

**THE INGWELL SAGA - CHAPTER 24**

Happy Christmas to you and yours. Once again the man of the family has the key, executive role of typing our news offering for 1993 - Bridget has merely composed it, and the children may read it if they manage to find time in their busy social schedule!

As ever the year has been a busy one "Grandad Sam" (Stuart's Father) has settled in well - he has a small sitting room (The Den) and a bedroom on the ground floor and is living "the life of Riley". He isn't southernised as yet and keeps up traditions such as bacon & egg breakfasts which our waist lines forced us to abandon years ago. In many ways he has slotted into the role that the children had; he even has friends that we disapprove of - the gambling fraternity in the local pub - so life has not changed too much. He is a fully fledged member of the Senior Citizens "Derby & Joan" Club and gets around in a battery-powered car when he needs to travel any distance.

Stuart's firm won the contract to develop a Collision Warning System for low-flying, fast-jet aircraft and he is project manager. He gets more job satisfaction than he did in his previous marketing role and the work is more varied. It covers high tech equipment development as well as aeroplanes so what more could he wish for except to be paid a decent wage for doing it! Actually so many of the firms in this locality are doing badly that it is distinctly unwise to even think about being overstretched/under-resourced/under-paid and the recent Ferranti debacle is a salutary reminder to anyone working in the defence sector.

Bridget is finding work very rewarding and she has a classroom with four walls to call her own for the first time in 10 years at the school - that's progress for you. She is working with a lovely bunch of people and they all manage to keep smiling in spite of the pressures of John Patten, SATS and the National Curriculum. She is playing tennis once a week in order to stay fit and of course walloping a ball around the court helps to relieve a lot of tension depending on whose head you pretend that it is! She occasionally holds down a place in the Ladies Team but not always.

We both spend a lot of time in the garden at weekends and keep generally busy planting, pruning and re-seeding. Our garden is now enclosed by a wood panelled fence and we have lost our view across the open fields as the new housing development creeps up around us. We still have no actual new neighbours but we realise that we shall see a lot of changes to our quiet country life in the next 5 years. Daniel is still away in France studying. He finishes the European section of his course in February and then moves back to Leeds for the last term and finals! His French is fluent and he is much more confident about his course; however, he has missed English beer, bacon, fish fingers & beans and Yorkshire pudding. Even living in a flat above a MacDonalds (yes -French cuisine is under threat as well) with 3 lovely girls does not compensate he says for student pub life in Leeds. We are looking forward to seeing him over the holiday although he will probably be kept busy doing his silver service waiter job at the local restaurant.

Charlie is also a fully fledged student now. She began a combined studies degree course at Nene College, Northampton and has settled down quickly to her new lifestyle. She is enjoying her independence but missing a warm hearth, TV on tap, and constant free use of the telephone. She shares a house with a lovely group of girls and of course we are delighted to see her happy and settled. Bridget misses her but not nearly as much as Polo the cat who now has to make do with an occasional cuddle from us rather than being smothered with affection each and every hour. Charlie considered taking Polo to live with her in Northampton but decided that she would not appreciate town life and might get run over on the roads.

Our Christmas celebrations will be cut short here in Bracknell because we have decided to take-off for France on Boxing day in search of snow. We intend to drive down to our place in Labenne and then across to the Pyrenees for a few days to do some skiing. We are all excited at the prospect of holidaying since it's a long time since we last skied as a family group. We are all praying for good snow in the Caunteret/Barège area .....

We send you the Season's Greetings and wish you a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Love from Stuart, Bridget, Daniel, Charlotte, (and Polo).