

# THE AYSNLEY GARDNER



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

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**Weather** in the British Winter is so boring! Not just boring but grotty too.

We hear that in Nice it never gets below 9°C and in other places they have snow. Either would be nice, even if only one is Nice. How ever do the local yokels cope?



## Season's Greetings



**Forecast:** Harlow will become even more monotone (not to mention monochrome!) and WAGN will lose some season-ticket income. The Cambridge Cruiser will become Lisa's friend and Steve will need one fewer bike than in 2002.

## "All the News that's Fit to Print"!

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer

### Welcome...

...to what we earnestly hope will be the last ever edition of the Aynsley Gardner. Much has changed in the two years since the last issue and we plan to move house early next year.

Steve now works at Cambridge University's Faculty of **Oriental Studies** and has just been promoted to Faculty Computer Officer after 10 months as a lowly Technician. He must be doing something right there!

I'm working too, at the **Institute of Ophthalmology** in London, combining my two interests: development and vision. I'm investigating events involved in the development of the optic chiasm, a locus of key events in the early development of the visual system. At the moment this involves a lot of learning on my part and I frankly am getting a little impatient with myself as I need some results!

I made my first brief trip back to the USA in five years in connection with work. I enjoyed the feeling of being at home tremendously. Back in my hometown of **New York City** I had the opportunity to catch up with some of my friends. I wish I could have stayed longer – perhaps as long as a month – so that I could have done a lot more of that! While there, I visited **my mother** for the first time in many years. I don't know who was more surprised, her or me!

### Wedding Bells



This was the year of the friends' weddings: first Sarah married Stuart, then David married Elza.

#### **Sarah & Stuart**

had a traditional church wedding with all the trimmings and lots of family and friends from both sides, while **Elza & David** opted for a smaller ceremony in the local registry office (where we were married) with a few close friends in attendance. We enjoyed both weddings tremendously – the first we'd attended since our own way back in '96!

#### **A Cat's Tale**

Since returning to work, we were concerned that our beloved **Thomas Catt** would miss our company and get very lonely. We had already started to look for a companion for him when **Sophia** found us! She was a starving little stray (barely out of kitten-hood) that we found around midnight one wet and windy Summer's evening while cycling home after a trip to the Playhouse with Elza & David. I scooped her up, looked her over and popped her into my bicycle pannier for the noisiest trip home ever! She and Thomas are growing to like each other and we've learned that two cats are much more than twice as much fun as one!

## Postcards from...

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer

### A Nice

#### **Thanksgiving**

We had our turn at being guests this Thanksgiving when we were guests of my uncles **Jean & Perry** in Nice. We spent our time tucking into fresh seafood, guzzling wine and enjoying my Uncle Jean's fine cooking. Our visit afforded us a much needed respite from the cold-wet-dark that is the English Autumn-into-Winter.

This was our **second** trip to Nice this year: we were also invited over in February for another much-needed break from the dark days of Winter.

#### **Landmark Trust**

In May we made a long weekend of a visit to **Hereford**, staying at a beautiful Landmark Trust property (Selwick Court) with our friends **Denise & Paul** and **Christine & Tony**. We enjoyed spending time in the old house, talking and eating together between forays to explore. At **Hereford Cathedral** we saw, amongst other things, the *Mappa Mundi* and the Chained Libraries. The long drive and front of **Berrington Hall** was used in the opening credits of *Brideshead Revisited* on TV.

#### **Lalita in Paris on 4th July**

Steve finally got to meet my school-friend **Lalita** when we Eurostared to **Paris** while she was visiting there.

# Sport and Lifestyle

## On the Move

by **Steve Fagg**, staff writer

### Our Year Awheel



For the first time this year we were **both** cycle commuting all year long, so the vast

bulk of our milage was strictly utilitarian. For much of the year my daily commute involved **two** bikes: one in Harlow and one in Cambridge! Lisa just rode to Harlow rail station.

Lisa got a trailer for **her** bike so many Saturdays we could be found stocking up on fresh vegetables from Harlow Market doing our weekly shop in Sainsbury's and riding home with **both** trailers full. The second trailer has already paid for itself in bus fares saved!

Over the August Bank Holiday we did finally get away for a few days cycle camping in nearby **Broxborne** - on the busiest camping weekend of the year! The week following we did the bike-train-bike thing up to **Norfolk** to spend an utterly restful few days at Woodlakes (near King's Lynn). Just a few days under canvas this year but that's a few more than last year and wonderfully revitalising and refreshing days they were too!

### Cyclisme



My cycling hero of 2002 was undoubtedly an Italian gentleman by the name of **Mario**

**Cipollini**. Long a favourite of mine, this year he excelled himself. He won the great **Milan-Sanremo** "classic" race at the start of the season and another spring classic: the Ghent-Wevelgem race. He went on to win several stages in the Grand Tours of both Italy and Spain.

Then, to cap it all, he rode in the **World Championship Road Race** at the end of the season and emerged from a charging pack of riders after more than 300km of racing to roar home in front! He looks great in the Rainbow Jersey of World Champion, I can't wait to see him in a race in it.

Hail **Super Mario, King of the World!**

## Performing Arts

by **Steve Fagg**, staff writer

### Out and About



**Stomp**, the percussive dance show, was the most unusual thing we saw this year. Great fun!

The year began with Samuel West's **Hamlet** at the RSC. This was stunning! Intense, intelligent, beautifully spoken, passionate and convincing. The rest of the cast were first rate but West's performance was mesmerising; I thought Simon Russell Beale at the National was excellent but West trumped him in every department. One of those nights in the theatre one feels privileged to have attended.

Later in the year we enjoyed an equally memorable theatre occasion: with David & Elza we saw Tom Stoppard's **The Coast of Utopia** trilogy at the National... all in one day. Starting at 11am we were in the theatre for twelve hours with just a one-hour break between each play. A tiring but fascinating and exceedingly enjoyable way to see the three plays.

### The Organs of Saint Albans



The annual dinner of the **Player Piano Group** took place in a fascinating venue: the St Albans Organ Museum. This is home to a superb collection of fairground and theatre organs and other mechanical instruments. We were given a musical guided tour of the instruments by the museum staff and one of the huge and brightly painted fairground organs played while we ate. After dinner we were treated to a recital by Len Rawle on the **Wurlitzer** theatre organ.

## Culinary Arts

by **Steve Fagg**, staff writer

### Dining Out



**Les Dents de la Mer**, a marvellous seafood restaurant in Nice, was the scene of two of the year's outstanding meals. In

February, Lisa's Uncles treated us to lunch there then, in November, we returned the favour. Both times the food, service, atmosphere and company were of the highest standard.

At the end of the year, Elza introduced us to a delightful new find in London: **South** is a minimalist French restaurant in Shoreditch with exceptional cooking, friendly and efficient service, and prices that don't make you wince; *superbe!*

**Sardo** is a lovely restaurant near Euston, where Lisa took me for my birthday. The Sardinian cuisine features many fascinating tastes that I (at least) hadn't encountered elsewhere. Their uncluttered dining room was packed solid the night we were there but the charming and friendly staff managed very well. Not cheap but certainly one to go back to.



### Kitty Korner

by **Thomas Catt**, chief staff feline

Feline Felicitations to you and yours! My newly-expanded staff and I wish you a purrrrrrrfect year in 2003 and hope you all enjoy tuna aplenty! Remember to get enough sleep, don't forget to patrol your borders and...

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