

## **Simon and Jillian's Christmas Newsletter**

The first half of 2001 started badly as Simon had to undergo an emergency operation on his back resulting in six weeks recovery at home. The first couple of weeks were a nice rest but then there is only so much daytime television that one can take!

In April, Jillian started her new job as a senior planning officer at Maidstone Borough Council, resulting in a promotion, escape from Hackney, and no more rail commuting. Meanwhile Simon is still suffering an ever painful commute courtesy of Connex South East – probably the worst railway company in the world!

Just when he thought he would not have to see another consultant again, Simon had to undergo a second operation resulting in a further six weeks recovery at home. However, this time the firm kindly provided a laptop to keep him company!

In July we finally managed to get away and participated in a week's rock climbing course at Plas Y Brennin in Snowdonia. This was Jillian's first experience of real rock and she proved to be a veritable rock spider! During the week we managed to do plenty of climbing at some of the best venues in the UK including Tremadoc, Ogwen Valley and the Llanberis Pass. Since then we have taken advantage of Jillian's parents close proximity to the gritstone edges of the Peak District and have lead a number of routes on Stanage and Froggatt Edges.

For Simon's birthday in September, we flew off to the medieval city of Carcassonne in the South of France. During our short break we took advantage of the excellent weather and visited a number of the so-called Cathar Castles which are perched high on the surrounding hilltops. Since returning from France, Simon has been busy improving his French by undertaking a short course of one-to-one lessons with a French tutor.

During the autumn, whilst out walking, Simon's father slipped over and injured his knee. Due to the inaccessibility of the location he had to be air lifted to hospital where he underwent an operation to repair the damage. He is finally out of plaster and is making a good recovery. However, it is probably fair to say that he has blown his chances of being called up by Crystal Palace FC!

Hopefully 2002 will be less medically challenging and we are particularly looking forward to a week of skiing in Méribel, France and another week of winter mountaineering in Scotland.

We look forward to catching up with everyone in the New Year, especially those who have recently had new additions to their families. Take care and have a very Happy Christmas



**Simon & Jillian**  
**9 December 2001**