

## Some Thoughts on the E.U.

It emerged earlier this year that while the Lords Prayer has 56 words, the ten commandments have 297 words, and the American declaration in Independence has 1300 words - the EU directive on *duck eggs* has 26,911 words. I'm sure it's all the clearer for it!

Someone also pointed out this year that the new EC regulations on noise levels now make it illegal to listen to Beethoven's 9th symphony without wearing ear defenders. Good to see they are still making sensible regulations over there!

Coincidentally, we were in France on January 1st 2002 and so we were present at the birth of the Euro, and two incidents remain in the memory.

Firstly, the poor sandwich lady in Paris, (who was operating at full capacity just selling sandwiches), trying to cope with the new money. Adding the prices up in euros, taking francs, and giving

the change in euros was just too much for her.

And secondly that night at the Moulin Rouge. Having seen the card on the table that said quietly that all drinks were a minimum of 69 euros (yes - 69 euros - £46 - *each*) we were a little wary. However the lady photographer, when asked how much a photograph was, replied "one seventy nine". At ten francs to the pound it was expensive, but worth it to record the event. It was after she had gone that we realised we were wrong. Liz thought she meant one euro seventy nine (about a pound - as if...), but I realised it meant euros - one hundred and seventeen pounds!!! It was one of those moments when your blood runs cold, your stomach knots, and you are *very* grateful for your plastic! As it turned out she had actually quoted us francs, and I have never been so grateful for a photograph costing a mere eighteen quid!



## How to dig a Duck Pond

### Holiday

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had to drive into Calgary - not good for Terry's blood pressure! From Calgary, we drove to the most beautiful place we have ever been to - Emerald Lake. Just a hotel on an island in the middle of a lake, but truly beautiful, and well worth the visit. We ended up at Echo Valley Ranch for four days where we rode every day in 30 degrees of heat. Terry is now an

This is a stuck digger. It has nothing to do with me, and it is what happens when you leave your cousins on the farm to dig a duck pond. I didn't ask how they got it out - but I think they may be back next year for more.

### Getting Older

As I say goodbye to my last year as a fifty-something I realise that over the last few years, I have visited my doctor ever more frequently, and I now seem

## The Sunday Times Magazine

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No, it's not just our favourite national conceit. A few years back, a study by Japan's equivalent of the Department of Trade and Industry concluded that 54% of the world's most

important inventions over the past 100 years were British. Of the rest, 25% were American and 5% Japanese. "The Americans aren't so good at invention because they think everything's just great," said Mandy Haberman, millionaire inventor of the leakproof Anywayup Cup for toddlers. "They're not nearly critical or bloody-minded enough." As for the Japanese, they appear too thoroughly conformist to be capable of off-the-wall thinking.

### Computers!

Ever since we got back from our holiday in July our computers have been a mess. The first thing was that the internet machine got a virus - presumably through email - and although McAfee claimed to have got rid of it, the machine was never the same. It seemed to go off into a day dream now and then. The video machine hadn't been right for some time, and neither of my two major experts were sure why.

Then, one day the internet machine got another virus, and if that had been all, although it would have infected Liz's machine, I would have caught it

the next morning. But, before I discovered it, I moved an infected program to my video machine and all of our machines had it.

As I write, we are still off the air, and the virus is still on the video machine, which is awaiting a trip to Bradford to be reloaded.

I was not properly prepared, and so it was much more of a disaster than it need have been. I am now much better prepared, although I have had to spend some of the hard-earned to get there, and if you would like to know what I have done, let me know, and I will try to get something printed.

## Photographs on the computer.

Because of the wedding, I had a lot of photographs to process this year, and I printed them all on the computer (before they all went down - see above).

I rediscovered the joys of enlarging and printing one's own prints - just like developing the old black-and-white films I used to do in my youth, but much less smelly, and in full daylight! Definitely one up for the

computer. The quality is at least as good as printed photographs, if you go about it the right way, and of course, there is very little waiting. They are cheaper than printed photos, but not as much as you might think. An A4 sheet of photo paper is about 50p, and the ink to print on it is another 50p.

