



Maiden Road News

Audited Circulation:
Did you know the Pirahã have no numbers, only "some", "less than some", and "more than some"?

2006 – 365 days, but to you, one year



2006 – Waiting for Gordot

2006 will probably become known as the year of the Gone Who Never Went. Tony Blair is forgotten but not yet gone; Bush has lost another election but he's still not taken the hint; Kofi Annan has gone, but – in true Obi Wan Kenobi style – having been struck down he is more powerful than before; Berlusconi should have crawled away in shame, but he keeps bouncing back.

Getting Hitched

Something that marked an end to waiting this year was our civil partnership ceremony. After 34 years we decided that it probably wasn't a flash-in-the-pan relationship; and, now that the nice Mr Blair has said that we can have something that is like marriage but isn't marriage, we decided to take him up on the offer.

The dark deed happened on 18th March, a cold but bright morning, breezy, rain expected later. We kept the party to a minimum – our two witnesses, Darius and Matthew, My sister Sarah and her son Matthew (the official ringbearer, and due back from Mount Doom any day now), and our second-oldest mutual friend, John. The ceremony went well, and we took some pictures for police evidence.



After the ceremony we went to our local café for a real wedding breakfast – no expense spent – and then a short trip around the shops. Back home by lunchtime and no major casualties. [It wasn't quite as downbeat as Martin says. But what can you expect from a man who used to start his love letters "to whom it may concern"? *Philip*]

So we now have a piece of paper guaranteeing peace in our time, and exemption from death duties. Eat our dust, Chancellor!

Holidays

We haven't had enough time for a holiday together this year, but we have both managed short breaks. I got away to Cardiff and Cork – both for conferences, but you can't have everything – and Philip went to Copenhagen with the Pink Singers – so more a safari than a holiday. [I rang Martin from Copenhagen and said "I wish you were here so we could hug and have fun"; and he said "who is this speaking please?"]

We did manage to take a couple of days out, however, which were welcome breaks in the schedule. The first was to Mole Farm, the wildlife farm we usually visit once a year. All the animals were pleased to see us, and we even had some eating out of our hands.



The other day out was to Hyde Hall, the National Gardens centre. This has an amazing floral display and many unusual plants on sale. If you want penstemons, Hyde Hall is the place to go.

I managed to lose my bag with the car keys (fortunately handed in at the desk), knock a cup of coffee over myself (fortunately I was sponged down by a rather cute waiter) and Philip got us lost on the way home (fortunately thereby missing a traffic jam). So a serendipitous day all together. We'll be going back for more penstemons and more coffee.

New Jobs for Old

In January I started my new job as Communications Officer at the City of London Academy, one of Mr Blair's new Academy schools. The job involves running the website (www.cityacademy.co.uk), producing newsletters, adverts, various publicity and publications, managing visitors, and supporting a rather panicky general office manager. It's tiring as hell, but I get long holidays, short days in the school breaks, and I seem to be valued – which, in the end, is the whole trick. The money's not bad, either: not up to the obscene amounts I was earning previously, but income over expenditure is ought and sixpence, so result happiness.

Hopefully this job won't get snatched away before retirement in six-and-a-half years time ...

The Back of the Wardrobe

My progress in the fantasyland of Academia continues. I gave three papers and one talk this year. The talk was to UEL PhD students about my research, and I managed to annoy a Freudian lecturer with my view that Freud and Darwin don't mix. The papers were for conferences at UEL (Academic Register: hallowed tradition or hollow ritual?), Cardiff (Constructing Identity: the source of language?), and Cork (Using the World Wide Web as a Massive Corpus). An eclectic mix of topics.

I am also handing in the final draft of my PhD, and I've been approved for my Viva, where I have to defend my ideas. I still haven't got anything until all the publishing and defending and being slapped with a floppy hat is over, but maybe this time next year I'll finally be able to say "trust me, I'm a doctor".

[and last but by no means least, our dear friends Sören & Bradley



celebrated their civil partnership in early November. We were invited to share their special day with their families who had travelled from Germany and the USA – and,

what's more, at their reception we met the Queen (or someone who looked suspiciously like her).

I hope you all have a happy holiday and every success and happiness in 2007.]

That Techie Stuff

Philip's email address is:

philiprescorla@yahoo.co.uk.

My email address is:

martin.edwardes@btopenworld.com.

The website is at:

<http://www.btinternet.com/~martin.edwardes>



How different Christmas would be if Robert L May had instead written about Ranulf the red-nosed rude deer.