

The Lonsdale Review

1996 AND ALL THAT

The Exiles Return

After a years exile, first in Japan and then in Malaysia, we returned to England, arriving at 5am on a very cold January morning - our furniture arrived four hours later! Whilst we're glad to be back to see family and friends we'd really love to be in the Far East again (all good job offers seriously considered) and after nearly a year we both still feel that way.

So What's New Then?

Well, the job hasn't changed much except that I go to Norway and Denmark instead of Belgium and all the boring stuff has come my way (preparing product brochures, etc.). I did get a new car in August. Noelene calls it a "big boy's toy" because it's an Alfa Romeo and (very) red!

Noelene feels that the time (and our bank balance!) is right for her to return to work and she's applied for quite a few jobs in the last weeks (again, all offers considered) and at the moment she's temping. Earlier in the year

she had to take her driving test since her IDP ran out and her South African licence isn't valid here. After almost 20 years of driving she's had all those bad habits to unlearn but she still passed, including the laughable written test!

Dawn's decided that she doesn't want to join the Police force after all and she's embarked on the Project 2000 nursing course with the aim of being a Community Psychiatric Nurse. So far she loves the course she is taking and seems to be doing very well. Dawn is now engaged to Leon and they've bought their own house in Rochdale moving in a few months ago.

Claire's, as they say, "resting between engagements" but she's still hoping to go to University to study Archaeology and/or Egyptology. So it looks like neither will be earning big

bucks to keep their father in his dotage!

African Invasion!



From August to mid September we had an invasion from the South African contingent of our family. Ever eager to see where real civilisation came from, Noelene's Mum and Dad (Merle and Terry) trekked all the way here with their ox wagons for a seven week tour of their ancestral origins. We had a great time in Scotland, visiting the islands of Mull, Iona, Islay, Gigha and Arran where we bought a

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*** FROM JOHN AND NOELENE GILLATT ***

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case of the new Malt Whiskey. Unfortunately that has to stay in the barrel until at least 2001 - so keep in touch.

Gallingly, for Republicans, we had to visit as many stately homes and royal palaces as possible, including Sandringham and Buckingham Palace and those were Merle's favorites. But, when asked what he enjoyed most, Terry said, "The Sellafeld Visitors' Centre"! He found Britain to be the "dead centre" of the world - too full of dead people and old relics!

The Sounds of '96

No new Pink Floyd or Stones albums in '96 but there's still a lot of good sounds around. More and more small venues have live music, especially jazz and the NW radio station, Jazz FM (100.4 MHz in the NW of England), is on all the time at home and in the car. We saw the great Japanese trumpeter Terumasa Hino in Izumiotsu last year and this year Noelene's birthday present to me was tickets to see Ray Charles and Van Morrison in Manchester.

Claire has developed a liking for a band that produced music before she was born and her birthday present (and for us too) was tickets for the Eagles concert at Wembley. This was an especially excellent performance on a wonderful warm, sunny summer night.

Then, to finish the year off while "Waiting For The Great Leap Forward", we saw Billy Bragg at the Manchester Academy. Billy's shows are more like political statements than concerts and are the better for being so. He says aloud what many of us only think, and feel in our hearts. The curry after was good too!

Who know's what musical treats are in store for '97.

New Year New Government

We're right behind "the great, revered and beloved leader for a thousand years" old red eyes Kim "Il" Blaire and a lot of our spare time this year has been devoted to working for his cadre in the Bolton West Constituency, the Labour Parliamentary Candidate Ruth Kelly. Ruth got married in June to a wonderful guy Derek (Des or Del Boy) Gadd who works full time for the Labour Party but, more seriously, is an Archaeologist.

The Tories "New Labour, New Danger" jibe was recently referenced in a new book of memorable political quotations. My favorite one, however, was from a former Irish Prime Minister who when asked about legalisation on birth control in the Irish Republic said that "what we need is an Irish solution for an Irish problem".

Since coming back from the Far East John's been Secretary of The Deane-Cum-Heaton Labour Party and doesn't have a Old Labour bone in his body (honest!).

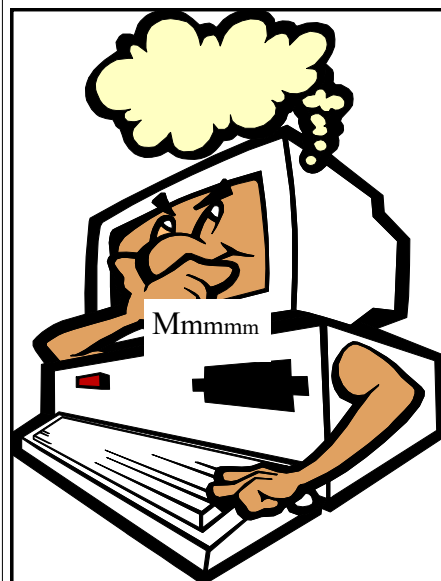
Anyway, when the time comes use your vote wisely. "Vote early, vote often!"

No Gain - All Pain

Remember the John that used to run marathons and bore all his friends with his best time for that race and how far he ran on Sunday morning despite the pouring rain, snow, etc. Well, the cumulative effects of advancing years and a knackered Achilles Tendon have put paid to all that, at least for a while. But, "97 is another year"

Electronic Anoraks Rule OK!

The Giblets are on the net (but isn't everyone) these days. If you want to see the latest version of the



Lonsdale Review check out our home page on Internet at <http://www.gaijin.demon.co.uk/lonsdale.htm>

It Could Be Lonsdale No More

Despite our love of Lonsdale we're thinking of moving and the headquarter of the Review is up for sale at the very reasonable price of £49,500 (yet again, all offers considered). All we want is a similar sized house with an extra room and some garden. Then Noelene will really have space to develop her creativity and I can laze on a sunlounger in the garden with a cold beer on a summer evening!

We can also start having parties again like we used to.

Have a Great Year