You don't need a digital camera (although you can use one), just a good quality scanner, a photographic quality printer, and the right paper. Recommended - Epson & Canon printers and scanners, and Adobe PhotoShop LE. And *always* use Ilford paper and the manufacturer's

to spend more time in his waiting room than in my own living room.

As a result of this, the sponge bag gets fuller each time we go

away. This was brought home to me forcefully recently when, in a bleary early morning rummage, I nearly cleaned my teeth with the anus!!

### Christmas 2002

#### Warning!!

This issue is NOT funny. It has been a serious year, so the laughs are a bit thin on the ground.

You may just prefer to chuck the whole thing straight in the bin.

You have been warned.

## A Big Year

This year has had a couple of milestones. Liz's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in March and our Silver Wedding in November. I (Liz) had some interesting presents, among them a pogo stick and a trampoline - obviously 50 year olds need to do a lot of bouncing!

Terry surpassed himself and presented me with a bit of a surprise - a 1964, pale blue E type Jaguar. Quite beautiful with a sound to make your knees go weak. However, she (the car) was quickly named Nash (see *Two Weddings and a Wedding* above) because she didn't seem to like the outdoors at all - too cold and wet.

To start with, it took several months and Earl's (see *Friends Reunited* - page 3) sharp ear to work out why she wouldn't start. That was fixed and then during a trip to have the speedo fixed (it read 120 mph while sat at traffic lights!) she stopped completely - once on the way there, and again on the way back - and we decided that really to have a car of that age and temperament you need to be a bit of a mechanic - and I'm not. I can do the chrome cleaning and TLC in general, and even put oil in the dash-pots, but getting oil

too short a time, she went back from whence she came.

Although she was a short lived pleasure, the joy of driving something so beautiful will stay with me for ever and none of the planning and subterfuge to find her (involving blindfolded drives through the wilds of Leicestershire) was wasted! Many brownie points were earned!

We celebrated our Silver Wedding very quietly having spent quite a lot on the Canada trip, but I do have to mention the 25 red roses, which were

on your best clothes and messing about under the bonnet wasn't my thing. So after all



From there we flew to Vancouver and from there we started a week's cruise up the Inside Passage to see icebergs calve in Glacier Bay. We went horse riding up in

# The Knowle Farm

## Two Weddings and a Wedding!

Our big story this year is the wedding of our daughter, Vicki, to Naresh. They were married on the 19<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> of July this year. The reason for the two dates (and a third to come next year) is that, while Vicki is a Christian, Naresh is Hindu. The Hindu wedding ceremony is not recognised by the authorities in this country (perhaps as it is all in Sanskrit which compares roughly to Latin in European terms), and Naresh (also known as Nash), as a Hindu, cannot go through a full Christian wedding. So. A civil ceremony to get the deed done. A Hindu ceremony so that the Indian contingent feel they are married, and a Christian blessing so that the European contingent feel that they are

married. Terry's impressions.

I was expecting the civil ceremony to be really not much more than a formality, but it was really lovely. I had suggested to

them that, as the civil ceremony only requires that you make two fairly simple statements to each other before the assembled throng, they learn them by heart rather than go through the "repeat after me" performance



## A Holiday to Remember

As this was a milestone year, we decided to fulfil a long held dream of ours to visit Alaska and Canada. We had planned the trip but not yet bought the airline tickets when Terry made contact with Dick Meades with whom he played in a band at school (See *Friends Reunited* - page 3) Dick and his wife Maria live in Montreal and we started our trip with a weekend with them. We had a brilliant time, and are hoping to go back and see them again.

the Yukon with our guide equipped with a shotgun to ward off grizzly bears. We saw bald eagles fishing in Ketchikan and Liz managed to stay on board a cruise ship for a week without having a nervous breakdown! She had threatened to spend the whole time in her Mae West in a lifeboat, but with a little counselling she managed to behave reasonably well.

