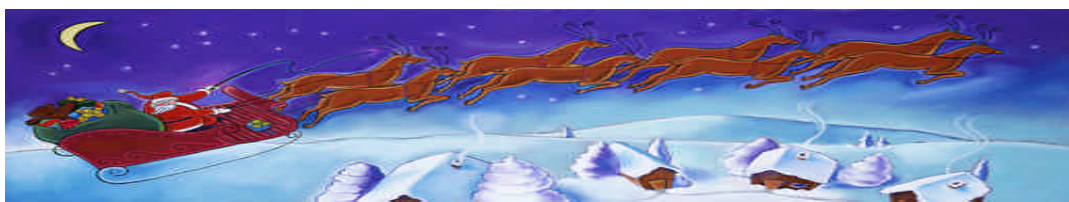


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# THE AYNLEY GARDNER

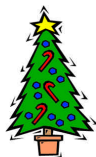


1, Aynsley Gardens, Harlow, Essex, CM17 9PB, UK

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**Weather** (or not...) This Autumn has been wet, wet, ... WET with record levels of rain, flooding, and train disruptions – especially in the south of the country – and no signs yet of a respite! Overseas readers, we do hope that your season has been drier!...



## Season's Greetings



**Forecast:** If it ever stops raining, I'm sure we'll soon get used to living in the 21st Century. And, in the coming (auspiciously numbered) year, I sure hope the folks up in the International Space Station keep an eye out for mysterious black slabs!

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## “All the News that's Fit to Print”!

### Welcome...

... to another holiday season and another addition of the 'Aynsley Gardner'! Looking back on the year, it has been another busy one for us with three trips abroad (see 'Postcards from...') a bunch of whirlwind days with friends visiting from the US in London (see 'Guestbook'), a smattering of week-end cycle camping trips (see 'On the Move') and quite a few plays and musical events – both here in Harlow and in London (see 'Out and About'). Also there were the usual birthdays (which means meals in restaurants!) and our yearly Thanksgiving celebrations.

Taken together, we've had a good year – hope you have too!

### Lost and Found

Last year sometime, Lisa had the good fortune to 'find' a long-lost childhood friend – on the Web! Lisa'd lost contact with **Akosua** through a series of moves on both their parts. Since moving to England, Lisa has periodically searched the web for Akosua but without success. Then, one day... BINGO! There she was, listed as a speaker for one of a series of lunchtime lectures. Lisa sent an email to the organiser and received an immediate reply – first from the organiser, then from Akosua herself! Wow! What a thrill! Even better, Akosua was in Brussels on business

and one Friday evening in July we were re-united in London. Akosua spent barely 24 hours with us but they were exciting ones: dinner at Cafe Fish and a quick pint at a nearby pub; then a morning, lunch, and afternoon in Harlow before heading to Waterloo Station to catch her Eurostar back to Brussels.



### Guestbook

On the heels of Akosua, **Anja** (a friend of Lisa's from graduate school) arrived at St. Pancras station later that evening. We brought her home, gave her chance to catch her breath, then it was off to Paris for a few days, where we walked her feet into the ground! During her visit, Anja taught Lisa how to fold 'tessellated octahedrons' from paper – VERY impressive!

May saw us guiding Pamela's friends **Julie and Bruce** through the nooks and crannies of the Tower of London, the Cabinet War Rooms and Harrods. For their part they led us to two fabulous London eateries – one a subterranean wine bar! We made two new friends only to have to say good-bye at the end of the day! We've now good reason to visit Peoria!

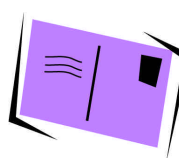
**Josh** was in town again in June and with him we toured the new Tate Modern gallery, built in a disused power station on the Thames.

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## Postcards from...

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer

### Lisa Meets the Med.



We had our turn at being guests earlier in the year when we visited my uncles **Jean and Perry** in Nice for the first time. Steve had been to Nice before and loved it, so I was in for a real treat! It was wonderful seeing Jean and Perry again and they generously put us up in their 'guest house'. I paddled in the Med. (in March!), shopped for hours in the market, and ate some of the best food I have ever cooked: we only ate out once (and once at Jean & Perry's) in 5 days! What a city! We'll be back...

We travelled to Nice and back by train (Eurostar and TGV): very relaxing and allowing us to stop off in Paris (where else!) on both our outward and return journeys.

