

The Fourth Estate 2006

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2006 In A Sentence

Claire and Carl got wed, John went for a walk and **didn't** get lost, Noelene continued to tussle with her MA as her business slowly develops, Dawn and Jon struggled with their handicaps - golf that is, we (almost) finished the work on our house and saw a lot of flowers.... !

About Time Too!

After almost seven years together Claire and Carl finally tied the knot. Having had the hottest and sunniest July on record they got married in August with several centimetres of "Bolton Sunshine" (alternately horizontal and vertical). Despite the reception being in our back garden, under cover perilously close to leaking, spirits weren't dampened by the weather, the father of the bride made the usual idiot of himself and great fun was had by one and all. Even the air guitars didn't get soggy and the bride made a pretty picture in trainers!

Then off they went for three weeks in Mauritius to enjoy



Going



Going



Gone

the sun, sea and beauty before the start of their long and happy lives together. More at <http://www.gillatt.org/clairewedding!>



Getting It Done

Well, sort of! Claire and Carl's wedding forced us to (almost) finish the reconstruction of our house, started over three years ago and "stalled" for some time. So our holiday consisted of spending the hottest month of the year, working most days from 8:00 am until midnight. The last paintbrush was put down at 3:00 am on the day before the wedding.

But at least we have a nice big bath and lots of spare bedrooms when you come to visit!

Back to the Jungle.....

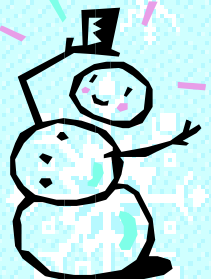


Almost a year to the day, John returned to Fraser Hill in Malaysia where he spent five days cheap B&B (er, actually without bed or breakfast) last year. This time he walked with a guide, two compasses, handheld GPS, ball of string, mobile phone and a huge rucksack, doing the same walk but without the directional malfunction (it's not permitted to say that he got lost) of 12 months ago. En route he found out where he'd gone wrong

(simply blundering straight on when he should have turned left!). Five hours after starting he and Durai arrived back at the Old Smokehouse Hotel, safe and sound.

Where've Yer Been?

Well, in a word or two, not very far. But both of our best trips this year were to London





Where Have All The Flowers Gone? - Gone to the Chelsea Flower Show, every one.... Fulfilling one of Noelene's long-held dreams and dragging John along too (actually, he rather enjoyed it!). The highlights for us were the Antipodean gardens, particularly the South African township garden - especially lovely, evocative and our favourite of the show (no bias, honest!).

We spent two nights in the capital, did lots of the "normal" tourist things which we so often don't make time for, but which can be very enjoyable nonetheless, and had a fantastic N. African meal (complete with a rather skinny belly dancer!). There was even some good London beer (yes, there is such a thing!).

Where Have All The Old Socialists Gone?



Gone to Cable Street every one (in October, at least)! They and a lot of younger ones went to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the turning back of Moseley's fascists at the famous battle, re-enacted on the street itself. We spoke to some, older even than us, who took part in the 1936 protest and very emotional and uplifting their stories were too. We heard music, poetry, watched dancing and even socialist magic! And don't forget, as Billy Bragg sang:

*"..... join the struggle while you may
The revolution is just a tee-shirt away"*

Anywhere Else? - John's still supporting the German economy with his monthly beer and wine runs with portions of *fois gras*, paella and Danish herrings thrown in as he flits around Europe. In March he travelled to Malaysia, China (for the first time), Australia and New Zealand, the latter for all of three days. Mind you, although **he** travelled for work, his luggage took a fancy to a rather longer holiday in Malaysia, as those around him at the time will attest!

Happenings



With everything else that's been going on in our lives, we haven't had much time for live music this year. Early on we saw Billy Bragg's hard hitting "*Hope Not Hate*", anti-BNP show at the Bridgewater Hall. We ventured into unknown musical territory with Mostly Autumn at Bury in October. Disappointingly, their recorded sound didn't translate into a good live performance, although John at least is willing to give them another chance (maybe)! Unusually, The Levellers were also well below par when we saw them

in early December, so much so that we actually walked out less than half way through, seeking solace in a bowl of pasta at Pizzeria Italia! All in all 2006 hasn't been the best live

musical year. Never mind, we've already booked to see Genesis at Old Trafford next July — the start of what we hope will be a year filled with good sounds.

But, where the musicians let us down, the actors lifted us with excellent performances of Miller's "*A View From The Bridge*" and Dario Fo's wonderful "*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*", both at Bolton's Octagon Theatre.

Cheering for the Team!



In March Noelene bowed to the inevitable, finally becoming "nationalised" and is now as British as St. George ("*he's half English too!*"). Naturally, she kept her fingers crossed and lips tightly sealed when supposedly swearing allegiance to the Queen at the nationalisation ceremony! Gawd bless 'er!

However, you can take the woman out of Africa but you can't take Africa out of the woman. It wasn't long before she was smiling smugly as England beat S. Africa at rugby and even more so the following week as they took their revenge.

What Else?



Well, it's not easy to sum up a whole year in just two pages and a lot of other things have happened to us in the last twelve month, thankfully almost all of them good!

Noelene continues to tussle with her MA in Public Art but the end is now in sight. Commissions continue to dribble in, although not all of them as well paid as they should be! At least now she's starting to put her actions where her heart is — working with the refugee and asylum seekers' communities and disadvantaged young people. And John stood (and came a great second) in the local elec-

tions yet again!

Our 2006 Top 10!

Event:	Claire and Carl's wedding
Plant:	Noelene's birthday Fuschia Voodoo
Exhibition:	"Another Place" by Anthony Gormley
Performance:	"Accidental Death of an Anarchist" - Octagon Theatre, Bolton
Place Visited:	The Beach at Formby with " <i>Les Goughies</i> "
Home Restaurant:	"The Coverdale Bistro" and " <i>Fourth's</i> ", both Bolton (tied!)
Outside Restaurant:	" <i>Medea</i> " - 561 King's Road, Fulham
Trip:	The Cable St. 70th Anniversary Celebration (J), Chelsea Flower Show (N)
Party:	Claire and Carl's wedding (of course!)

A very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all our readers!

