

THE INGWELL SAGA - CHAPTER 26

Happy Christmas. I wouldn't want to be the one to suggest that the years are getting shorter but where did 1995 go? - I think we must have suffered some sort of time warp. I blame these Galileo people for taking a spaceprobe to Jupiter (surely the achievement of the year). I'm afraid the Ingwell saga is tame by comparison although it has been a year to remember, and guess who celebrated his half century in June! [Secreteries Note: I reckon to be only 43 when the effects of time dilation due to over-indulgence are taken into account]. We had a great time and if you are amongst the friends who couldn't make it to the party the full stop at the end of this sentence is champagne impregnated just for you (but do not lick it all at once). It was a garden party and the weather was perfect. Daniel looked after the BBQ and Charlotte the bar, and things like crazy-croquet, air-ball golf, and badminton-without-net, looked after themselves.

As far as work is concerned we are both beavering away and working hard to move inexorably down the career tree. Stuart remains with GEC in Project Management (particularly projects associated with aircraft Collision Warning) and Bridget is still in Birch Hill school (Juniors) with special responsibility for maths and discipline. Stuart has given up fighting the flab and decided that it is easier to move up one waist size whilst Bridget is still doing battle at the local tennis club once a week (2 years younger you see!); it provides a chance to unwind and enjoy some fresh air even on winter evenings - under floodlights. Bridget holds down a regular place in the veterans team but her hold on a place in the more competitive "Seconds" is somewhat tenuous.

Our garden is still very important to us although we are now surrounded by the new development, and planting more and more trees/hedges in the vain hope of retaining enclosed privacy. Actually there are advantages to having neighbours and it adds spice to life. One of them bears an uncanny resemblance to Hyacinth Bucket (pronounced Bouquet) in her manner. (PS for non-UK residents - English soap character). Another new neighbour is a gentle giant of 6ft 6" and father of an adorable set of twin girls - the village could really wake up in a few years time.

Grandad Sam ("The Patriarch" in our unfolding saga) is still thriving at 87 years but visits the pub in his battery car less often these days and finds it difficult to walk any distance. But, he still enjoys his pipe and the sport, especially snooker on TV - and visits his "Derby & Joan" club twice every week.

Charlie is now a 3rd year student at Nene College and expects to graduate in 1996. She is quite an organiser, and after working through the summer hols, arranged a cruise-crossing from Portsmouth to Bilbao with a group of four friends in an old banger. Needless to say their ultimate destination was our holiday home in Labenne, which is normally quiet in September. It seems that this year the season did not wind down quite so early and Biarritz can never be described as "chic" again after a prolonged assault by the Famous Five. However they returned home relaxed and with sun (rather than night club) tans ready to face the rigours of the Final Year

Daniel graduated (Hons: 2/ii) in the summer and in November we attended the degree-award ceremony in Leeds' Town Hall; it was a very auspicious, well-organised affair and a proud day for us all. However Daniel did not sit for his "cap & gown" photograph alone - never one for half measures he graduated and fell in love at the same time! At the beginning of November he asked Joanne to marry him and the date is set for this time next year. We are all thrilled - excited - happy and amazed: our beer swilling, football playing batchelor son is now a responsible adult saving up to get married. He has taken a job with Thorn Securities in the Finance Dept of their head office in Sunbury and Jo is with the marketing department of Microsoft in W. London - you can imagine how busy that was when Windows 95 was launched! It seems strange to hear Dan talking about rings, cakes receptions, and wedding bells but watch this space for the next episode in this exciting drama, only one year to wait

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

Love from Stuart, Bridget, Daniel, Charlotte,