



After an annus horribilis in 2010 things didn't get any better in 2011! Following Chris's father's death in 2010, his step mum Jean had suffered a series of strokes. Whilst it was hoped that she would make a sufficient recovery to go and live with her sister in Croydon, this didn't prove possible. In January Chris and her sister arranged for her to be transferred to a lovely nursing home in Croydon and ever since then her sister Beryl has continued to visit every single day. At the end of September she suffered blood clots in her leg and was given only days to live. At the end of November, to the surprise of everyone, she was still with us. Chris has regularly visited her throughout the year.

Back in Essex, Chris's sister's husband has spent most of the year on the liver transplant list. Despite the average time for a transplant being 4 months Ian has now waited over 6 months and every time their phone rings they hope it's the transplant team. We all hope that the call will come very soon, hopefully before Christmas. Also up in Essex, Chris' father's house was put on the market once Jean was obviously not going to need it. After a huge number of viewings and many acceptable offers, the sale was finally completed on 10 November. Very much the end of an era for the Essex family in Brentwood/Shenfield after nearly 90 years.

So moving on to happier news, this is what the kids have been up to this year. Stephanie (27) is now in her 6th year of teaching and has been made head of Year 1 at Summerhill Infant School in Bristol. She continues to thoroughly enjoy it and still gets a huge buzz from seeing the children develop significantly during their year with "Miss Essex". She's now been with Tux for over 9 years and we see a lot of them as they have owned a house in the same road as us since 2009.



Samantha (25) sold her first property development in 1st quarter 2011 and bought a 2nd in July, which will go back on the market just after Christmas. She will then use her degree in Interior Design, coupled with these two projects, to get a job in this field. In between she's been fortunately enough to continue working at Saltford Golf Club for a regular income. She's been going out with Neil for over 2 years now.

Michael (22) amazed himself and us by getting a 2-1 in his Marketing degree at UWIC (Cardiff). He's moved back home and after some time spent trying to get a Marketing job is currently getting some valuable experience with an up market web business. Like Samantha he also continues to get a regular income from the Golf Club.

Eryl continues to enjoy her role as an Avon lady and looks after a 2 year old on a Wednesday, for one of the neighbours. Chris when he's not been travelling up to Essex or visiting Jean on an almost weekly basis, has continued to fill his time as treasurer for a local community based charity, with watercolour painting, walking, fishing, organising reunions for ex London Life staff and being on the With Profits Committee for the Phoenix Group of companies. He also continues to play an active part as a Trustee, Vice President and a number of other roles for his old school former pupils' society.



For a number of years Chris had promised that he would one day take the whole family, including Tux and Neil, to Australia/New Zealand and 2011 was that year. After stopping off in wonderful Hong Kong for 3 days on the way out, we then spent time in Melbourne, Cairns, Brisbane, North Island New Zealand and Sydney, before visiting Singapore for 3 day on the way home. It was a fantastic 5 week trip of a lifetime and an opportunity to meet up with some family and school friends, including in Sydney Simon our best man.

That's about it except to wish you a very Merry Christmas and happy New Year. As usual we will be spending Christmas with Chris's sister and her family, although for the very first time without Stephanie. This year we have hired a converted barn in Essex, so that Ian is within an hour of Addenbokes if he's still not had his transplant by then. We hope for a much quieter 2012 and a great trip to the Olympics!