Then we took the Rocky Mountaineer train from Vancouver to Jasper - a fabulous trip through three mountain ranges seeing more wildlife and wonderful views. From Jasper we drove, (very slowly to try and see a bear) to Calgary for the Stampede, via the Ice field Parkway, where you can walk on a glacier. The Stampede was slightly marred by Terry having an eye problem, which meant Liz

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## Friends Reunited

It has been a great year for me (Terry) with Friends Reunited, the web site that puts you in touch with old school friends.

I had lost contact with all the people I was at school with, mostly through moving around a lot, and there were certainly one or two that I would have loved to meet again - so for me, Friends Reunited was a Godsend.

It started off with an email from Dick, who used to sing in the band I played in when I was at school, who has been living in Canada for many years. Then I spotted a name I remembered from primary school, and during the course of the year Liz and I have contacted and met up with half a dozen people.

We were a little trepidatious about the first couple of meetings, but I have now realised that what happens is that the door opens to reveal the person you are meeting and your brain takes about five seconds to age the sixteen year old you remember into the nearly sixty year old you now see, and then it seems as if nothing much has changed. The body has aged, but the people are pretty much unchanged. It is really wonderful.

Jean was the first. She dropped in on her way back from a long weekend while we were lambing this year. We deliberately planned it so that it could be a short or a long meeting as neither of us was very sure how it would work out. In the event it was a wonderful afternoon - we just sat and chatted and chatted. It always amazes me how much people remember.

We did a trip in May to visit another couple of new/old friends, and Christine, the lady from my primary school, had many school photographs, but ruined one of my best Christmas stories. When the subject of nativity plays comes up, and gets round to which of the characters various people played, I usually have a bit of a conversation stopper - I played the tortoise. Not much you can follow that with. Christine, however, insists that I was a boring old King. So its not all good news.

Rita, (who broke my heart fairly comprehensively at fifteen), was very much as I remembered. But, after a lovely evening with her and her husband, it was great to revisit my hormone charged emotions of all those years ago, and close a chapter in my life which needed closing. We have met them again since, and look forward to more pleasant evenings together in the future.

Earl came up for a week, and Liz says that it seemed we just carried on where we left off all those years ago. We used the week to fit a new gate up the fields, and although there was



much use of the spirit level, not much seems to have come out either vertical or horizontal. I blame Earl of course.

Lastly there was Dick, who we stayed with on our trip to Canada, and his wife. And another friend from school, John, who also lives near Montreal. Again, a fantastic weekend, it was just as if we had seen each other yesterday.

Yes, Friends Reunited gets my vote. Any of you out there who would like to contact old school friends try [www](http://www).



## The Farming Report

Farming here has changed a bit this year as a result of several things coming up together. Our flock of ewes was ageing, and most of them had pretty much finished their useful life, so we needed to bring in some fresh blood, which would be very expensive. Andy just lambed his own flock here this year, and was grateful to be lambing only 350 ewes instead of the usual 550. Part of Andy's responsibilities when we started together was to train me to run the farm, and now that I was able to do some of that, unsurprisingly, he left me to it. Also unsurprisingly, perhaps, I didn't want that much responsibility.

So a change seemed indicated. We sold all the ewes to Andy along with the ewe lambs that we kept from last year, and bought a new flock of this years lambs - just six months old. These are normally considered too young to breed from, so we will let them have the run of the place for the next twelve months while they mature.

(You don't measure a young ewe's age in years as they are usually

born January to April time, but are sold in September. So they start as ewe lambs, and they are then are categorised by the number of times they have been sheared - and they are sheared the first time around their first birthday. Interestingly, as they get older they get another set of teeth each year for two years, so they are then called four teeth, or six teeth. Later, as they get old, they start to lose their teeth, and are called broken mouthed. It makes birthdays look like a good idea doesn't it?)

So, next year, having claimed the subsidy, we will sell our ewe lambs as shearlings, and we should make a tenner or so per head. This will pay to run the farm, so Andy is still here, and on the surface, not much will change. There will still be lambing here, Liz will still get to provide most of the post natal care required and look after the orphanage, lambs will still gambol in the fields in the spring sunshine, but we will not be lambing our own flock.

We will see how it goes - but it looks like phase 2 of the