



2008 – The year things changed

MAIDEN ROAD NEWS

2008:
International Year of Languages
International Year of the Potato
International Year of Sanitation
International Year of the Frog
International Year of Planet Earth



Philip's Foreward (oh, yes he is)

Welcome to this year's newsletter. I hope it has been a good year for you all. In June I reached 60, and I celebrated the event at my favourite French Restaurant with some of my best-est friends, a few of whom had not seen each other for years. I'm now at the age where my back goes out more often than I do; and I don't have to do drugs – I get the same effect standing up quickly.

My choir, the Pink Singers, celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. It has now been going nearly as long as the DFS sale. We had a number of special performance events, and there is a DVD of our anniversary concert at the London Royal Academy of Music. We also appeared at the O2 Arena in Docklands (formerly the Millenium Dome), at the Pride Rally in Trafalgar Square, in Brighton, and at a number of community events. It's hard work being gay – all this marching, dancing and having to learn the words to *I Will Survive*.

Martin has just told me that my allocated space is up and I must sto.....

The Martin Chronicles

Well, it's been a rum old do, this 2008 thing. Bhutan replaced its absolute monarchy with an elected government, as did Nepal and the island of Sark. Australia apologised to its original inhabitants for acts done in the process of colonisation, and so did Canada. The Beijing games showed that the Olympics movement is not about politics – but it's not really about sport, either. The 2012 Stratford complex is going up fast, but so is the cost; we won't be able to afford the spectacle the Chinese gave us, but there will be at least two balloons and a sausage roll to share; and it will be an opportunity to go to an athletics event where the spectators are the ones who have failed the drugs test!

On a slightly more serious note, the financial collapse currently means that I can no longer retire at age 60, and I will have to work on for a couple more years. In the global scale of things this is small beer, and there are people reading this who are considerably more seriously affected. Philip has now passed retirement age (see above), but is still working with no indication of retirement any time soon. I think he's mad, but the way things are looking he could be certifiably sane. Over all, I have to say that life is still

pretty good at Maiden Castle as we move boldly forward.

Academy

So what has *really* happened this year? On the Work front (and the war metaphor is carefully chosen) the senior management continue to do what they do best: nothing well and many things badly. The senior management team was increased by one this year to compensate for the increased workload of running an almost full school. So pupil numbers increased by 10%, teaching staff increased by 15%, non-teaching staff increased by 2%, and senior management increased by 33%. Nice work if you can get it.

Our superhero team now consists of: Big Ben – a new face for every hour; Teflon Man – nothing sticks, not blame, not responsibility, not even work; Ferret Boy – busy, busy, busy, but not much seems to happen; and Newbie Girl, who replaced Vision Woman – she could see into the far future, but the present was a blur to her. So far Newbie Girl is a breath of fresh air, trying to make the system work despite the ministrations (with the accent on the mini) of her colleagues; but there is every chance she could turn into Disillusionment Woman at the present rate of progress.

The Academy is a monument to lost opportunity, and is really surviving on an untested reputation. If we lose the edge of sparkle that makes parents think we walk on water then we have no mechanisms to re-establish our position, or even to keep the system chugging along. I realise that I'm an old Jeremiah when it comes to business planning, and life is too short, and something will always come up; but more of the right things tend to come up if you sow the right seeds (St Paul, paraphrased).

My current favourite quote at work is from Roald Amundsen: *Adventure is just bad planning* – Amundsen went on an expedition, Captain Scott went on an adventure; one of them came home. Ah well, if nothing else there's a book in this.

Academia

On the Academic front, the Doctoring thing is going OK. I keep submitting papers to journals, but none get accepted. I should sit down and concentrate on producing one fully-crafted paper rather than firing off

blanks at any target in range. Now there's a project for 2009.

My presentations at conferences, in contrast, are going very well. This year I gave papers at Brighton, York (the prestigious BALE conference), and Bangor, all of which were well received. The book deal is proceeding slowly – it may amount to something, it may not. I'm supposed to be writing a sample chapter even as I type this; feel privileged, you are interrupting genius. And I applied for a part-time lecturing job with Middlesex but didn't get it. That goes in the "never mind, didn't really want it anyway" pile.

The garden went a bit mad this year, mainly because we were both too busy to get out there and do the heavy pruning it needs. This is a task scheduled for the Christmas break – although I'm not sure that Philip is aware of this yet ...



I did achieve one ambition this year: to have more letters after my name than in it. OK, it's a tawdry ambition; but talk to the hand, Martin Edwardes, BSc MA PhD, FRAI AMBCS, isn't listening.

That Techie Stuff

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Donner and Blitzen mean thunder and lightning, and are related to the Norse gods Thor and Loki. Dancer and Prancer are suing their parents.