

THE YEAR IN REVIEW – 2022

We rejoiced at the end of 2020, an *annus horribilis*. We went blithely skipping into 2021, an *annus horribilior*! Now I tip-toed nervously into 2022, an *annus horribilissimus*!!

The Move from Brighton to Lockleys –

We almost managed formal completion of the new house, *'Il Palazzo del Gatto'*, by the end of 2021, but a few supply-chain and CoViD-19 issues saw the job spill over into 2022. Even then, a few minor jobs were still to be finished at the time of the formal handover and were written into the Builder's Warranty list of minor corrections.

Nam was in charge of the moving operation. On his planning documentation, *shifting me* was listed along with other sundry items! Hence, I described myself as a *fragile objet d'art*. My mother and sister were also listed in the additional notes section at this point as having the job of "looking after Alan".

Once the Brighton house had been completely emptied of all our items, there were some presentation jobs to do, such as repainting the front window frames, and the house was thoroughly cleaned. A home staging company then decorated and furnished the place to appeal to the target market, and our real estate agent was let off the leash. The sooner Brighton was sold the better. Prices were up for sales, which was good timing for us for a change, and the sale funds went straight into offsetting our home loan account. Our current mortgage was eye-watering!

Formal Possession of *'Il Palazzo del Gatto'* –

We took formal possession on Friday, 21 January 2022. The main shift was on Tuesday, 25 January 2022. I had already "gone on holiday" to stay with my mother at West Lakes; everyone agreed that it was best if I were not around!

We now officially live in the City of West Torrens rather than the City of Holdfast Bay, but both are cities in the greater Adelaide metropolitan area.

The house is magnificent. The centrepiece is the huge "Cathedral", as I call it, the living area in the centre of the home. As you enter the house, the entrance hallway takes a left and then a right into the splendour of the Cathedral. Before that, a hallway off to the left takes you into a self-contained Guest Wing: two bedrooms and a full bathroom. (One of the bedrooms will be fitted out to be Nam's formal Home Office since we are not planning to operate an AirBnB!) At the other end of the house, past the Cathedral, is the Private Wing: Alan's Study and Library and finally a huge master bedroom with a wonderful en suite and a walk-in robe.

The building materials and the double-glazed windows are all the latest environmental technology. (One evening, the temperature outside had dropped to 10 degrees, but inside

the Cathedral it was 21 degrees, and at no stage that day had we turned on the air conditioning!) There are all the latest hi-tech toys, including camera surveillance with audio-visual recording of the feed from nine cameras – both inside as well as outside – twenty-four/seven. Nam and I have an app that lets us view live-feed and past-feed using our smartphones over the internet, including the ability to use any camera as an intercom. When someone arrives at the front door, there is a doorbell button to push. They hear a chime, and we hear a chime on our smartphones – wherever we are (via the internet)! With a click we can see the visitor and start a conversation with them through the doorbell mechanism. If we wish, we can remotely unlock the door temporarily to allow them access.

We are extremely happy with our Builder (Aria Homes (S.A.) Pty Ltd), and I have written Steve Jones (the proprietor) a glowing testimonial that he may use as he wishes. Steve recommended Guy Barrett from Harris Real Estate (Glenelg Branch) as a Real Estate Agent for the sale of the Brighton property. Guy, also, was magnificent. He put us onto a Home Stager (since our Brighton property now was bare) who transformed the place with their own furniture, wall hangings etc. The property sold easily, and for much more than we had hoped for. (We benefitted from selling at the height of the property surge – good timing for once.) Guy, along with the well-known Conveyancer Bertrams, made for a quick and smooth settlement. I also wrote a glowing testimonial for Guy.

As for our Architects, well I doubt they will be bothering to ask me for a testimonial. I have blocked their telephones on mine, and they have been informed that I shall ignore any email or other correspondence from them and that I shall refuse to see them. It seems that this has rapidly spread through the grapevine in dear old Adelaide, where the traditional six degrees of separation comes in at about two degrees of separation! Why my angst? The saga is ongoing. More in a little while.

