

Don't be surprised! Greetings, and news from Joy and Eric in Nottingham for Christmas 2024 and New Year 2025.

Our Christmas greetings were so late last Christmas, profuse apologies, but life was very chaotic caused mainly by Eric, see below. So we'll try to get the letter out earlier this year, started in September!

First, the important person, **Joy**. She's back clog dancing again, with her titanium screwed hip. She occasionally needs help with balance, but is back on form dancing and acting as announcer for the cloggies. She goes to Aquafit (exercises in a swimming pool) every Wednesday, then she brings some of the "old biddies" (much much younger than us!) back for an early brunch with fresh bread by Eric. And she sings every month at the King Billy folk sessions and from time to time at the Beeston Folk, sometimes accompanying herself on the autoharp, sometimes by Eric on the squeezebox.

The family: **Angus** was "putting up tents" in Poland or Lithuania or some such country, and he enjoys bossing teams of workers around. **Karen** continues with teaching piano, and is member of various local orchestras.

Our summer holiday (two weeks) with K & A in August was our first nights away from home for a year. We flew Lufthansa from Birmingham to Frankfurt. We had ticked the "old and decrepit" box on the booking form, Birmingham Airport looked after us wonderfully, Frankfurt not quite so well. Karen & Angus have a swimming pool in their garden, Joy was in every morning before breakfast and at tea time. We ran a ceilidh for their local charity while we were there, with Joy being MC in German, and Eric leading a scratch local band. A super super evening, but I played so enthusiastically on a borrowed accordion that it fell apart half way through. But was soon mended.

**Rory** looks forward to early retirement some time soon, his (American owned) company call him a "future shaper". **Jean** has given up her job as pastry chef at a local (garden centre) restaurant.

**Hamish** is delighted to be able to spend more time on music with the many groups he's in. **Anita** helps at their local cattery. **Jenna** will design a shop for you, **Sean** enjoyed surfing the ocean waves in the Philippines.

Last and very least, **Eric**. The news changes frequently so this may be out of date soon. Some good days and bad days (embarrassing when you burst into tears in a shop, even when I tell them it's the drugs, not me), still terminal, still a guinea pig on a new type of chemo, a nurse comes round home every 4 weeks (it used to be every week) to jab and intra-venous drip me. In and out of hospital several times recently, but I prefer home. They look after me incredibly well. And I keep our GP and Health Centre busy, my skin is so fragile that they keep having to dress my wounds. I had to give up cycling through loss of balance, and it only recently occurred to me that a tricycle would do the job. So, I'm now the owner of a purple pedal-with-electric-assistance trike, named "the purple peril" by Joy and "trike-u-like" by Rory. It's wonderful, you just sit there and pedal. I've done over 1000km since March, it's good for my health and I'm in heaven visiting some of my old haunts by canals, rivers and forests.

In spite of everything, we are still busy and enjoying life, Eric finds both accordion and pottery wonderful therapies when the chemo drugs try to get me down. Stay cheerful! We are both out singing and dancing most weekends.

There may be some porcelain Christmas decorations soon. Free for visitors only, but they may not happen.

The garden flourishes with help. We've eaten our own raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, courgettes (not many this year), peas, runner beans, potatoes and tomatoes (oodles). Other folks are called in to pick our huge supply of grapes to which Eric is seriously allergic.

We are now a car-less house, neither of us were happy with our awareness of all the traffic round us. But we have friends who offer us lifts to most places, and we are very near tram and bus stops, both free for us. And we book a taxi when needed.

### **From Joy and Eric**

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