lovelock Family in Sunninghill on www.gpss.co.uk/xmas18.htm



Hi All ! I've been writing these online Christmas Newsletters since 1995 . Many of us prefer paper, and there is a more printer-friendly version on xmas18p.htm and xmas18p.pdf . However, paper will not follow links or play videos - yet ! :-)

Here is a recent picture of Samantha, Homer, and June, after we put up the Christmas lights. June retired this year, after 11 years with Axon. She can now spend more time helping Robin with housework*, gardening, and going out to enjoy ourselves. * Robin's friends know how much time he spends on "women's work" like hoovering and dusting ;-)



Our [Garden](#) , neglected for over thirty years, has certainly occupied much of Robin's time this year - helped by some friends from [Chobham](#) , to do the "hard graft" like shifting soil and laying slabs.

We now have a french door from a spare bedroom, to give easier access to our old flat [Roof](#). You can see Robin's old [Telescope](#) and

the path to the new Summerhouse. June hopes this will become the home for Robin's robot boat stuff, currently filling the Games Room, but this may take a little more time - as will work on the house, including a new kitchen. But before the kitchen we need a new flat roof with windows ;-)



GPS still plays a part in our lives, in hobbies such as robot boats and [Geocaching](#) . This video from 2001 was found on an old VHS tape. It shows the BBC World TV broadcast that went into 200 million homes, starring young Geocachers Sam and Poppy. Weren't they cute ? How kids change :-)

Snoopy's Robot Boats have been trying to cross the Atlantic since the BBC broadcast our first attempt in 12. Since then Peter and Dick have been key Team-Joker members. Snoopy's 2017 Atlantic Attempt in Boat 11 was VERY brief: just one minute, before the mast broke in the second tumble in the surf ! We took another seaside trip on 7th January, but chickened out because the surf was too strong - but we did have a nice train ride :-)

After repairs then delays due to holidays, and other things, we tried again in October, after tests on Bray Lake - including in Storm Callum ! The October Atlantic Attempt was aborted due to a fault in the SPOT SatComs tracker. This is now fixed, so see the [Snoopy](#) page for the latest news and LOTS of videos :-)



Saturday 17th February: June's first trip to The Brookland Museum: June enjoyed looking around, taking photographs, and Robin chatted to grumpy old guys, some of whom, he'd met before. They chatted about things like the Wellington Bomber, recovered from Loch Ness in 1985. Robin's ex- [EASAMS](#) Tornado mates had refurbished things like the radio - it worked when dried out and the battery recharged ! Also, some things still on the secret list, like the clockwork bomb release timer. Don't worry Dave (ex-Engineer) and Oscar (ex-RAF), I'll be careful what I say here ;-)

After checking out things like historic aircraft, and buses, they ended the trip at the nearby fairground. Robin used his rifle shooting skills, forgotten since the 1960s, when he first fired a rifle in The City University rifle range, in the cellar. Eileen, manning the stand, would not let Robin use a higher calibre than the 177 air rifle, but gave him the little boggle eyed doggy when he won ! :-)



On Sunday 25th February, Robin and June made a brief visit to [Church Cottage](#) NGS Garden, open for charity, in fascinating [Long Marston](#) . They then had a lovely long chat with old friends Fritz and Janet Wurstlin in nearby historic [Tring](#) . Robin found these pictures taken in 2016, obviously near Remembrance Day. It seems Robin gave them several bottles of the famous KatzPiss German wine.



Sunday 4th March 2018 at [Basildon Park](#) : Robin polishes his skills on the Old Joanah (Piano for google translate). Click on pictures to enlarge.



