
THE AYNLEY GARDNER



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

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Weather (or not...)

English weather. Forecast:
MORE English weather!

Fog, rain, dark, cold ... the
usual for this time of year!

Days will then gradually lengthen to
give rise to more spring-like days.

Watch this space...



Season's Greetings



Forecast: Whether it's
the last year of the old
millennium or the first of
the new, next year will
certainly be one to

remember. Nobody will be able to treat
it like just another year, and who'd want
to? Bring on the big 2000!

"All the News that's Fit to Print"

Welcome...

... to the second edition of the
'Aynley Gardener'! As you can
see from the 'new look' this year,
we've bought a NEW computer
(printer, scanner, ...)! Yes, folks –
we've got ourselves an **iMac**: the
cutest computer on the planet! And,
yes, it **is** 'all that'! (see *On the Net*)

In case you hadn't heard, Lisa's
finally got a job! One that pays a
salary. She's working in the
Department of **Biochemistry** at
Cambridge University. She's become
a seasoned cycle/rail commuter:
clocking up ten miles a day on her
trusty bicycle, in all weathers.

For Steve's part, he's racked up
twenty years at Nortel in Harlow. In
that time he's worked for ITT, STC,
BNR and Nortel (a veritable alphabet
soup!) without ever changing jobs.

Out and About

Lisa's new job left us little time
(or indeed energy!) to play in the
second half of the year. Earlier we did
get out a few times (see *Sport and
Lifestyle*). We managed a few trips
away (see *Postcards from...*) and
finally got around to something
Lisa's wanted to do ever since she
landed here: we spent a week visiting
London... as *tourists*! We had a great
time, visiting museums, sight-seeing,
shopping (whee!) and dining out.
This prepared Lisa well for her rôle as

tourguide (see *Guestbook*).

A Year of Celebrations



We confused our
friends by turning
Steve's Birthday
Weekend in May
into a joint
celebration for both
of us. In September

we confused them even more by doing
the same on Lisa's Birthday Weekend!

The year's biggest family get
together was to celebrate the 70th
birthday of Steve's Auntie Iris. This
was tremendous fun and only
threatened to get rained on!

Finally, we marked our 'leather'
wedding anniversary by giving each
other leather bicycle saddles.

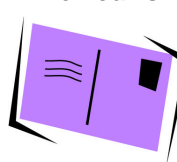
Guestbook

In September, while Steve was in
the States (he went there four times
this year!), Lisa's friend **Lisa Brown**
came to visit from the USA. Her
two-day whirlwind tour of London's
sights under Lisa's wing included
Westminster (the Abbey and
Houses of Parliament), as close to
'**Number 10**' as allowed, St James'
Park, a stroll up the Mall, and
Buckingham Palace; all in one
afternoon, with shopping at **Harrods**
(including a glimpse of **Fergie** at the
candy counter!) and a **Prom** concert at
the Royal Albert Hall the next day.

Postcards from...

by Lisa Fagg

Americans in Paris



February -- whoever
goes to **Paris** in
February?! We did,
at the drop of a hat,
when my friend

Pamela told us that

she was going to be there for a week.
Paris is Paris, even at that time of
year, and we all had a fantastic few
days there together!

Living in a Landmark

Tixall Gatehouse is a 16th
century edifice near Stafford, restored
by the Landmark Trust. With several
friends we enjoyed the elegant
furnishings and grandly spacious
rooms for a weekend in March. We
also explored the towpath of the local
canal and visited the Potteries
Museum in Hanley and nearby Calke
Abbey while we were there.

Back to Steve's Roots

I finally saw where Steve hails
from in two visits to Rochester,
Kent. The High Street, its antique
shops, museums and restaurants, and
the Norman Castle are fascinating and
I really feel I know the place now!

Canterbury Tales

Also down in Kent, I got to see
THE cathedral (breathtaking!) and
enjoy strolling around Canterbury's
wonderfully unspoiled City Centre.

