

# Christmas Newsletter 2003

2003 has been a good year for us. We have seen several lovely sunsets from our office. Nothing really spectacular has happened here, but nothing terrible has happened either. Andrew achieved a lifetime goal when we visited Edinburgh. Much here is other people's news: Elaine and Malcolm, Andrew's parents and Lez's Dad.

## Family

There have been 3 new additions to our family. We now wake up to the patter of tiny ... paws. In February we went to an Animal Aid Rescue centre and picked up 2 cats: Jack and Jill. The third new member? Well, this is Alice. A Smart Car. Lez has wanted one for years and she finally got one for her birthday!

Andrew's cousin Elaine Bullwer married Malcolm Howard in April. Welcome, Malcolm.

Andrew's parents celebrated 80 and 75 years. Their bungalow now has a bedroom, a living room and a shower/wet-room. The kitchen needs painting and then they are almost "home!"

Lez's Dad completed a charity end-to-end bash on his vintage Royal Enfield Crusader.

## Teignmouth Towers

Andrew finally stopped work on our kitchen on Christmas Eve, just as Lez's parents arrived. It is now almost complete. This August we had our office fitted. We were originally hoping to refit our bedroom. When we found that Hammonds fit offices (we spend most evenings in our office), we jumped at the chance. We had a radiator moved (the resulting flood nearly brought our kitchen ceiling down), we got our ageing PC's to share a printer (and had to rebuild Andrew's PC as a result – networking is a dark art) and we still await our electrician's visit! After spending nearly a week removing woodchip wallpaper from the office we've decided that woodchip should be banned.

Andrew has been head gardener this year. Lez bought a hosepipe to help water the plants. The garden looked at its best in August when we finally had an open house to celebrate apparently everybody's anniversary and everybody's birthday!

Our 1989 Volvo 343 (Fred) died this summer, or rather, was put down. This year it took us over the Cumbrian hills and up to Scotland but MOT welding would have cost too much. Fred was well run in at about 200 000 miles (the odometer failed a long time ago). So we got Andrew's parent's Skoda (which had been left in our garage since 2000) back on the road. It had under 30 000 miles on the clock. It is very different beast compared to a Volvo! We are now a 2-car and 7-bicycle family.

Andrew has started tidying the garage and the loft: the target is to get a car in the garage and to find things again in the loft. We plan to complete this at Christmastime. He's been to the tip frequently this year, playing catch-up after moving here in 2001. He found a box in the garage that had been packed in Hinckley that was literally a box of rubbish. Our move had been a bit rushed. We plan car boot sale trips next spring.

## Outings and Holidays

We've been to the Ideal Home exhibition at Olympia, to Bodnant Garden (whilst camping at Llanystumdwy) and the gardens at Hidcote Manor, together with a visit to

Barkby in Bloom. We've also enjoyed several picnics at Pitsford Water. At Easter we visited Sheffield and Cumbria staying B&B, then went on to Northumberland, staying in a farm cottage.

## Lez

Lez is still working at the City Council Education Department. She now has a fellow colleague to help with the workload, which is still intense.

Lez is still studying. This year she has taken 2 maths courses with the Open University. Her maths exams were in October, and the results will be out in late December. She is currently studying German, again with the Open University.

Lez was poorly over the summer period with a virus that knocked her for 6.

Lez has played her oboe in 3 concerts this year, and was soloist at the last concert.

We've bought a second camera because Lez has started taking photographs. She is already excelling in this digital art.

## Andrew

Andrew is still at the Bookshop. This year the computer network has been very naughty.

Andrew still goes to Hollycroft Church in Hinckley. The church has changed location twice (!), but Andrew still hasn't moved to a church in Leicester.

At home he has been trying to keep everything going and to support Lez in her studies.

Andrew was very poorly in the spring with a chest infection. His asthma, which had almost completely disappeared, has returned. He also has had a head to toe rash twice this year. It disappeared as quickly as it came on both occasions.

## Cats

Hello, Jilly reporting. I'm the cute cat. I've explored everywhere at our new home, even getting under the bathroom floor from the kitchen. Andrew thinks this is great fun and has made some changes in the kitchen to make next time more exciting. He mentioned razor wire, whatever that is. I like to drink from my special drinking bowl in the bathroom. Lez and Andrew sit on it. I'm trying to stop them but they need more training. Jack tries to kill me every day. I think it's a man thing. We've enjoyed spending summer in the garden, and now the garden door is often shut. We're always on the wrong side of it for some reason. We've been to our special hotel twice this year. Janet, the manageress is very nice, but it's still scary and I hide a lot. Jack's been to the white coat place twice, once because he had the d&v and once with me to get our hotel passes. Jack doesn't like where they keep our pooh box and makes practical suggestions as to where it would look better. Andrew still thinks that his ideas are best, but Jack tries to be helpful with new suggested locations.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year:

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Andrew' and the signature on the right is 'Lez'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.