



Christmas 2003

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Merry Christmas Everyone!

Again it has been a bit of a crazy year and we are never quite sure what is around the next corner. We are really enjoying living in this part of the world and don't regret leaving Swindon for a moment.

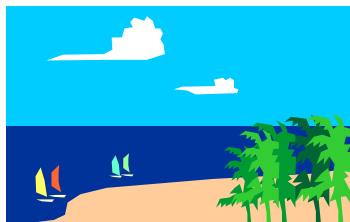
■ **Holidays** We travelled to the South of Spain (near Marbella) for a week just after Easter. We took my Mum with us as her 70th Birthday present. The weather was fantastic and we spent our time visiting local towns and villages and going to the beach. It was the first time Mum had put on a swimming costume and swam in the sea for years!



We went to San Diego, California in October to visit Julian's Dad. We were very fortunate as 5 days after we returned they had forest fires not far from their house and had to be packed and ready to evacuate at any time. The first week was rather cloudy at the coast with grey skies and drizzle (as you can imagine everyone was saying we had brought the weather with us). We drove out into the desert (just 1 hour from the coast) to get full sun and temperatures of 110°F!

■ **Sailing**

Again, we sailed a lot this year and we are still getting out regularly once a week. With Julian busy working throughout the Summer I ended up at the sailing club by myself quite frequently which has been very good for improving my sailing skills. We mainly sail during the week with a group called "The Potterers" who take their boats out for trips to local beaches and take a packed lunch. It is a great way of getting to know the local waters as well as good fun socially.



Our Sailing Club is proving to be a great success. Even though we have only been there for about 18 months we are now both on the Committee and will be at the Club for both Christmas and New Years parties over the next few weeks.

■ **Julian's Work** Julian trained up as a Dinghy Sailing Instructor in April and was immediately offered work by the sailing school he trained at. He went to the South of France for two weeks to teach school children from England. Since then the work has been more local in Poole, Southampton, Calshot and at Keyhaven where we keep our boat. He has been spending some of his time working for local sailing centres and any spare hours teaching private clients. The work at Southampton Sailing Centre is drying up now for the winter so he is currently putting his CV together to investigate getting a Software Design Contract for a few months during the winter.



■ **Lesley's Work** In spite of all I said in our last Christmas letter I ended up working for Brockenhurst College all year! Although I resigned after the first 6 weeks, they asked me to come back on a part time basis. This was a great improvement as I managed to give up the classes I hated and keep the ones I liked. Though it was still a relief to leave in July.

Soon after I left I started looking for a new job and decided to try out being an Estate Agent. I found a job with a local agent in Lymington and I have been working there for three days a week since the middle of August. Unfortunately the housing market has now gone rather quiet and is unlikely to pick up until about March so I am now down to two days a week.



My old boss from Brockenhurst College contacted me just after the start of term to ask if I could help out as they had recruited more students than they expected...well initially I said no...but now I am working there one day a week...glutton for punishment!

I am also training up to be a Garden Designer! I am doing an HNC in Garden Design one day a week plus homework!