CoViD-19 Storm Clouds Gather Again –

In the Review of 2021, I described it, for me personally, as the eye of the CoViD-19 storm. As we moved through 2022, more and more CoViD-19 public health measures were dropped. This was more a political than a public health decision. Instead of the drama caused by the occasional infection reported, the virus that causes CoViD-19 was now running rampant in the community. Due to vaccinations and boosters, this situation was not of much concern to the bulk of the population. Medical practitioners though kept reporting hospitalisation and death figures that were quite alarming – but only to old folk and those with serious medical comorbidities such as me. Cynically, I regarded the attitude as being one of let's make budgetary savings while we can by letting CoViD-19 kill off all the old and frail. I was wondering when packets of Soylent Green would start appearing on supermarket shelves!

My doctor recommended that I avoid large inside gatherings of non-mask-wearing people. In practical terms, this meant that I spent most of my time in quarantine in the Cathedral and the Private Wing of 'Il Palazzo del Gatto', only venturing out for medical appointments with my mask on and driven by either Nam, Judith, or Mum.

Well before Christmas 2021, the centre-piece opera for the 2022 Adelaide Festival of Arts had been announced and tickets were on sale for elitists such as me, being an Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (ASO) subscriber. The inimitable Barrie Kosky was bringing his

production of [Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Golden Cockerel"](#) for an Australian exclusive. I had jumped on the internet and bought two (very expensive) tickets. Now that March 2022 was upon us, I was under doctor's quarantine orders. A lucky couple of friends scored two complimentary tickets.

I of course held off renewing my ASO subscription for 2022, since there are only so many concert tickets that I can purchase only to give away.

Nam Gets the Plague –

In late April, [Nam reported respiratory illness symptoms](#) and a [Rapid Antigen Test](#) indicated that he had contracted [CoViD-19](#). A PCR test taken at a GP Clinic made doubly sure. This now placed me in extreme jeopardy. We had both had our scheduled inoculations and boosters – I had had at least one extra due to my "fragility". But were I to contract symptomatic CoViD-19, I almost certainly would have been [at least hospitalised and the outcome could have been dire](#).

Thank goodness for the new house design! Nam was [thrown into the Guest Wing](#); the door was bolted, and [lettuce leaves and sticks of carrot were stuffed under the door from time to time](#).

I retreated to the [Private Wing](#), and [the Cathedral became a demilitarized zone](#) only entered after soaking in sanitizer. Occasional doorbell chimes indicated the [arrival of internet-ordered food](#) thrown from the driveway onto the doormat.

But the gods had looked favourably on us, and a week or so later normality was restored. **I had dodged a bullet!**

Democracy Sausage Day – 21 May 2022

It is [Democracy Sausage Day in Australia!](#) For the benefit of overseas readers, today is a [General Election for the Commonwealth Parliament](#). The [House of Representatives, the Territory Senators and one-half of the State Senators](#) are all up for re-election – or not. A national institution at every polling station is an inferno of hotplates barbecuing sausages and onions. For a few dollars, every voter on their way out of the polling station is morally obliged to buy a piece of bread, folded diagonally, with a sausage, onions and tomato sauce stuffed inside. Proceeds benefit all manner of community organizations. [Voting is compulsory in Australia](#). One benefit of my status as a person with a disability is that I am [automatically sent a postal ballot](#) for every election, and thus I cunningly [avoid the gastronomic disaster that would follow a democracy sausage!](#)

The Tragedy of the Eave –

Let us return to discussing the new house, and to present the [Architect Firm's most glorious stuff-up](#). Consider the following picture.



Inside the Cathedral

Observe that the Cathedral has raked ceilings. The “wall of glass” – a stretch of sliding doors and windows – form the northern wall. Above them is a “ceiling” sloping upwards to the left consisting almost entirely of four windows, three of which have shutters down. The apex is deliberately off-centre, and then there is a ceiling sloping downwards to the left. The four high, sloping windows face north, and so **in the summer would be exposed to a long period of extreme sunlight each day**. To ameliorate this, the long upward sloping ceiling from the left is **extended outside, beyond the apex, to form an upward sloping eave**. See the following picture.



The upward sloping eave

The upward sloping eave formed by extending the raked ceiling beyond the apex provides a certain amount of shading to four high windows. The extent of the shading depends on the length of the eave.

