

Here we are in the last day of 2017. I have managed every month for seven years and now is not the time to miss, though this week is hard. Since I regard all my readers as friends, perhaps you can indulge me a little before we get to bridges.

I met Sue in 1967 at the start of our final year at University. This is the earliest picture I can find of us together, taken in Feb 68 at the Engineers Ball.



We married in August 69. Liz was born in Feb 72 and Hamish in March 75 but before that, in December 74 she became temporarily and partially paralysed by MS. The MS progressed very slowly and she was barely prepared to admit to it before 2000.

On Saturday 23th Dec she was well recovering from a replacement hip following a fall.

At 3pm on 24th, after a brief period of distress, she was gone.



I confess, I am struggling, but when we visited Otterton Mill on 23rd, I took the opportunity to photograph the main bridge and a couple of smaller ones in the village. What follows will be short shrift but I will know the job is done.

The main bridge over the otter is here: <https://goo.gl/maps/GXuvxMUXei92>. It is modest, but rather fine in its way. Three spans, with the central one slightly larger. It is built from large blocks of sandstone. The spandrel walls are horizontally coursed but topped with a string course and parapets following a sweeping curve. It's a bonny bridge but the endless progress of river movement leaves the flow through it far from what was assumed by the designers.

Note first, though, the different levels and forms of erosion on that face.



Looking through the right hand span we see an island with a modest flow against the near bank and a much greater at the far side. Downstream, there is another, very shallow, island which blocks less of the main span. Looking more closely, we see that in this, relatively gentle flow, there is a substantial flow across the upstream edge of the pier where any scour is likely to be most severe.



For such a small village, Ottery offers a lot of bridge interest for it has a stream running along the main street. These bridges serve individual houses and carry different weights of traffic. By the time I got to these, Sue was getting cold in her wheel chair so there was, as now, a measure of haste. Only caught three bridges and the almost hidden one looks as though it might be interesting. Worth noting that single skin arch though.

And so, a new year and a new life. All the best for 2018.

Bill