Sport and Lifestyle

On the Move

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer



'I don't do tents – I prefer to stay at nice hotels...'
Steve Fagg, 1994

This Spring we bought a tent and ALL of the gear we could cram on our bikes and went cycle camping for the first time together this Summer! I'd only ever been camping when I was a Girl Scout and, most recently, under the close supervision of my friends **Karen & Martin** when I lived in Connecticut. I was an expert camper, however, compared to Steve, who'd never been camping before! We came away from the experience with two truths that we hold to be self evident: (1) two stoves are *definitely* better than one and (2) ALL camp sites are at the top of mile-long, extremely steep hills!

Our first trip was to **Rochester**, which held the twin attractions of being very familiar to Steve and close to his parents' house, should we need to bail out! We had a ball, though and Steve (to his surprise!) thoroughly enjoyed the experience, as I knew he would. Our next trip saw us starting off again in Rochester and going on to **Canterbury** to camp there for several nights. The combination of the open sky and the feeling of being totally self-sufficient was enough to revitalise both of us for weeks afterwards!

Cyclisme



The Tour of Italy was spoiled for me, and for all **Marco Pantani** fans, when he was denied a certain win just two days from the end.

That was the last we saw of our hero all year, but a new hero emerged in the *Tour de France* when all-American boy **Lance Armstrong** overcame cancer to win the race in dominant style. I hope his win encourages more Americans to follow professional cycling!

Out and About Guide

by **Steve Fagg**, staff writer



Arts

Our year's most memorable musical event was seeing Lisa's all-time favourite singer **James Taylor** at the Royal Albert

Hall. In the same venue we enjoyed a fun 'Viennese night' at the **Proms**, made even more fun by having my Mum & Dad along. We also made a trek up to Thaxted to hear **Harlow Chorus** sing **Bach's B minor mass** (a special favourite of Lisa's) in the church there. The chorus treated us to a thrilling and uplifting performance.

The National Theatre wowed us with their productions of **Private Lives** and especially **Troilus & Cressida**. Highlights at the Harlow Playhouse were **Elektra** and **A Doll's House**.

Shakespeare in Love took the honours at the cinema, but **An Ideal Husband**, **Elizabeth** and **Life is Beautiful** weren't far behind. We also got to see Fritz Lang's 1926 classic **Metropolis**.

Dining Out

The new owners of the **Straw Hat** have improved the place and the cooking tremendously, we had two superb meals there this year.

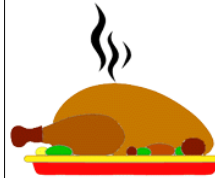
Return visits to the **Lemon Tree** in Stortford and the **White Onion** in Islington confirmed just how good they both are.

New finds for us this year were the restaurant at **Shakespeare's Globe** and **Lola's** in Islington, both highly recommended.

Dining in

by **Lisa Fagg**, staff writer

Double Thanksgiving



Since I've been living here we've celebrated this most American of holidays with Steve's parents. Each year we try

to do something different and this year was no exception. Instead of the usual turkey we had **guinea fowl**. For dessert we had **pecan pie** (made with Golden Syrup instead of Karo!) and **sweet potato pie**. Mmmmm!

We were seated at our new oak dining table. We bought that when a **French Market** came to Harlow in March. Imagine: we set out intending to buy a few shallots and, perhaps, some cheese and cold meats and came back with a dining table that seats 8!

We were treated to a *second* Thanksgiving in Cambridge by new American friends **Sarah** (an old friend of my friend **Anja**) and **Mark**. It was a real **American** Thanksgiving with too much food and lots of people!



Kitty Korner

by **Thomas Catt**, staff feline

A delightfully uneventful year – which, for a cat, is just *purrrrrrfect!* I have more toys than anyone I know – this year's favorites are 'Mini Mice'! They're such fun to play with and when I wreck them, SteveLisa buys me new ones! *Purrrrrrr!* Feline Felicitations to you and yours!

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