



MAIDEN ROAD NEWS

Audited Circulation:
More numerous than
the grains of sand on
Brighton beach

2001 - a Spare Oddity



Where were the mad computers?

Arthur C Clarke assured us that in 2001 we would face mad computers as we explored the outer reaches of the solar system. Instead, we have Windows XP and appear to be exploring the outer reaches of human iniquity. So, at least he was right about the mad computers.

2001 had all the makings of a year of change - and in many ways it fulfilled its promise. Mark in Oz took a deep breath and changed the direction of his career - don't dream it, be it. And his brother, Drew, took a deep breath and proposed marriage to Lou, one of the nicest people I've met. Mutterings of "about time" from the cheap seats. My Mother spent her first year without Dad - life goes on. And my brother Michael took a deep breath and emigrated to Oz. After one year he has a job and has almost finished building his own house.

On September 11th the World was changed for us all by a bunch of lunatics. Philip's cousin, Rick Rescorla, was killed in one of the towers. As security chief it was his job to evacuate the Morgan Stanley staff, and he got all but a handful out. Unfortunately, he was one of that handful. So 2001 has ended up like most other years: full of la change and full of la même chose.

Oz 4 for Four

For four weeks over the end of January/beginning February we were in Oz. It was our fourth trip and the longest yet, and we took a couple of friends along to share the Oz experience. We visited parts we hadn't seen before, as well as showing all the traditional stuff to Matthew and Darius. With four weeks of things to talk about this can only be a swift gallop through the highlights.

The trip took us up North to Queensland, where the rest went out to the Great Barrier Reef while I photographed insects. We also hired a car and drove around the coastal area of Qld, at one point encountering the edge of a tropical storm.

Next, we flew to Sydney, where we met up with Drew and Lou. We also spent a day in the mountains at Katumba, with Yves and Hannah; following which Yves let us take Hannah (pictured) down to Sydney for a day at the zoo. Thanks to Drew and Lou we saw parts of Sydney previously unexplored, and the visit was memorable.

The final part of the trip was Melbourne and Victoria. What can I say? Excellent as ever. St Kilda, Prahran, The Dandenongs, Great Ocean Road, ... (my favourite).

In addition, this time we got to "go bush" and visit Mark and Leigh at Christmas Hills. So many amazing insects! And the Yarra Valley wineries! And wild kangaroo and echidna! The best!



Just call me Mother

After three years before the mast of Higher Education I am finally a MA. I presented my thesis (on Grammar and Language) in March, was passed for human consumption in July, and crowned in mid-November. Hopefully there will be a picture, just as soon as they've finished airbrushing my waist (a team of experts is working overtime). Unfortunately, there is still no certificate. It's strange, I know I've been awarded the qualification, but without the certificate it doesn't yet feel real. Still, it will make yet another reason for celebration when it finally turns up... Having finished the course I haven't given up on studying or linguistics. I'm currently working on the interface between animal and human communication, and I'm discovering all kinds of interesting stuff. I also have a theory firming up about how we got from general communication to language, but it's still in the early stages. I attended BAAL and LAGB conferences (linguistics associations) in September, and various other events throughout the year. This is one hobby that doesn't seem to be going away.

Go West, Old Man

In September we made a trip down to Cornwall to see Philip's family, and to view a few more of the gardens. Twenty years ago it would have been the beaches, but Oz has spoiled us with warm water and hot sand. Fortunately, Cornwall still has stunning scenery, amazing gardens and, in September, relatively quiet roads. It is a pleasure to visit.

This year, unfortunately, our usual hotel has gone out of business, so we decided to stay in St Ives instead. It's a very nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there - the parking is impossible. We got bed and board, although I hadn't realised they were the same thing.

Fortunately, the weather was good and we got to see the Eden Project (pictured). We heard the news of the twin towers later that day, when we phoned Philip's cousin Rhonda to arrange a visit. We didn't know about Rick until later.

Despite events we had a good holiday and a welcome break, and we got to see Philip's family after a two-year gap.



Working Nine 'til Five

We all have to do it, and sometimes we may even enjoy it. But there are always the little niggles and annoying oddities - or, as we call them, Managers. Philip has had his share of management this year, and is currently undergoing trial by smarm. A manager he doesn't like is trying to headhunt him by bullying his present managers into giving him up - fortunately, it isn't working.

I am busy dismantling a system I set up and worked on for 10 years. The replacement system has dropdown boxes; it's crap but it has dropdowns. The change has been caused by the merger of two major drug firms (work it out...) and it is interesting to see the two managerial styles at war. One company was highly democratic, the other highly hierarchical. As the democratic side is used to negotiating and giving ground it is being walked all over; but this only means that, in the long term, the dynamism of the democratic company is being completely stifled, and the good people are leaving. The new whole is going to be considerably less than the sum of its parts. But that's management for you.

Pink Singers

The Pinkies went to Berlin this Spring, although without us. Apparently it was a good gig. They also appeared at Mardi Gras, closing the main stage with pop group A1. Philip compered the classical stage, and was so entertaining that he was asked for his autograph (by someone young and cute, too!) As it was the day after I had been given my MA result, I spent most of the day drinking champagne - very nice.

In November, the Pinkies also went down to Brighton to sing with the Brighton choir. Good performance, but the highlight of the day for me was sitting on the beach and watching the sun go down at 4:30 in the afternoon.

Other Events

Dad died on 15th December last year; too late for the last newsletter, but far enough away, now. It made for a rather muted Christmas, but we got through it and got on with our lives.

In May I ordered a new car, which eventually arrived in September, just before the conferences and holiday. It is a Skoda Fabia, and is the faggiest car I've ever had. Everything's automatic: electric windows and mirror adjust, heated mirrors, seven wiper settings, tracking headlights, and a knurled knob which does something amazing but I've forgotten what. It is extremely comfortable and has Clangers in the engine (you have to hear it to know why this is a good thing). I've also had letters and reviews published in various places, and my website has been quoted in Computing magazine! Soon it will be dark glasses and a headscarf when I leave the house.

That Techie Stuff

For the computerate amongst you, Philip can be contacted at philip.rescorla@care4free.net, and I am at martin.edwardes@lineone.net. In addition, I have set up a website at <http://website.lineone.net/~martin.edwardes>. Surf on in, Dude!



A swinging Yule and a great New Year!