Saturdays 10th - 17th March: tragic case of missing man from Aleppo in Syria, found dead on our estate. In April, June rushed Robin to A&E, after a 111 call - but it all came out OK at the end ! In August, June and Robin went to the Sulhamstead Thames Valley Police Open Day, and filmed a riot. They got the good news that Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue have now got a location at what was Arborfield Army Camp. Robin published all this later in the year, on his [Frimley Park Hospital](#) page. It suggests how the Army have the real experience, when it comes



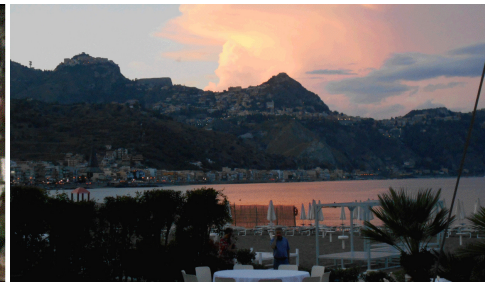
to things like Ground Search and Emergency Care. However, perhaps the main message is the importance of "sharing", and the occasional need for "Army Humour" - in whatever country you serve.

Sunday 25th March: NGS Garden near Whitechurch; coffee and cake with a live violin recital; a walk doing geocaching. Cheaper than their Greek Tennis Holiday in May, where Michelle discovered you can order pizza to your sunbed on the beach :-)



4th until 18th June: from the [Holiday](#) page: Sicily in 2018 - Naxos, Fleri, Capo d'Orlando, Scoglitti, Ragusa Ibla, Siracusa, and more ...

Click on the video to play, and the pictures to enlarge them. The video lasts almost 50 minutes, but it starts with a 2 minute summary of what we did - including the bicycle-car drive with Enrico and Matilde in Capo d'Orlando, in the far north. Don't miss June meeting Caterella, during filming of Montalbano in Ragusa. We started and ended our holiday in our favorite place: Naxos and Hotel La Riva. Lots of places to visit, including taking the bus up to Taormina, walking through the ancient greek ruins of the Gardens of Naxos, and following dry rivers upstream. We joined Enrico and Matilde for two nights in Fleri and the Windmill Hotel in Capo d'Orlando. We stayed in Scoglitti and Punta Seca in the deep south. Also Siracusa - where Robin met several parrots ! Enrico took us to wilder places like the hill towns such as Savocca. Plenty of sun, fun, and good food ! :-)

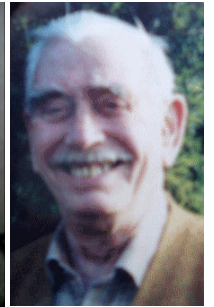


Late September: Saskia and Gary treated us to a lovely long weekend in Ross-on-Wye, and the Forest of Dean: Lots to see, including the swollen river, with trees swept downstream, castles, mines, and caves. We met Gary's mum and dad, who'd worked in the mine.



"If there is an elephant in your neighbour's garden, there is much to be said for studying its intentions. But however friendly you may think it to be, there is equally much to be said for having a stout fence to protect your flower beds" .

The above quote is from [Lord Peter Carrington](#) , from when he was Secretary General of NATO. He appears in my other pages, and I've had the pleasure of meeting him at his Bledlow Ridge home, 50 years after his presenting me with a book at High Wycombe Technical College in the 1960s.



I found the quote when doing a quick search through UK Government [Cabinet Papers](#) for 1987, released under the "30 Year Rule". I was curious if there were any mention of the [Mysterious Deaths](#) of GEC-Marconi engineers at that time. As always, I'll let others do the work of searching ;-)

There is now more about my dad on the [Len Lovelock](#) page. Film star [Richard Todd](#) taught dad to fly a Tiger Moth at Woodley Airdrome. There was a flying accident and dad broke his ankle. So he did not fly a Horsa Glider to Arnhem, and "A Bridge Too Far". If he had, I might not be here.

Was Sunninghill the birthplace of NATO ? We recently discovered that General Eisenhower's bunker was under what became the Marist Convent School, near the centre of Sunninghill village. During World War II, the area was sheltering Allied Military Headquarters & Royalty. See the [Sunninghill, SACEUR, and Snoopy](#) page. Play the video and listen to the memories of pensioners who remember those days. We have friends in 150 countries: e.g. Russia/Iran/USA. Let's make Love and not War :-)



It's now 100 years since the end of World War I - the Great War. I'm reminded of that Christmas, when the guns paused, and opponents climbed out of their trenches, to exchange gifts - and play football.

Finally: A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ! Love and Strength for 2019 from the Lovelock Family ! :-)

