



# Maiden Road News



1999 Edition

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## How do you spell Millennium?

So we reach the end of another year, another decade, another century, another millenium. And yes, spelling with one n is perfectly acceptable, despite what the language mavens say: it's our language, not theirs.

This year should have been a year of closure, as all the old slowly died to make way for the new. But it turned out to be a year like any other: completely ordinary in every way. In fact it was quite extraordinary in its ordinariness. No great work achievements, no great changes at home, no changes of lifestyle, and (fortunately) no deaths.

## Educating Marty

This year I have continued with my MA in linguistics. I attended lectures at Birkbeck college to add to my knowledge, but all it really taught me is that there are a lot of entrenched attitudes out there. I'm not sure whether the lecturers saw me as some kind of annoyance, but their reactions to me left me with the feeling that the pursuit of excellence is no greater in the ivory towers of academe than elsewhere. I suppose it was just a foolish hope on my part that it would be so. In contrast my lectures at University of East London (the MA-awarding body) were most informative. I have a really good tutor who is giving me my head to try to tie the odds and ends of my theory together. I must admit I have been through periods wondering why I put myself through it, but the amazing feeling of suddenly fitting two bits of the puzzle together... trust me, it's better than sex and doesn't need tissues.

Thank you to all the people who completed the survey, the results are available if you have not already received them. The two behaviours that came out of section two are now fully explained and mapped into the model – in fact they turned out to be the key to the whole thing. I'm becoming more and more sure that all the ends are now tidied up, and all that remains is to write and edit.

## I love Paris in the Springtime

Our first holiday this year was to Paris. Because Eurostar had messed up our return journey last year we had free one-way travel, so we only had to pay for accomodation and to get home. We only took a long weekend, but in that time we visited Sacre Couer, Versailles, The Natural History museum and the Zoo.

At Sacre Coeur we went up to the dome, a tense experience for me because of my dislike of high places. Philip said I was wandering around with a permanent stoop, and wasn't the hunchback supposed to be at Notre Dame? I ignored him – water off a hunch's back.

Our visit to Versailles was in brilliant sunshine. We spent the early part of the day in the gardens, only going into the palace when the sun got too scorching. It is an amazing place, more impressive than any palace in Britain. They were filming a documentary about the Palace, so we were also lucky to see the dragon fountain in full flow – a 50ft spurt of water.



The Natural History museum proved to be a strange collection of old bones and freakery. As you walk in you are confronted with an army of skeleton animals from all periods, which look to be frozen in mid-charge. At the end of the room are the preserved skeletons of various siamese twins and down the righthand side are the pickled viscera of various creatures. An eerie and Hirstesque experience.

The Zoo was much more lively. It is small but well laid out, and is notable for acting as a charcuterie in the Siege of Paris (1870). Fortunately they have restocked since then, and the animals seem happy enough – although they do tend to get nervous if you mention Bismark. And that was Paris, 1999.

## Cornwall

We made our regular trip to Cornwall in September, to see Philip's relatives. We only get to see them once a year, so we like to visit as many as we can while we are there. But we also take time to see some of the attractive sights of the peninsula.

This year we spent a large part of the time visiting gardens: Trengwainton, Glendurgan and the Lost Gardens of Heligon (they found them right where they last saw them. It's always the last place you look). Each of them had different appeal, but all of them have views out over the sea. At Heligon there were several woodland plant sculptures, an example of which is below (on the left).



We also went to Truro one day for shopping. Officially the capital of Cornwall, it is a quaint little market town with a lot of bookshops. Needless to say, we bought books. A highlight of the holiday was my first visit to St Michael's Mount. The castle was nice, but the

best bit was finding an enormous house spider in a bowl in the buttery.

We took the whole holiday like two little old pensioners – getting in practice for retirement. But it was a relaxing time and we enjoyed ourselves.

## Blackpool

Less enjoyable was our weekend in Blackpool in October. The trip was made in wind and rain, the roads were jammed, and it took eight hours to go 300 miles. Still, the hotel was warm and dry. This was my annual consultancy get-together, so it was work for me on Saturday afternoon, while Philip got to go into town to enjoy the sites. But before that we spent the morning at Blackpool zoo, next to the hotel. It was small, but full of hands-on things to do. Even the weather calmed down a little, but the animals still seemed to prefer the indoors to the out.

In the evening I received my 10 year award, and we did our duty entertaining the crowds as the pet homosexuals. Now I know how the animals in the zoo must feel.

## Pink Singers

The Pinkies have had three main performances this year. The first was a three choirs mini-festival for the Pinkies, Gloria from Dublin and the Rainbow Chorus from Brighton. This was at the Royal Academy of Music in May. The second was at the Albany Empire in July, and was excellent. Then in November the Pinkies went to Geneva to sing with the local choir. All that's left to do now is the Winter show next week.

They have also been in the studio laying down tracks for their new album, but it has not been released yet. It should definitely be out next year, hopefully for GALA.

## Other events

Other events this year have included my Brother's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party, two trips to Mole farm with various relatives, and several trips out with Drew from Australia – Mark's brother and Hannah's uncle.

Matthew has also been very busy this year. He started studying for his MA in theatre studies, and is now a third of the way through the course. It is hard work, but he seems to be enjoying it. We attended his first group performance just a few days ago – a very avant garde piece which took the audience on a guided tour through the building they were using, with a historical theme and a pain/expiation/salvation subtext. No, I didn't understand it either. What happened to good old-fashioned theatre of two men in dustbins?

Well, that's it for another year. Next step the Millen.. er, Milenn.. er, Milen...



**HAPPY YULE  
AND A GOOD NEW YEAR!**