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Christmas Letter 2016

Dear

Well, it's that time of year. Our American friends have already stuffed, cooked and consumed their turkeys. We can look forward to the same in a few weeks. So it is time to cast a retrospective eye on the happenings of the year.

What a busy year it has been. Two weddings, a funeral and a semi-retirement.

We said goodbye to Aunt Eileen, who lived with my parents. She had suffered two strokes and found life very difficult. She died in May. Adrian and Tina were out of the country at the time, but Sarah and David were able to attend to pay their respects. She was much loved and will be missed.



Our son David married Eleanor Fountain in Bar Hill (near to Cambridge). They had a lovely wedding on a hot summer's day. They live in Bar Hill along with (from time to time) a cat, a pug, a sister (until recently) and two chickens. They are also expecting a baby in May next year. David continues to work for the fire service in London. The photos are here:

<http://www.chezstephens.org.uk/piwigo/index.php?/category/765>.

Our daughter Sarah married Derek Archer near their home in Raunds. Adrian got to give her away, which meant a ride in a 1932 Rolls-Royce to the hotel venue where the wedding took place. Unfortunately it rained, but that didn't dampen folks' spirits.



The photos are here: <http://www.chezstephens.org.uk/piwigo/index.php?/category/772>. Counting Derek's two children Jaden and Kyson we now are proud grandparents of 3, 5 (including step-grandchildren) or 6 (including ex-step-grandchildren). Sarah continues to enjoy her work for the police looking (medically) after those in custody. She is studying for a master's.



Our daughter Ruth has a boyfriend John, who is in the US air force. As I write, she is gallivanting round the USA (Chicago, Washington, New York, Maryland) to "meet the family". She continues to enjoy her work at the Cambridge Botanic gardens doing things with plant DNA.

Tina and Adrian are thankful that they are decaying gracefully at no more than the expected rate. Adrian's condition is stable. Pity his fashion sense hasn't improved.



Tina's Aunt Elsie had a fall at the end of last year and spent quite a lot of time in hospital (which was a strain on Tina) as they tried to work out her medications and care package. We are thankful with the provision of a full time care assistant that allows her to keep her independence.

Adrian was offered a separation package from Intel, somewhat out of the blue. As big American corporates often do, they needed to do a "headcount reduction" of about 10%. This time they were "cutting from the top", and I got offered the choice of taking voluntary redundancy. I took the offer, and subsequently negotiated with them to support me as a consultant for the remaining 18 months of my commitment as 802.11 chair. This happened during our May holiday. He continues to travel about 10 trips a year.

The separation allows me to spend more time on my own projects, such as building a church sound desk, rebuilding a window, fixing joist sag (painful). I've yet to become idle. If I do, I anticipate what my colleague Jon describes as "honeydo" projects ("Honey do this, honey do that...") to keep me occupied (or I might just buy a large padlock for the office, now christened the doghouse (Tina)).

We give thanks to God for the year past, with its comings and goings. God bless you wherever you are.

Sincerely/Love/Kisses/Hugs/Manly Handshakes (according to our relationship),

Tina and Adrian Stephens xx