



# Christmas Letter

## 2000

As the first year of the new millennium draws to a close, you start to wonder where it's gone. Following all the hype at the start, it all went very quiet, with no major computer failures after all. As some people said at the time, "It's just another year... I don't know what all the fuss is about!" Never the less, we celebrated in style with a party at my Sister Elaine's home in Chester - it's amazing what you can do for a Disco, given a laptop PC, an amplifier, speakers and a few fairy lights. The boys both stayed up to see in the New Year for the first time and assume that it will be the same every year!

You only start to notice how fast Richard and Edward are growing up, when you realise that they have both finished at their respective schools since moving to Stone four years ago. As they have a three-tier system here, Edward has just moved up from the First to the Middle School following Richard, who now goes to the High School. Homework seems to arrive in ever increasing amounts, along with demands for money for one activity or another!

2000 seems to have been the year for holidays... Richard went on a skiing trip to Austria for nine days, with his school, in February, which he thoroughly enjoyed. So, feeling in need of a holiday ourselves, we took off to Crete at May half term. The weather was good - although windy at times, especially when driving back in an open-top jeep over the narrow mountain roads. Crete is not as picturesque as some Greek Islands, however we did find some breathtaking scenery, particularly the Samari Gorge. Nearer to home in the summer holidays, we stayed at a friend's cottage in South Wales, which was a nice break. The boys particularly liked sleeping in the attic bedrooms. Finally we spent a couple of days in London, seeing the sights, doing the Dome and riding on the London Eye. On the first night we took the boys to see Starlight Express, which I would recommend as an ideal show for children as well as entertaining for adults.

The garden landscaping continued this year, re-laying the patio, levelling the back garden and putting down a new lawn. I left the lawn until the end of the summer, just in case it dried out too much. As it turns out, I needn't have worried about the lack of rain, in fact, I think I could have planted rice! Fortunately we were not affected by flooding ourselves, although some parts of the town were. Alison's school hall floor is suffering from the after effects and now needs re-laying. You realise just how bad things have been for some people, when viewing Bewdley on the T.V. - seeing the river side path under water, where we had walked only a few weeks before.

Patch (our pet rabbit) died a couple of months ago. Since having Lucky (a black and white cat) he seemed to have found a new lease of life playing tag in the garden, but he caught a chill and sadly, never recovered. He is now at the bottom of the garden under his favourite bush. Richard bought a miniature rose as a memorial.

Mum and Dad have settled well in Chester, they have an active social life and still enjoy dancing. It is handy being so close to Elaine, although Alexander has now gone to University and Natasha is very busy these days! I think that they would like to see more of the boys as they too are growing up fast. Richard is almost as tall as I am and Edward is catching up with his Mum!

I am kept busy at work these days, designing and delivering training mainly for BT people, although the company that I work for now is called "e-peopleserve" and is a 50% joint venture with Andersen Consulting. Alison now works three days per week as a Reception / Year 1 Classroom Assistant. As a trained Teacher, she is often given the responsibility of looking after a group of children. There are a higher than average number of children with "special needs" in her class at the moment and things are particularly hectic with an OFSTED inspection in progress.

Christmas is coming and I currently have two new PCs built - almost ready for dispatch, as well as several more in for repair/upgrade. I have been running my "Build Your Own Computer" course at the local High School for over two years now. However, I still seem to have as much work as ever - never mind it keeps me off the streets as they say! Alison started a Yoga class in September, but unfortunately had to finish at half term, as the teacher is no longer able to run the evening class.

Alison says that I write Christmas letters that are too much like a business report, so here is a joke that Edward found on a "Wotsits" packet:

Q. "Why did the orange stop rolling down the hill".

A. "It ran out of juice".

I am hoping to upload a few family photos to our website over the next few days, so have a look at:

[www.hannafore.btinternet.co.uk/photos](http://www.hannafore.btinternet.co.uk/photos)

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*Wishing you and your  
family a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year*

*Nigel, Alison,  
Richard & Edward*