What was **never discussed with the Architects** were the criteria that would constitute **“an adequate amount of shading”**. Everyone who attended the formal handover of the house on 21 January realized that something was very wrong. We were meeting in the early afternoon in late January: it was a hot day, and the sun was beating on the four high windows without any shading from the eave. The Cathedral was stifflingly hot, and the air conditioner system was needed to make the area tolerable to stay in. This didn’t seem to us to constitute “an adequate amount of shading”!

Once we had moved into the house and we were reasonably settled, Nam and I discussed this issue. We agreed that “an adequate amount of shading” would be complete shading at solar noon for several weeks either side of the summer solstice, preferably equinox to equinox. Without the need for the Architect’s fancy software, Nam looked up relevant data on the internet and a few calculations later he had concluded that the eave should be about four metres wide. The Building Plans had an eave about one-and-a-half metres wide. Oh dear!

When Nam showed his analysis to the Architects, the response was a rambling discussion about the thermal properties of the house with this many mega-Joules in and that many mega-Joules out. They never did tell us exactly how they determined their eave width!

Nam did a calculation of the eave width required to provide complete shading at solar noon **just on the summer solstice**, rather than a period either side of it. **The answer was very close to the eave width on the Building Plans!**

We don’t know if that was the criterion they used, but certainly **the Architects had a very much lower concept of “adequate shading” than we did**. But, as no criteria had been agreed upon, there was precious little we could do other than say that they were **<expletive-deleted> idiots!** We had long since paid all their accounts and we had no legal comeback, only one of reputational competency.

You cannot simply glue an extra two-and-a-half metres of eave to what is there. The whole roofing design was predicated on the eave as they had specified it. Multiple possible solutions were discussed, but none was satisfactory. The internal shutters helped a little, but **the sun hitting externally directly on the glass was a big problem.**

Summer became autumn, and we really had only two options. Put up with the sun exposure in summer and use the air conditioner to counteract it, or to **rip out the four upper windows section and fill that ceiling in.**

Autumn became winter, and we had the first really heavy rainstorm. **Water poured into the Cathedral from the bottoms of the four windows!** Nam talked to the Builder who put him onto a window wholesaler whom he often uses. Nam managed to sit down with the proprietor of this independent company and discuss the water issue. **The proprietor explained in detail to Nam the system used to drain rainwater from the windows. But this required the windows to be installed vertically!** If the windows were sloped as ours were, the water pooled at the bottom of the window **until it then poured out ... the other way – straight into our Cathedral.**

What was the response of the Architects and their window wholesalers? Oh, we just needed some **extra silicone** along the base of the windows inside! She’ll be right!

What can we do? By any ethical measure, **the Architects should pay for us to have their high sloping windows folly removed and the ceiling installed**, plus give us **loss of utility compensation**. But, unless we employ a cartel of lawyers (I am told that “cartel” is the collective name for lawyers), we cannot get them to take any responsibility. Even then, we may not win a court case.

We are left with no option but to rip out the four upper windows section and fill the ceiling in, **at our expense**. Fortunately, although the Builder is only a new-dwelling Builder, he has agreed to take on our renovation job. We now, along with thousands of other people Australia-wide, are waiting on supplies and tradespeople so that the job can be done. **May the termites of a thousand dodgy shacks infest that Architectural company!**

Henley-Fulham Uniting Church –

For a few years, I have attended a monthly **Progressive Christianity Service** hosted by **Adelaide West Uniting Church**. I have even on occasion given the presentation that leads on to the discussion and debate part of the format. However, the Church itself overall is in fact more conservative than my taste.

About the same distance in the other direction is the **Henley-Fulham Uniting Church**, the successor Church to the one I grew up in back in the '60s and '70s. In April, I successfully applied for readmission to the Congregation of that Church. The next newsletter from the Church mentioned, “We welcome back Alan Branford as a member of Henley-Fulham. While Alan’s health may preclude him from attending services, he has been and will be involved in other ways.” The following Sunday, Reverend Christa Megaw announced in the Service a similar sentiment.