### Irish Mist

Later that very same month we were in Ireland – visiting my friend **Nanette** and her sister Maribeth at the cottages in County Tipperary, where they were enjoying a long holiday together. What a contrast the Irish weather and culture was from that of southern France where we had been just a few weeks earlier! Memories of peat fires, home-made Irish soda bread and the misty Irish landscape remain with us...

# Sport and Lifestyle

## On the Move

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer



This year's wet weather and our busy lifestyle put a damper on our cycle camping

although we did manage to get out under the stars on three occasions this Summer. Nearby **Lea Vally** park provided us with our first opportunity to cycle from point-to-point – look ma, no trains! Our next trip was down to **Rochester** again, on our way to Hoo to celebrate Steve's Dad's birthday. Possibly our most interesting trip was up to **Willingham**, in 'Flatland' (north of Cambridge). There we camped in the middle of a pear orchard. It seemed a lot like Eden with fruit everywhere, ripe for the eating. The pears were so good that I went a little mad and came home with seven pounds of the fruit tucked into my panniers! So much for watching every ounce that goes in the packs!

This was the year of the new bikes: in February I bought a **Specialized Crossroads** to be my commuting steed and I've ridden over 1300 miles on it already. In May, Steve splashed out on a **Dawes Galaxy** tourer like mine. To handle our growing bicycle brood we became carpenters for a day and built a shed to house two bicycles out in our garden.

## Cyclisme



Lance Armstrong dominated the **Tour de France** again this year: everyone else seemed to be racing for second place.

Happily the other two major tours (Italy & Spain) were fought-out to the finish, and the Olympic racing was great fun to watch. Already we're eagerly anticipating the new season!

On the track, the **Olympics** in Sydney provided some spectacular racing and Gold for Britain; as did the World Championships in Manchester, where Chris Boardman bowed out with a new one-hour record.

## Performing Arts

### Out and About

by **Steve Fagg**, staff writer



In a year of musical treats, **Laurie Anderson** thrilled us with her show based on **Moby Dick**, **June Tabor** moved us with the

intensity of her singing, and the **Carnival Band** put a smile on our faces, but best of all was a stunning performance of **Bach's B minor mass** at the **Proms**.

At the National Theatre, we loved **Hamlet**, with Simon Russell Beale, and at the Harlow Playhouse were delighted with Mike Moran's magical performance of **Captain Corelli's Mandolin**. In a busy theatre-going year, honourable mentions go to the National's **The Heiress** and **She Stoops to Conquer** in Harlow.

### Appreciating Grandpa

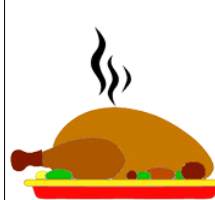
by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer

My grandfather, **J. Lawrence Cook**, was one of the foremost exponents of the art of arranging music and making rolls for 'player' pianos. Recently, we made the acquaintance of **Mike Meddings**: a long-time admirer of my grandfather, 'Jelly Roll' Morton, and others. I knew that, towards the end of his life, Grandpa corresponded with an overseas enthusiast – this was Mike. And he lives just 100 miles from us! What a small world! We're looking forward to meeting Mike, to share some memories and talk about Grandpa, in the New Year. Mike maintains an impressive fact-filled and very musical site, take a peek! It's at: [www.doctorjazz.freemove.co.uk](http://www.doctorjazz.freemove.co.uk).

## Culinary Arts

### Game for Thanksgiving

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer



This year we celebrated Thanksgiving not with turkey but with partridges! Organisation was the key and we did

a lot of preparation the day before so that I was able to pull off my somewhat elaborate menu. Steve's Mum and Dad joined us, as usual, and we made a night of it.

### Dining Out

by **Steve Fagg**, staff writer

In London we were introduced to the **Orrery**, **La Brasserie**, **Les Associes**, the **Black Truffle** and the **Purple Sage** while locally we enjoyed a meal with **Sarah** at the **Thai Rack** in Stortford and celebrated our 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the **Straw Hat** in Sawbridgeworth.

On foreign shores, Jean and Perry treated us to a delicious meal at **La Zucca Magica** in Nice – a delightful restaurant where all the dishes are based on squash! In Co. Tipperary, Nanette treated us to a meal at the **Half Door** in Nenagh.



### Kitty Korner

by **Thomas Catt**, staff feline

My good friend **Socks** is leaving the **White House**. I guess he'll be moving to New York now! *Purrrrrrr!* Feline Felicitations to you and yours! <<μ >>

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