

THE INGWELL SAGA - CHAPTER 25

Happy Christmas to you and yours. They say that the older you are the faster the weeks and years roll by, but it seems such a short while since last Christmas!

We are all fit and well except perhaps for Stuart's father Sam who has developed eczema in his old age. He is finding it hard to deal with, but is booked for some allergy treatment at the local hospital early in the New Year so we are hoping the specialist can offer a little more advice

We are expecting Daniel home for Christmas having finished his last term in Leeds and with his dissertation completed and submitted for final assessment. He now hopes to have 6 months off to do something different before he begins a career and life in the world of commerce/finance. He has no fixed plans and talks variously of working in a ski resort, a pub, or just travelling.

Charlotte is in her second year at Nene College and enjoying life. Her student house in Northampton is very cosy and the friends she is with get on well together and make a lovely group. I went to see her at half-term and took my mother. We had a lovely day out and learned a lot about modern living from 'veggie' meals and mini skirts to Hip Hop and Rap. Charlie is coming home for Christmas and has reserved a slot as a waitress at the White Hart working with her old school chums.

Stuart and I have had a busy year but managed to take some time out to enjoy ourselves. Our biggest treat was the celebration of our 25th wedding anniversary. Our honeymoon was in Yugoslavia, so we decided to go back to the Isles of Scilly instead! It was a place that we visited in our first year of marriage when we lived in Padstow, Cornwall (Stuart was at RAF St Mawgan). This time we flew from Land's End to St Mary's in a ten seat aircraft at 500ft over the waves - quite a thrill. We visited some old haunts like the gardens at Tresco and the Island of Bryher (where we first camped) but also discovered some new and exciting areas. We would love to go back again but will probably have to wait for our Golden Anniversary.

Our little French studio is still a delight and we visit it regularly. This year we have enjoyed taking friends but the accommodation is somewhat limited, so watch this space for the next building/extension plans - after all it's over a year since we last disrupted house and home in England. Anyway we hope to convert the garage sometime during next year into a new master bedroom. Fortunately we know a lovely English guy who lives nearby and works as an artisan (posh french word for builder but without the cleavage); he is prepared to help us with the work. Stuart will do the electrics, Gerard (Posh name too) will do the main construction work and I will simply feed the workers, serving glasses of wine rather than cups of tea, and sitting in the sun at every opportunity.

Our plans for the Christmas holiday include a journey to S.France on the 27th December and (snow permitting) we will have a few days skiing in the Pyrennees. Before that we are involved in organising a Christmas party for our church friends. St Michael's (our main church) decided to 'plant' a new church in some modern school premises on the growing new estate which is adjacent to our back garden. I am a church-appointed, school governor and Stuart is chairman of the Mission Committee so we tend to get involved one way or another. Our job is to arrange party games for 60 people on the 17th so that will keep us out of mischief. It should be fun and hopefully we will get to know some of our new of neighbours better.

We wish you and yours all the very best for Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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