



(U//FOUO) SID Around the World: Jumping Into Yorkshire's Village Life with Both Feet

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(U//FOUO) What's it like for an American to settle into life in a small North Yorkshire, England, village? [REDACTED] who works at Menwith Hill Station, fills us in...

(U) Greetings from foggy Albion! Well, actually, the weather here has been just great for the past month or so and, believe it or not, most people here in North Yorkshire are actually hoping for some much-needed rain. I never thought that it would be so dry here during the early spring that some local parks have had to impose camping restrictions because of fire hazards.

(U) It's been over a year now since my wife [REDACTED] and I have PCS-ed to this lovely area of England and we are greatly enjoying our stay. This area is considered to be an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), and it has certainly earned that distinction. I never tire of looking at the rolling green landscapes with the grazing sheep and the dry stone walls. Although, I will admit that it's next to impossible to sightsee and drive at the same time since the country roads are quite narrow and most of them are basically paved over cowpaths. Plus, one always encounters pheasants, rabbits, riders on horseback, and people on bikes who seem to travel in gaggles.

(U) We opted to live in a small village called Staveley, situated between York and Harrogate and about 25 minutes from base. So far, we have been very pleased with rural English life. The village has around 200 houses, an Anglican church, and, of course, the local pub. We were very lucky in finding a lovely home to rent which, unlike most British homes, is quite spacious and even has ample closet space. And, most importantly, there's enough room in the back for me to have a vegetable garden. There were two main requirements for our home: an extra room that [REDACTED] could use for her quilting and sewing projects, and room for a vegetable garden for me. I owe what little sanity I still possess to gardening and working outdoors.

[REDACTED]

(U) The author's home in Staveley, front and back

[REDACTED]

(U) [REDACTED] and I got involved in village life from the outset. [REDACTED] joined the village Anglican church and recently became the first American to be asked to serve on the Parish Council. She tells me that it's not quite like the TV program "The Vicar of Dibley," but it is interesting. I joined the Staveley Historical Society and have attended many interesting lectures on a variety of topics.

(U) [REDACTED] has also started a Staveley ladies' quilting group which

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meets at our home on Thursday evenings. They are making a quilt and other items which will be sold or raffled off at the summer garden party with the proceeds going to the church. There are many other social events in the village such as the yearly strawberry festival and various teas, coffees, and plant sales, which we attend on a regular basis. We have made several friends in the village with whom we socialize often and feel that we are really part of the community.

[REDACTED]

(U) The "Staveley Stitchers" quilting group.

(U) One of the fun things we did last summer was to host a Fourth of July party for our English and American friends. We really had a good time poking good-natured fun at our English friends for having lost the colonies to such a ragtag army. They actually seemed to be quite relieved that it turned out the way it did. This summer, along with the Fourth of July party, we are planning to hold the first Staveley bocce ball tournament on the village green.

(U) Along the same lines, [REDACTED] and I really enjoy introducing the joys of Italian cuisine to our fellow villagers and often serve a traditional Italian dish when we entertain them. As a general rule, the favor is often returned and we are invited to their homes for a traditional English meal. We certainly come out as winners in that exchange! Who knew that boiled beef and potatoes could be so delicious? And that wilted sprig of parsley on top is the piece de resistance. No wonder the Brits have a few pints of bitter or ale with each meal! But seriously, English cuisine has been a very pleasant surprise for us in that it is actually very good and certainly doesn't deserve the bad reviews that it has been getting. English cuisine has been unfairly maligned for far too long now and that needs to stop. Really, I mean it.

(U) We have done a good bit of traveling, though not as much as some. We spent the first several months just exploring North Yorkshire since there are so many castles, manor houses, gardens, and other sites of interest. We did take a nice tour of Southern Italy and Sicily last fall, and have also taken a couple of shorter trips to Edinburgh, London, Tenerife, and Wales. We plan to take advantage of the proximity to Europe and Ireland, and plan on taking some more trips in and out of the country before we leave.

(U) Overall, I would say that our stay here in England has been even better than expected, both professionally and socially. Of course, [REDACTED] is having a great time of it since she is now retired and spends the better part of her day quilting or reading, interspersed with some occasional housework and cooking. I think that she put it best recently when she said that right now, for her, "every day is like Christmas." I won't quite go that far since I'm still working in the government salt mines, but I am also having a great time.

(U//FOUO) I would recommend a tour to MHS to anyone.

[REDACTED]

(U) The author, manning a "cookies of the world" table at the Staveley summer garden party.

(U//FOUO) Note: This article is reprinted from the July edition of S2H's "Mezhdu Nami" publication.

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