



# Christmas Letter 2004

Well, what a year it has been... It all started in that period between Christmas and New Year when we had a few friends round for a bit of a get together. Two out of three of those friends, who moved to Staffordshire at the same time as us (eight years ago), took jobs back in mainstream BT, whilst I stayed in training. All of us now have teenage families and started to discuss how they tend to take over your house when they bring their friends around and how handy it would be to have a room for them and still have space for yourself?

House prices have more than doubled in Stone in the time that we have lived here, which is great from the investment point of view, but it also means that the gap between what you have and would like is ever widening. To cut a long story short, having found somewhere that we liked (with an extra downstairs room and a nice garden), we decided to take the plunge!

We moved house in May, (self move) having emptied most of the contents of the roof and garage into a neighbour's garage to make things easier. We brought our cat (Lucky) with us, but unfortunately he became a little too adventurous and sadly came to grief on the road opposite. We did however acquire some new pets in the form of Coy Carp and Goldfish in the garden pond.

In the summer my Aunt, Uncle & Cousin (Jessie, Don & Jane) came over from Canada to celebrate my Mum's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday and to visit some old friends here and in Minorca. Richard had arranged to go on holiday to Corfu with a friend from college and his family, whilst we opted to stay in a friend's caravan at Filey. So far, so good, until we received a phone call from Corfu to say that Richard had gone missing...

It would appear that the holiday had not turned out as he had expected so he had decided to make his way home (without letting us know!). Eventually, some hours and many phone calls later, he did make contact and we were re-united in Filey! So, feeling somewhat happier now, we were surprised to receive another phone call from our new neighbour to say that there had been flash floods in Stone and that perhaps we ought to come home as more had been forecast!!

We were actually flooded three times in two weeks, the worst being on 16<sup>th</sup> August. I won't bore you with the details, but suffice to say; over 60 properties locally were affected by what turned out to be the tail end of a hurricane! If you really are interested, I have captured it all on a website: <http://home.btconnect.com/alfa>.

So, slowly but steadily we are getting back to "normal", although we have taken the opportunity to make a few improvements at the same time (whilst the place is upside down). Fortunately the upstairs is sufficiently spacious to house most of our furniture, so we have become quite used to living on the first floor! We also ended up changing our car, not because we wanted to, but when I notified the insurance company that it had been flooded, they had the local Ford dealers take photographs and subsequently wrote it off! So, we are now on our third Mondeo Estate. No doubt we will need to get some sort of "run around" so that Richard can have something to practice in when he learns to drive, as I would imagine insuring a 17 year old to drive a 2 litre car would be cost prohibitive to say the least!

Richard has now started his BTEC course at Newcastle College, having completed his GNVQ Intermediate with flying colours and is talking about going back to Nottingham to do a degree. He finished his job at the local newsagents when his boss sold the business in June and has since had numerous jobs at weekends working in Hotels and Night Clubs. Whilst he enjoys the atmosphere and the music, the hours are not really ideal when you need to be up for college on Monday, so he has opted to work at the local branch of Woolworths on the run up to Christmas instead.

Edward still has numerous interests, including model making and keyboard, although he has now finished at Swimming Club and Scouts is starting to loose its appeal. He is looking forward to me emptying some things out of the roof, so that he can build a model railway up there. He started at the High School in September (Year 9) and seems to be taking it all in his stride, although getting up in the mornings to get there on time is still a bit of a challenge!

Alison continues to work at the local first school as an AST Supply Teacher at least one day per week and fills in at other times when required. When not working or running the home, she attends her Yoga class and NWR meetings at Trentham. She visited Trentham Gardens recently with a friend. The site is undergoing a facelift at the moment after many years of neglect, so hopefully some of the old buildings will be restored to their former glory. Early signs look promising.

I continue to work mainly from home these days, although still based in Yarnfield. I have recently taken on the job of an NVQ Assessor for some BT IT Apprentices. Mine are based mainly in the south, so that will involve some travelling and a change of scene as I visit them in their various workplaces.

All that remains is for us to wish you all the very best for Christmas and the New Year and ask you to make a note of our new address... If you ever decide to venture as far as Sunny Staffordshire, please call (see enclosed location Map).

Kind Regards

*Nigel, Alison,  
Richard & Edward.*



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## Location Map:

To Stone Town Centre

