

The Williamses Annual Christmas Newsletter for 2005

Yet again we've had a busy year with a number of notable events, chief of which was Jennie's wedding:

Wedding of the Year!

Jennie and Ian spent much of the year planning their wedding, and then we had the event in August. They were married in Uppermill Parish Church, complete with choir and bells, and had their reception at the Saddleworth Hotel. Lovely service, great do. It was nice that Samantha and Elizabeth were able to come over from Strasbourg for the event and of course Peter and Lianne with Jack and Thomas were there as well, plus Rhys' cousin Geoff with Kath, Vanessa and Ashleigh, and of course family from Jennie's Mum's and Ian's sides, together with cricket and football players and lots of their friends and work colleagues.



Jennie and Ian honeymooned on a motoring tour of mid-Europe, through Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Italy and only just managed to avoid the floods in the first few days - they just arrived as the Danube burst its banks, but managed to find sunshine and warmth further south.

The rest of the year, for us all:

Our year started with a New Year stay at Charingworth Manor in the Cotswolds, which we had picked out for a dinner dance on New Year's Night and lots of local walking. This didn't really work out, however, as Jean had broken a bone in her foot - the second metatarsal - before Christmas and was still on crutches. However we did win the treasure hunt (by car) and came away with a bottle of champagne! Rhys finished a contract in London at the end of 2004, leaving Jean working there for a month or so into 2005, and we've both been working since.



We still had our house in the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich into February but let it go when Jean 'retired' from the mortgage company she was with. So we both came back home and had a quick trip to Strasbourg to see Samantha, Elizabeth and Mike (courtesy of RyanAir from Stansted and a hire car from Baden-Baden). Rhys was asked to do some work in the North West, for a change, for a Contact Centre support organisation, so he was working with them from March to October, but then stopped and has been doing various improvement jobs in the house since - retirement might be harder work than working!

Elizabeth at home near Strasbourg

Jean was asked if she'd mind her CV going forward to one of our agency's clients to fill out the numbers, but she came away with the job, so she's been working in Aintree, Liverpool since March, merging the financial services businesses of the UK's largest catalogue company, though now with slightly shorter hours. This might finish this year-end, or might run on into next year!



In May we had visits first from Jean's Aunt Ann and cousin Mike and later cousin Teresa with Teresa's daughter Lisa, all from Australia. It was very nice to see them and we now have someone else to look up if we ever get to the Antipodes.

In late June we went to France for our main holiday. Owing to our friend Gary's splendid 50th birthday party we went from Hull on a mini-'cruise' to Rotterdam to get us started and save the long drive south on the 'morning after'. We drove to Strasbourg and had a few days there with Samantha and Elizabeth, then on to Annecy, which we hadn't been to for some years. It was raining there and the weather looked well set in so we went on further south to Avignon and stayed there a few days in glorious hot sunshine. Although we visited *le pont d'Avignon*, we missed out on the singing and dancing!



Jean 'Sur le Pont, d'Avignon'

From Avignon we went back to Annecy for a few days, where the sun was now shining, and enjoyed trips on the lake and some rowing practice! Then we went off to Lucerne in Switzerland for another few days, staying on the lake shore at Vitznau and doing the mountain railway trip up Mt Rigi. We very much enjoyed everywhere we visited, including the fabulous Château de Ligny where we stayed (north of Reims) on the way home. We've agreed the area around Avignon is probably the part of France we've liked the best so far, having just beaten our previous favourite of the Languedoc / Catalan area near the Spanish border. So we'll just have to go some more! (Can't wait!)

Now Rhys may have finished work and looks like staying that way we might be able to get properly into our retirement, if Jean stops soon(!) We've had a few other weekends away to generate inspiration, the latest being at Rhydcroesau in Shropshire, right on the Welsh border.



David and Lynne are still in Droitwich, and David's still on a contract in Telford that could go on a good while longer. They've built a conservatory this year to go with the splendid circular deck in the garden. Their holidays this year have been in the UK, including Cornwall, the Lake District and the Isle of Wight. Here they are at Jennie & Ian's Wedding

We've been down to Dorset a number of times during the year to see Rhys' mother. She's now on broadband and, although she finds it difficult sometimes, we think she's doing incredibly well for 81. She's now got an electric scooter to get about on - look out Swanage!



Peter and Lianne's boys, Thomas and Jack, have been doing well. We look after Tommy two days a week now that Lianne's gone back to work. Peter and Lianne are both now 'homeworkers' which suits them well - they don't have the trek into town and back every day. But of course they can't have the children in the way of work so still need childcare for Tommy, and Jack outside his



school times of course. They all had their holiday in Cornwall this year but are planning for another trip to Orlando next year.

You can see more about our exploits on the internet at:

www.williamses.org.uk

We wish you peace and happiness for Christmas and 2006



Love and best wishes from Jean and Rhys

