

**Field House, Toadsmoor, Brimscombe,
Stroud, GL5 2UL
01453 884268**



First of all thanks to those of you who have sent us cards and good wishes, it does cheer one up in this rather miserable weather. We had the big chill a week or so ago and now it seems we are in for another one. Is it all a result of climate change? Who knows? I listened to the results of the Cancun conference, some sort of agreements had been reached, but they seemed to be fairly modest, even if rather better than the nil results achieved at Copenhagen. But not a word on population control. The 'p' word seems to continue to be off the agenda. PC is obviously not 'pc'.

I read an interesting analogy to our current position. Imagine an amoeba in a test tube full of nutrients. The amoebas divide and soon there are lots of them. Apparently, we are at the stage where the test tube is half full of amoebas. They think – because these are thinking amoebas – that everything is rosy because they have half a test tube of nutrients left. Unfortunately for them, they go through their next cell division and that's it! Test tube full of amoebas and no nutrient! But Meg says I must not be gloomy, so I shall open a bottle of red wine – before it all runs out – toast our healths and try again!



What a wonderful year! We had a really great week in Bali in February and then a week in Goa, southwest India, for a further week, made even better by Jess and Pete coming too. Lots of laughs, lots of sun, culture and climbing volcanoes! We also spent a long time in Qatar airport, including an uncomfortable overnight break. I do not recommend it. Apparently they are building an even bigger new airport, now they

have the Olympics, the World Cup and everything else going there. Well it is an utterly barren bit of desert with an ocean of oil under it. A friend of mine tells me they are gearing up on this and so raising billions and billions, which means that they will eventually be in super debt like everybody else. But Meg is looking over my shoulder again, so I must concentrate on the good news.

Our good news is that eldest son Tom and girlfriend Helen are getting married next summer. We are absolutely delighted. Helen is lovely and they are a great advertisement for Match.com. Tom still spends a lot of time with his nose buried in his computer so it was great place for them to meet, and they are living happily together in Cardiff, where Tom continues to work at Penarth Marina. But I think he is getting itchy feet and wants to do more sailing, and also use his brain a little more. Whether these ambitions are compatible I am not sure, but hopefully Helen, being a very sensible girl, will help him find a happy compromise.



Jessie and Pete love their house in Stroud and are very happy there. Both have been promoted at work. Jessie is now a band 6 occupational therapist working in the community adapting people's homes so they can stay there, rather than being (expensively) looked after in hospital. It's priority work and so hopefully secure. More

than that she loves the work. Pete is now in charge of a team at Delphi, who make diesel fuel injectors for large trucks, and their work also continues to expand as they try to think of ever more clever ways to squeeze as many miles as possible out of a tank of diesel. It means more travelling and more responsibility for him, but he is coping well with it. Amazingly he also continues to find time to work at weekends on the Stroudwater canal restoration, and the trust has even paid for him to go on a chainsaw course, so he now has a certificate to prove it.



Sam is still living in Brighton, well Hove actually! He continues to be sound engineer for various local bands and venues, but has also branched out to work doing sound recording and gig work in London, so he gets plenty of variety. And he is getting better at issuing invoices and chasing them up so he even gets paid every now and then. He has a nice little flat, a good flat mate and a rather erratic (yes, I said erratic, but probably the other thing too) relationship with his girlfriend, the lovely Nina.

What about Meg and I you ask? Well, Meg has been very active, what with her breast feeding counselling, aerobics and fitness teaching, her pilates classes, etc. etc. but she has even found time to write a book. Her book on Pregnancy Pilates came out in October and you can find it on Amazon. She has copies for sale from home if you'd like one at a discount and signed to give to a friend! Just give us a ring or try her website at www.GreenValleyFitness.com

Me, I have got to the stage where I am really excited when the brown envelope arrives telling me the Government have decided to give me £125 towards my winter fuel bill. I then rush out to the woodpile and chainsaw yet another load of logs and think what a saving I have made, and that I can put the government's cheque towards better use than buying electricity. Well, the wooding keeps me fit and with the old house now double glazed and the wood burning stoves cranked up to the max we can feel warm despite the snow and icy weather. I do all sorts of other stuff, most of it too boring to tell you about, but the best bits are our travels and in particular, we also had a great trip to Crete this year. It was beautiful, interesting – because we looked at lots of archaeology – and a trip down memory lane too, because it reminded us of lovely holidays we had had there in the past.



I trust you all have a happy and peaceful 2011 – peaceful; sounds better than prosperous – and that this letter finds you fit and cheerful. Who could ask for more!

Lots of love,

Eliot and Meg XXX