

The Cheltenham Reader's Special Edition

Special One-Off Edition

2013 marked the publication of the final annual edition of Mello! but the editorial team know that over the years there has been a special interest paid by a reader based in Cheltenham. We are marking this interest with this special one-off edition for 2014 – the Cheltenham Reader's Special Edition. Future years may bring similar specials but the editorial team makes no promises. Such special editions, if any, will have a strictly limited print run numbered on the fingers of, well, perhaps just one finger. However, like all past issues, this special and any in future will continue to be made available through the Mello! website at mello.s555.co.uk

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

David's coast towards retirement has continued and was marked by a decision to apply for the early payment of his pension from old employers Cap Gemini, being occasioned by his 60th birthday in September. Janice will reach this milestone in May 2015 and will reap the benefits of nearly 30 years of contributing to the Teacher's Pension Scheme. We are very conscious that, compared to our children and, perhaps, even those not that much younger than ourselves we are in the privileged position of benefitting handsomely from final salary schemes. We shall try and ensure that those we love will gain some benefit from our good fortune.

We plan to mark our move to pensionerhood with a change of scenery. For the best part of a decade we have taken holidays in the Canary Islands. In particular, we have become attached to the resort of Playa Blanca on the southern tip of Lanzarote. We are now seriously researching the property market over there and plan to return early in 2015 on a househunting trip. The plan is to spend winters in the sunshine, with summers back in blighty.

The property empire will be slowly downsized. Currently we have two properties on the market - three if you count Muriel's old place in Southport. STOP PRESS: An offer has just been made on 21 Court Road, Southport. I am trading phone calls with the Estate Agent as I write.

RACHAEL

Elder daughter Rachael started the year by buying her first flat, a spacious ex-Council 2 bedroom job down in Guildford. We have had a few trips down there in the works van loaded up with various bits and pieces of furniture. Rachael has started on the decorating with so far, the main bedroom and the lounge completed. The bedroom now has a feature wall of pelicans. We all think it looks good but then it should at £70 a roll plus £20 for the tub of wheat based paste. This paper is posh and therefore unsuitable for a pleb-like product such as Solvite [or words to that effect] said the advice on the hanging instructions rather sniffily. The picture below shows the finished result.

Rachael's feature wall



The next job is boarding out Rachael's loft so that we can finally reclaim the front bedroom which is overflowing with boxes of her stuff. Thankfully she had the good sense (takes after her Dad) to buy the upper floor flat (and, hence, has a loft). Two or three vanloads might just do it (takes after her Mum!). Ouch.

ALISON

Younger daughter Alison continued her association with the RNLI and picked up some work training groups of schoolchildren in water safety earlier in the year. This was followed by a second season as a beach lifeguard at Sunderland. The picture below shows Alison taking part in a rescue exercise for the delectation of the crowds at Sunderland Airshow last July. She's the one on the rescue float hitched to the jet-ski – which she tells us is fun to drive.





Alison spent 10 weeks in Joza, Grahamstown, South Africa in a voluntary role where she was involved in a project helping to improve schoolchildren's lives by educating them about helminth infections and the hygiene practices needed to avoid them. More details of the work (with some photos) can be found on the project blog at <http://southafricalattitude.wordpress.com>. The venture was however marred by tragedy. In the final few days, the project teams moved to the coast for debriefing sessions and two team members drowned on 4 December whilst swimming in the sea¹. Alison was not involved but has been badly shaken by the tragedy.

DAVID AND JANICE

All in all 2014 has been fairly busy. The culmination of David's 4 reports on Economic and Population Projections for Newcastle and Gateshead Councils came to fruition with the Examination in Public of the two authorities' local plans in June². With exquisite timing the Office for National Statistics released a new set of local authority level population projections at the end of May, which naturally, objectors to the two Councils' proposals latched onto. Fortunately, the passion of their arguments was not matched by the quality of their analysis and the Planning Inspector has recently indicated the submitted plans will be deemed sound. All in all an interesting process: I think I gave at least as good as I got at the EiP.

This was followed by the usual hectic period of sorting out properties for the new academic year's set of tenants: a re-decorated room here, a thorough paint-out there and a kitchen refurbishment elsewhere. The latter followed a new boiler installation, removing an elderly Baxi back boiler, so there was accompanying disruption as pipework was re-routed and replaced throughout that particular flat.

*Work in progress
Bricking up fireplace*



All done (and all my own work)



November brought the usual trip to Lanzarote, accompanied this year by sister Christine. The picture below shows the three of us relaxing over a glass of white following an hour or two spent at the Wine Museum at the Bodegas El Grifo. Salud!



AND FINALLY

We hope this special edition of Mello! finds you and your family in Cheltenham and elsewhere in good health. We wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. With love from David, Janice, Rachael and Alison.

¹ <http://www.nsri.org.za/2014/12/5-people-swept-out-to-sea-3-survivors-1-deceased-1-missing/>

² Items EL26-29 in the Evidence Library http://onecorestrategyng-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/examination_library