I reported in the 2021 Year in Review that I had made a video called *“Caring for God’s Creation”* that had been used to introduce a discussion and debate session at Henley-Fulham in October 2021. I had done a similar project in January this year called *“Living God’s Will”*, that focussed on the **three beatific virtues ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘charity/love/agape’**. (See my YouTube channel for both videos.)

I wrote a piece called *“Reflections on Psalm 121”* which was published in the booklet *“Psalms - Reflections for Lent”* by the Church. I now have a regular column, *“Scripture in Action”*, in the Church’s quarterly magazine, *“Sharing the Love”*. All these activities may be found through my personal website, <https://www.alanbranford.net>.

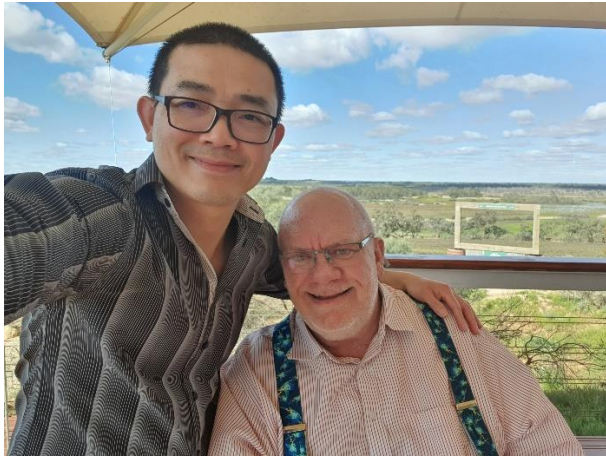
Given my association with **Adelaide West Uniting Church** through the monthly **Progressive Christianity Services**, I also joined that Church, as a **Member-in-Association** of the Congregation.

I am slowly writing a series of essays that will detail my **Theological and Christological beliefs**. These will gradually appear on my website.

The Riverland –

In late September, Nam and I decided that we deserved a little holiday. Nam found an excellent apartment called **The River Vista** in the South Australian region known as **The Riverland**. The apartment sat atop a cliff overlooking a sharp bend in the **Murray River** just outside the hamlet of **Monash**. The Riverland is a comfortable one-day drive from Adelaide, and we stayed at The River Vista for about a week. Each day, we made leisurely car trips around the Riverland towns.





Apart from one evening, we just ate the evening meal back at the apartment and chilled out. The evening that we arrived, we looked for restaurants offering [takeaway in Renmark](#), the main town in the region and only a short distance away from us. We hit upon [Nui's Thai Kitchen](#). I wrote in Google Reviews, "A magnificent Thai restaurant in the heart of Renmark! We grabbed some take away the night we arrived. Stunning! Second night: Nui takeaway again! What a gem".

The towns of [Berri](#) and [Loxton](#) were not far away in the other direction. Most of the water from the ongoing massive floods in the eastern states eventually winds up in the [Murray-Darling Basin](#), which by the time it enters South Australia is just the Murray River. Even in September, there were parts of Loxton where [public parks were already partially submerged by the rising river](#). As I write this Review, massive flooding has swept through all the places that I am mentioning.

No trip to The Riverland would be complete without a visit to the [Overland Corner Hotel](#). A wonderful historic building, originally a post office, it is set amid shady restful garden near the river. We had lunch there on one of the days. Alas, the recent flooding has caused the Hotel to shut, one hopes only temporarily.



My Google Review: “The Overland Corner Hotel is a must see on a trip to the Riverland. An historic colonial era building, now a quirky pub, eatery, museum, and shop. After lunch, sit in the outdoor area with a beer or three and while away the day.”

Another must see on a visit to The Riverland is the **Mallee Fowl Restaurant**. My Google Review: “The Mallee Fowl Restaurant is an experience you won't want to miss. Alice in Wonderland meets Aussie Country humour and hospitality. The food is top notch, and Frank and Sue are your delightful hosts.”





*The Mallee Fowl is a protected bird.
\$6,850 is the current fine for killing one.
C,P,&CYO? 'catch, pluck and cook your own'!!*



"Great meal and a fun evening. Thanks, Frank!"

We also of course visited Barmera on the famous Lake Bonney and had a trip to Waikerie.



