



2007 – And on we go!

Maiden Road News

Audited Circulation:
The Mayans say the World will end in 2012 – there goes the retirement plan



Philip Proclaims

The Pink Singers had a good year, with visits to Helsinki and Paris. We have now seen the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the White House in Washington and the Taj Mahal, one of the finest Indian restaurants in Stratford!

We had a great concert at the Royal Academy of Music in June. We have quite a broad repertoire at the moment – some Bruckner, Duke Ellington, John Rutter, Kate Bush, Abba and Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful".

At the June concert I cracked a few jokes and made gentle fun of the people in the front row. I said that when I go to a rock concert I have to sit in the front row now – or my Calvin Kleins don't reach the stage! (I wanted to say knickers but you can't say knickers in the Royal Academy.) The other line people liked was "although this is an old building the fire exits are clearly marked – by the fingernails of the previous audience!"



Our Pride March was on June 30th followed by a rally in Trafalgar Square, and we sang on the stage there. There were the usual celebs introducing the performers – Ian McKellen, Graham Norton, John Barrowman (Captain Jack in *Dr Who*). We were introduced by Captain Jack, and he even joined in our final song – apart from being in *Dr Who* he is, of course, a great singer.

At work I have been busy briefing the new Ministers. We are on our 5th Secretary of State in six years.

Recently, I was trying to explain our political parties to an American. I said we have two main parties in the UK: the Labour party who the Americans would call socialist, and the Conservative party who the Americans would call ... er ... socialist. Not sure he got the irony. He did say he thought George Bush was misunderstood (well, I struggle to understand him). Still he probably also thinks Elvis is still alive and working the deli counter at Wal-Mart.

I am now on Facebook, thanks to the lovely Mark, and am still working out what

Facebook does and whether a poke is a good thing or a bad thing! My mood indicator shows I'm content but I can't change it – which no longer makes me content. I thought that I was too old for this sort of thing but I've made contact with people I'd lost touch with so have changed my mind. Come up and poke me sometime. Meanwhile I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and every happiness in 2008.

Martin Mutters

What a busy year! I thought I would hand in my PhD in February and take the rest of the year off. No such luck.

OK, it started well: I handed in my PhD for binding in February, and the bound copies came back to the postgrad office – who lost them. They managed to find two copies to send off to my internal and external examiners, but the other copies were gone.

So then I waited: March, April, finally a viva in May. The copies of the thesis also mysteriously turned up. My main tutor decided he wouldn't come into the viva with me, leaving the job of supporting me to my third tutor. My suspicion that he didn't like my thesis became more concrete. Apparently, this is common: the main tutor tries to create a "mini-me", but the student starts to think for themselves – of necessity, the thesis has to be original thinking.

The viva was over two hours long. The external examiner, Jim Hurford, was very thorough, and he came up with a long list of changes that were needed. This was a Good Thing – Jim's changes made the thesis stronger, tighter and more consistent.

So, in June I handed in my final version, in July it was signed off, and in September the postgrad office finally noticed I was finished. Of course, it was too late to acknowledge completion in the previous academic year, so I had to re-enrol – although they let me do it for free. Still, all's well that ends well, and I'm being gowned on 12th December. I'm officially Doc Martin, and you can read my thesis at http://www.btinternet.com/~martin.edwardes/side_publications.htm, – if you really want to.

I also gave a couple of papers this year, one in London in March and one in Cardiff in August; and I gave a lecture at Edinburgh University. So I've been getting my name round in academic circles, which is mathematically consistent.

At Edinburgh I talked to a publisher about my PhD, and they are interested in publishing it

in book form. We'll see. I'm interested in a more accessible style of book than my PhD, and I want it to be more story-like. I'll put together a full proposal at Yuletide, and we'll see how it goes from there.

And now I'm lecturing part time at Kings College London. It appears that becoming a recognised name does work. I only really got the job because the professors know my name from my role as Web Editor for the British Association for Applied Linguistics.

This term I'm teaching 'statistics for social scientists' – I know how to program an Excel spreadsheet so, to social scientists, I look like a mathematical genius. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed is king.

Next term I'm doing psycholinguistics, which is more related to my PhD. I have to prepare a full lecture course – which is what I should be doing now instead of writing this!

Work has been a series of incredible highs and lows. The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has visited the Academy twice this year, and we've had visits from a series of other semi-celebrities: Catherine Tate, the Lord Mayor of London, the Armenian Minister for Education ...

Nonetheless, I described this year in my annual appraisal as "the worst in my working life so far" – basically, the management has been appalling (and when I use the term *management* I use it wrongly).

One case in point: I was covering for the HR Manager while she was on maternity leave. On the day she came back I received an email from the vice-principal saying "we did not appoint to post X so we will need to re-advertise". When I didn't re-advertise he wanted to know why. Well duh! I was no longer part of the "we" who needed to re-advertise.

Ah well, onward and upward. I hope everyone has a happy and successful 2008, and that we're all here to complain about it when it's over!

That Techie Stuff

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Yule comes from the old Norse Hjol, meaning wheel (as in the wheel of the year). One of the names of Odin is Jolfothr, or Yulefather.