

Belfry Bat April 2021

On Good Friday the roofers came and almost completed the tiling of the roof of our extension. On Saturday we prepared for my daughter Sally's visit by erecting our new gazebo in the orchard. New in the sense that it's the first time we've put it up, although we bought it several months ago. We knew it was three metres square, but its size still surprised us. We erected it next to Ro's shed, so that a buffet lunch could easily be served.

Mass was celebrated in Keele chapel on Easter Sunday for the first time for several months. The congregation was predictably small, but it was good to see people we hadn't met for a while. In the afternoon we spent a very pleasant couple of hours in the orchard with Sally and family. Tuesday saw progress with the external cladding on the extension, work finishing just before it snowed. By Thursday afternoon the roof was finished and the electrician had done the first fix.

A number of churches tolled a bell on Friday when the Duke of Edinburgh's death was announced, and tolling was requested for 12 noon on Saturday, which was what we did. We also tolled on the day of his funeral.

We were visited by Jane and Bernard Besly on April 16th. Bernard brought his new strimmer and demonstrated it on some of our brambles. A very impressive piece of kit, and he has promised to come back for more.

Work on the extension progressed smoothly and pleasingly until April 19th, when the builder phoned to say he was having trouble getting a delivery date for the windows, which are now required, which means he may have to abandon the site for three weeks. Not a huge inconvenience for us, but he will be paying rent for scaffolding and portaloo.

Ro had her second jab on April 20th, so we are now a fully vaccinated household. On Saturday April 24th I started the mower for the first time. As usual after the winter, it started on the third pull, and I cut the back lawn. The absence of the builders has had an interesting consequence. The window spaces have been blocked with sheets of plywood, but the fit is not perfect, with the result that for a few minutes early in the morning there has been a *camera obscura* created, with the image of some twigs and leaves projected onto one of the bedroom doors.

On Tuesday April 27th the builders reappeared and started to prepare for the plasterers to come in. We had originally been told that it would be possible to do the internal plastering before the windows were fitted, and then there appeared to be a change of mind. I think it must depend partly on what work is available elsewhere. On Thursday April 29th we were plastered, making the room look much lighter. The windows are now promised for the middle of May, disappointing but bearable.

Phil Gay