

Christmas Newsletter 2004

I'm writing this as we recover from 'flu, and as 2004 becomes another fading memory. It has been a year where a newspaper headline writer would struggle. Lots of long-planned things have finally happened. So many parties, get-togethers and social events happened that we've lost count. This is a new experience for us!

Teignmouth Towers

We've had lockable garden gates fitted, had major electrical work done throughout the house, moved bulky furniture to both sets of parents' homes, replaced an ancient washing machine, and fitted carpet tiles in our office. A friend helped restore our view of sunsets over Bradgate. After this much-needed tree-logging it rained a lot and Andrew made a dozen fully-loaded tip trips in a very soggy Skoda. In our garden, Andrew managed to break a large fork weeding the front garden. We've also bought an electric hedge trimmer, which makes gardening easier. We've (again) remortgaged our home, and discovered that the value has almost doubled in three years.

Lez

Lez is currently taking a year out for study. She passed her 2 maths courses with the Open University last year and has just heard she has also passed her German studies this year. She has also done some consultancy work and has played her oboe in two concerts with NWCO.

Andrew

Andrew is still at the Bookshop. It has been a year of change with staff leaving and retiring and not being replaced. He has finally left Hollycroft church and found a Leicester church. He has been trying to keep everything going at home and to support Lez in her studies. He has discovered buffalo milk, as part of a search for asthma control.

Cats

Hello, Jilly (the cute cat) reporting. We've discovered and lived on the garage roof this autumn. Jack gave Andrew a present of a bird, but we can't understand why he doesn't like our presents. He's stopped trying to get Andrew to move our pooh box. He's also wheezing a lot and is poorly quite often. We've again been to our special hotel twice this year, but it's still scary and I hide a lot.



Outings, Holidays and Fun Things

Our holidays this year were fragmented. We went to Wales in February and nearly got snowed-in. In May we had a coach tour of western Scotland. We'd like to visit this area again, but not by coach next time.

We've been to many parties, included several leaving parties, a housewarming party and a posh garden party (complete with serving staff).

We saw Lucy (Lis and Dave's bearded collie) at Cruft's for the first time, in *Discover Dogs*.

We've had 3 batches of snow and lots of rain. Because we've been *doing things* as opposed to taking a holiday, this hasn't been too much of a disappointment for us. It's also provided opportunity for lots of cinema trips.

We've visited lots of gardens, including Barnsdale, University of Leicester Botanical, Bodnant, Knighton Hall and Bradgate Park.



Health

We were both poorly a lot this year, twice with the same thing at the same time, which made mutual care a challenge. It also indicates a stressful year. On a positive note, we've discovered that Andrew is allergic to Ibuprofen.

Technology

We discovered computer USB memory sticks, mobile computing (which make digital photo's fun), electronic toothbrushes, a daylight box (for dull days), have replaced our microwave and upgraded our mobile phones. Our television licence has expired and we are again television free! We've also enjoyed DVD nights with Andrew's parents.

Bikes and Cars

The Skoda occasionally refuses to start without first kicking the fuse-box! Andrew is playing catch-up with bike repairs and maintenance, which usually need doing at cold or wet times. Not being able to find tools or parts has been very frustrating for him.

Politics

We are not political creatures, but this year we were subjected to two voting marathons, once for the european elections and again for a central government by-election. We were amazed at the physical weight (about 5Kg) of canvassing publications and by the interminable door knocking. Being in a marginal constituency is a curse.

Resolutions and Plans

We didn't get to any car boot sales this spring and Andrew didn't manage to organise the garage or the loft: the target is to make it possible to use the garage as a workshop and storage area, and to be able to find things again in the loft.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year:

Handwritten signature of Andrew in black ink.

Handwritten signature of Liz in black ink.