The mural on the Waikerie grain silos

Social Grinch –

Please remember that Nam and I **no longer send Christmas cards.**

If you have not yet made a note of our new postal and residential addresses, then please email me. Likewise, if you have lost my telephone number (which also operates a WhatsApp account). The best source of information such as my email addresses is my personal website, <https://www.alanbranford.net>. You can also readily find links to my social media profiles, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. In 2019, I deleted my Facebook account. However, at the urging of some of my overseas friends, I created a new profile in 2020. If in all of that mucking around you find that we are no longer Facebook friends, then simply use the link from my personal website and invite me to befriend you once more. **You will notice that there is no longer a link to a Twitter account; Elon Musk will be able to explain why.**

I post a variety of written material such as essays, and creative writing. If you take the appropriate link from my website homepage, you can [sign up to receive an occasional and irregular update by email of my personal news and items that I have posted to my website.](#)

You will observe that I have not spent one-third of this Review of 2022 detailing the inexorable decline in my health. For those of you who like some **schadenfreude on your breakfast toast**, there is a link on my website homepage to an update on my health.

Cat Capers – The section you’ve been waiting for!



26 March 2022



17 April 2022



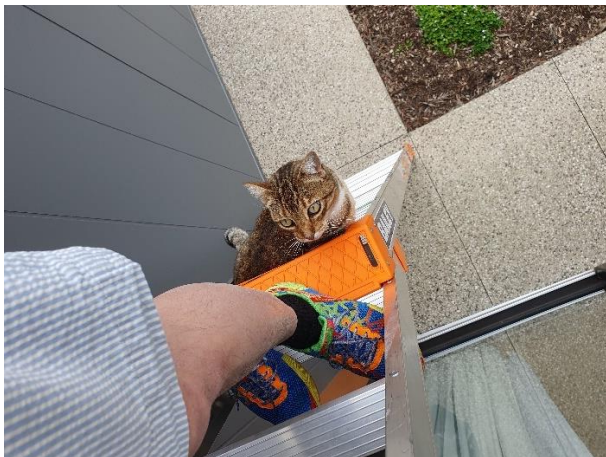
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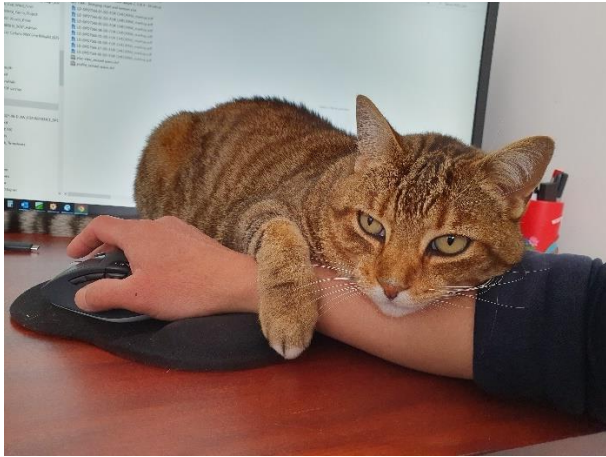
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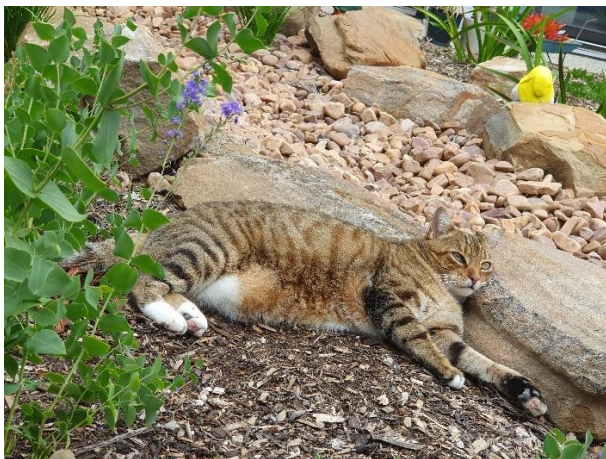
11 December 2022



14 December 2022



20 December 2022



20 December 2022



24 December 2022

Best regards from Lily, Nam and yours truly ...

Alan