

Dave Aitken

Westacre News

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

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Its that time again.....

Its that time again when I tell the tales of the year about to end.

In truth, there is not an awful lot to expound, since this has been a relatively quiet year overall. In terms of the "Ancient Chinese Curse", I have not been living in interesting times! Or at least not very interesting which is probably a good thing.

At the time of last year's newsletter we were under a foot of snow and not aware that we had another month of that to go before the worst of it was over. This year, at the time of writing we are suffering the worst winds for over 10 years. They

say we will get snow along with these winds tomorrow. Global warming anybody?

In the meantime, I will type away and hope the power stays on. (Touch wood)

The high point of the year was finally getting my bathroom replaced after years of dithering and procrastination; not all of it mine. I also replaced my 20 year old lounge suite with one in caramel leather which consists of 2 recliners and a 3-seater with 2 built in recliners.



Winter 2010/11 in my garden

Ideal for the lazy bugger in me.

Are you sitting comfortably?

Nowadays I most certainly am. I finally got my primrose yellow 70's bathroom replaced with something more chic and 21st century. It has only taken me about 5 years from the point when I first decided to do it. Most of the delay was

down to my desire to get it just right but eventually, last year, I finished my design, bought all the stuff and engaged a group of tradesmen to do the job. This was all supposed to happen in October 2010 but there were delays, then the awful

weather and finally, in early 2011, the guy who was supposed to be running the job stopped answering his phone. I was very patient but after a few months I had had enough so I asked my electrician if he could put together a team



Are you sitting comfortably contd.

which he duly did. Not only that, they were available after only a month and the whole project took two weeks to complete. They do say it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good and in my case, the fact that the first lot seemed to lose interest was a blessing. Colin's guys were all very good at their respective trades and, not only that, their advice allowed me to get a better boiler. The before and after pictures will be on my web site, or

at least some of them will. There are some that are frankly too embarrassing for me to display. Nevertheless, I am absolutely delighted with the end result and consider it money well spent.



The finished article

Check out my website
at
www.daveaitken.co.uk
To see some pictures
from this year's events

The Wedding That Never Was

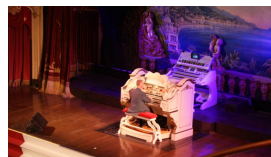
Sometimes the best laid plans go well astray. Last year I was introduced to me second cousin's fiancée while I was visiting the family for a wedding party. They seemed ideally suited and got on very well together. I was delighted to be invited to their wedding in July. I even booked my hotel well in advance which,

as those who know me well will attest, is not like me at all. Sadly, it was not a good move as three months before the wedding, the young lady decided not to go ahead with it. I have yet to find out why. It cost her parents quite a bit as they had already made a lot of the arrangements. I managed to persuade the

hotel chain to give me a credit for the three days and forgot about it until much later in the year when I found I had only a few weeks to use it or lose it. Which leads me on to my next story.....

How I ended up in Blackpool

I needed to go somewhere at relatively short notice to use up my credit with Travelodge. I was forever seeing these adverts for the Illuminations so I decided to go and have a look. Now, at this point I should say I



Oh I do like to be beside the seaside, Oh I do like to be beside the sea..

was not following my own rules for going away anywhere and I just assumed the Illuminations were on until Christmas. I booked my hotel in the city centre, booked my trains and then started my research into what I was going to do. It was at

this point that I discovered the Illuminations finished the day before I was due to arrive! I was stuck. I couldn't change my reservations so I just had to go through with the trip as it was. The train journey was fine and I arrived, walked to the hotel, checked in and then went for an explore.

Blackpool contd.

I walked for about 3 miles to the Pleasure Beach and back again by which time I was already wishing I could just go home. I think I can honestly say that I have never been in such a dismal, depressing place in all my life. When you realize that the most sophisticated eating place on the entire prom was McDonalds, you get an idea of how I felt. They have spent a fortune on tarding up the beach area but the pavements elsewhere appear to contain the ground-in entire annual output of the Wrigley's factory. The entire population of tourists seem to be refugee extras from the Rab C Nesbit

show complete with shell-suits and fag ends stuck in the corner of their mouths! Almost all the "attractions" were closed until the weekend so a pretty boring stay was in prospect.

To make the best of it, I sought out a hostelry and did find a couple of good pubs, each with a decent range of real ales which I duly spent the next two days sampling.

I did visit the famous Tower which was interesting. It was certainly very popular



Blackpool Tower

with quite a few people attending the tea dances in the Tower Ballroom. Other than that I couldn't wait to get home. Rarely have I so totally miscalculated on trip planning but at least it was a relative inexpensive lesson.

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I had a couple of short trips during the year. I went to Castle Stuart near Inverness to see the Scottish Open Golf which was very interesting if a tiring walk. You needed to be like a Haggis with one leg shorter than the other!! That said, it is a terrific course amid beautiful scenery. I also went to Edinburgh for a Rock Garden Club seminar on bulbs at the Royal Botanic Garden which was very interesting and which also afforded me my first look at the Gardens themselves for many years.

That's it for this year's Newsletter. Next year will no doubt be a bit more interesting. I will have no major projects on, other than redecorating my bedroom and creating a gallery in my hall to hang some of things I've collected or photographed over the years. Aberdeen airport has finally extended their main runway and we are getting some new services next year. I might decide to try some of them out (if I can afford the exorbitant taxes). There are quite a few European cities I've never visited and this might be the opportunity to do so.

This Winter I will try to de-junk some of the house to allow for a proper Spring clean when the time arrives. Visitors are always welcome, all I need is a little advance warning.

All the very best to all my friends and relations who take the time to read my musings.

I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2012.

P.S. I believe there is a major event on in the London next year, any ideas on where to go to avoid Olympic fever!! :)

