

# Challinor 2025 CHRISTMAS LETTER

2025 was a busy year for us. Adrian continued working for an Athens-based company, HarborLab, and like many of our age, we enjoyed several holidays outside the UK



In February/March, as a result of a close friendship with our Sri Lankan neighbours, we spent 2 ½ weeks on the Teardrop of India visiting Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Kandy, Ella, Yala National Park, Tangalle and Galle. It is a stunningly beautiful with friendly people and wonderful and varied food.

With barely a month back home, we were off for 10 days to Istanbul at the end of April, where Jan was indulged in her passion for Islamic art and architecture. We visited Aghia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Sulemaniye Mosque, Rustem Pasha, and a number of fascinating museums as well as a cruise all the way up the Bosphorus to the Black Sea.



Walking up the hills in Istanbul we found ourselves out of breath and overweight. We were also drinking too much, far more than we admitted to our doctors. Something had to change! So, we decided to use weight loss drugs and cut out all the naughty things (bread, chocolate, biscuits, beer, wine, move to small measures of scotch). In 6 months, we each lost over 22kg. The only trouble is that now our wardrobe doesn't fit. Adrian's new suit falls off him – literally! But we are still losing weight (and inches) so investing in a whole new wardrobe now would be a waste of money. We are shadows of our former selves, but better for it.

In August we visited friends in Staffordshire, Adrian's mother in a care home in Derbyshire and finally former neighbours in Yorkshire. The sad part is that mother no longer recognises us, and an hour after we leave denies we were ever there at all.

Finally, we joined a large group of members of the Flamsteed Astronomical Society for a week's visit to the volcanic island of La Palma in the Canaries in order to do some serious stargazing and



visit several observatories on a volcanic rim at 7,500 ft above sea level. It was an amazing experience at many levels. However, astrophotography was curtailed by a Sahara dust storm that turned the sky an opaque reddish colour. But some images of deep sky objects were obtained. We also had a group tour around three of the professional observatories at the top of the largest volcano. We did some walks over the more recent calderas and lava flows.



In late September Jan rejoined Blackheath Choir after many years absence, and took part in a concert of Bach choral works in early December. She now looks forward to starting rehearsals for the Brahms Requiem in early January.

Adrian was seriously ill in late summer with shingles and gastroenteritis. During his recovery having time to review his life, he decided that it was now the time to give up the stress of working full-time for HarborLab. This was also the time when he realised that what he was putting down as heartburn was rather more serious. Since then, he has been under the excellent care of the coronary team at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich. The good news is that the consultant believes his problems can be treated with medication rather than surgery.

He finally takes retirement (for the second time!) at the end of December and is now looking forward to indulging himself in his hobbies of astronomy and Formula 1. He is designing and building a train set that will be controlled by a number of computers.

Plans for 2026 are still in their infancy but in April we will be travelling Morocco's Southern Loop, starting and ending in Marrakesh, crossing the Atlas Mountains, south-east towards the Sahara, then west through the Anti-Atlas to the coast. The telescope will also travel with us!