

2011 – Was that it?

It's been a quiet year here at Rodgers Towers, well away from the summer rioting; the main cause for concern in these parts is the state of the drains. Oh, and the fracking gas extraction just up the road, that's going to cause a spate of earthquakes and let gas into our water supply. Two utilities delivered through the same pipe; there's efficiency. And if they can electrify it as well then we're laughing.

Elsewhere, we can only watch the European debt crisis unfold like a motorway pile up in slow motion. It looks to me like the Greeks, Italians & possibly some others are going to be so indebted to Germany that when the loans are called in and they can't repay them they'll have to forfeit the country. It's a great way for Mrs Merkel to get a Mediterranean seafront, and lot less messy than using Panzer Divisions and the Luftwaffe.

Anyway, on to the family and what we have been up to.

Ian & Lynne – went to Austria for a few days in January to attend a family wedding. My nephew Tim was marrying his partner Andrea, who is Austrian. As they live in New Zealand at the moment it was an even longer journey for them! We went with Peter and Susie & Liam (see below) and had a lovely time.



Schwarzenberg

The village was like a picture postcard with a covering of fresh snow, and not as cold as we expected. Mind you, having endured -18°C a few weeks earlier we were probably acclimatized!

In April we enjoyed our 'proper' holiday in Madeira, and spent the rest of the year making the most of our National Trust & RHS memberships; visiting houses and gardens from the Lake District (Stagshaw) to Gloucestershire (Batsford Arboretum).



Madeira

which took me a week, and I now know more about the thermal creep of reactor grade graphite than any normal person ought to!

But instead of getting a proper job he's now embarked on a PhD in 'Advanced Materials' at Manchester. At least it's sponsored, so they won't starve.



Lynne, Peter, Susie & Liam in Vaduz (Liechtenstein)

Lynne's Mum continues to be content in her care home, but her Dad is becoming increasingly frail and had a close call in the summer when he was rushed into hospital with an infected gall bladder and stone. But he's obviously a tough old bird and has now recovered completely.

Ben & Heather – are doing well. Ben finished his MSc, but had to have an extension on his dissertation because of problems with the laboratory equipment, and as a result it has only just been handed in. He got me to proof read it for him,

Heather also finished her course and is now a fully qualified Music Therapist. She is also *expecting a baby*, so all being well we will be **grandparents** in May. Hard to believe, isn't it! Names have been discussed and agreed on. Lynne will be Grandma Lynne, and I will be Grumpa. No idea what the baby will be called yet. In the meantime we are referring to it as 'Bob'.



Susie & Liam

Susie – or more properly Susie & Liam, since they seem to be settling down together. I base this opinion on the fact that they have now bought a house in Sheffield and have a joint mortgage, so it must be serious. Susie has just done her final accountancy exam, but hasn't got the results yet. Liam is working in the N Midlands but can spend a least one day a week working from home, so it's manageable.



Ben & Heather



Peter helps out in Susie & Liam's garden

Peter – is now in his final year at Huddersfield doing Music Technology, and is enjoying it even more this year as he gets to spend more time doing the things he is really interested in. He would have liked to spend this year on a placement, but times are hard and not many companies are offering them at the moment.

In his spare time he performs with a local band "Fauna", and he is still a keen skateboarder. In fact, he was filmed skating for a music video recently, but he says you can't recognize him and I can't recall who the artist is, so we haven't managed to see it yet!

I think that just about covers the main points. And so, as the torch bearer of hope, rounds the corner of opportunity into the Olympic stadium of destiny only to be greeted by the Safety Officer of fate with the fire extinguisher of eternity, I notice that it's the end of another newsletter.

It only remains to wish you all a joyful Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year.

With love from,

Ian & Lynne & the family