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December 2009

Dear

Christmas greetings for 2009!

Another year, still in Macclesfield and the same house – next year it will be 25 years since we moved in! So what have we been up to – apart from staying put? Beth has masterminded the remodelling of the garden – – and it now has a greenhouse, composters and an area especially for barbeques – maybe we should charge the Met Office for the redesign costs?

Beth's freelancing is still working well she has been very busy in November and December and is looking forward to the early spring when all the tax returns are in!

Robert, meanwhile, after a reasonable year saw the IT support at TNEI moved up to Newcastle and out of our control and then, and at the end of November I was made redundant (again!) . At the moment I'm on 'garden leave' and am hoping that one of the current prospects I'm looking at will produce work for the New Year. The break is giving me chance to get some piano practice done for the 3 classes I'm playing in at the Hazel-Grove festival in February!

Clare and Chris are still also seeking work and still living at home. Clare still is involved with the Manchester role-playing group.

On the less work related things, Beth and Robert spent a week walking in Switzerland around Lucerne in June admiring the mountains and the alpine flowers . We had been slightly intimidated by the prospect of walking but found it pretty straightforward and enjoyable (apart from possibly early morning alarms from the cowbells).



Spending the night on Rigi and seeing the sun rise over the mountains was particularly memorable.

Following last year's closure of Scargill, it has been bought by a group which is intending to reopen ([www.scargillmovement.org](http://www.scargillmovement.org)) and we spent a week in September acting as caretakers and enjoying Wharfedale – it got exciting when one of the hay-making tractors drove into an electricity pylon and the lights went out for 7 hours! And then there were the colonies of 700 bats!

Church life continues with Dave Mock now being half in charge of All Saints (or maybe in charge of half of All Saints) and Graham Turner similarly at St Michael's

We've got involved with the local French Club which has given us some enjoyable multi-lingual evenings Beth has also been involved in setting up a French book reading group which meets here. In August she passed her Spanish GCSE with flying colours and is looking for the next linguistic challenge.

In October we also had a weekend with Robert's now-ex-work in Wales looking at wind farms and large pieces of electrical engineering as well as walking the Welsh hills in beautiful weather.

Robert helped to arrange a reunion of youth club he had been involved in in the 1970's in Macclesfield, this happened in the autumn and it good to meet again folk I hadn't seen for 30 years!

The cats – Sid and Hecate - are still walking carefully around each other, we live in hope they'll get to be more friendly

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clare

chris

With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year!

