Atlanta February 2003

So – late Jan / early Feb starts with me flying to the Mobile Air conditioning Conference in New Orleans (in January ….?) it was very interesting and although it was super-cooled (I guess because it was an A/C conference) I managed to have some fun in the evenings – I caught up with Rob most evenings – first night I met a bunch of his new friends and the second we went out with one of his friends who I had sailed with just before Xmas. Friday my friend flew in from San Francisco (he lives on Coventry but was working in SF for 6 weeks) – Mikey

We had a blast – Friday night we went to the finishing dinner – which was dull so we bailed early and went down Bourbon Street to the fabulous bar that sells Hurricane's – an awesome cherry-flavored drink that positively knocks your socks off. We met Rob later in the evening at the hotel bar of a very posh place (I can't remember any of the names …. It WAS a long time ago !)
Saturday we meandered around the French Quarter and then to the Mardi Gras museum which was quite an interesting place. Met with Rob that afternoon and went for an interesting exploration trying to find the plantation houses – we followed River Road on and off (and got lost – my favourite was a road called 'OK road') we found an interesting levee which was fun to drive around and then we finally found a house – the oldest one around stuck in the middle of oil refining sites – very incongruous.

Saturday night we went out to a very nice fish restaurant and then to the art gallery in the business district where there were all sorts of art and performing art going on – some a lot better than others. We sat (on the floor) through a truly awful comic and then watched a woman recite poetry whilst burning a lot of things – we bailed relatively early.
Sunday was spent meandering about – down to Rob's place via town and the Garden District and lunch and then the trolleybus ride into town for a walk and then I got a lift to the airport to get back Sunday evening….

I managed two and a half days in the office before I went up to Becker (our supplier) which was interesting – the work was good, but the catching-up was more fun – saw John and Jim the first night (thanks for the hospitality boys !), Carla the second night and then dug myself out of a foot of snow to get to work on Friday. Boy did I not miss shoveling snow all of a sudden. I popped in to Mercedes in the afternoon – that was interesting – it was lovely to see everybody but strange really – I felt very weird to be back nothing much had changed.

I spent the weekend up at Scott's cabin up in up state New York – it was a lot of fun – by Lake George. He's done a lot of work to make the place self-sufficient and has a large solar-panel and a huge number of batteries in his basement. The food was awesome (Scott is a marvelous cook !) and the wine was flowing. We listened to jazz by the light of a wood fire. Then Scott had the bright idea that we should try and freeze washing-up liquid bubbles . . (see pic) – I played photographer and then bailed as it was very very cold !!!
Up early in the morning and off to rent cross-country skis. Now I haven't ever done this before – the others had and laughed heartily at my totally ineptitude – especially on the downhills . . .

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eventually I got the hang of it and swooshing through the trees in the snow was truly lovely (still prefer downhill !) and very calming.

Back to Western Mass to drop off Jon and then on to Dick and Polly for dinner. We had a jokey conversation about Dick and I diving together over dinner (watch this space . . . !) - David, Kuniko and Peter were there – a real family dinner – it was such fun …

Monday I visited a dealer in Fair Lawn and swung by my old place (covered in snow) on my way to the airport – boy was I glad to get on that plane ! The rest of the week was very quiet and I spent the time getting the place tolerable for my parents who arrived on Saturday. Friday night I christened my bathroom (Valentine's Day) with a bubbling bath and a bottle of champagne – candles and good music – ahhh the good life.

Parents stayed until Monday when they went to Savannah – sadly they didn't have good weather as it was cold and gicky – the rest of the week was very quiet – Friday evening we drove to Mobile, Alabama in the most foul weather ever – raining and more rain – we had a huge lightning storm once we had arrived at the motel and settled. Saturday morning we were up early and finished our trip to New Orleans – we had a brunch in a very cool hard-to find place with Eric who we pried off his boat and then over to Rob's. Rob and his girlfriend Marla were getting ready to go to a ball so we hardly saw them –we went out to catch a parade – took the trolley there and then stood around for hours watching the floats having beads thrown at us – it was fun and even my dad got into the spirit !

ME and dad in Mardi Gras spirit !

That evening we had a meal in a restaurant that Marla booked for us – an awesome neighborhood restaurant – mmmm. I fell asleep exhausted on my temporary bed – the sofa !

The following morning we walked around the French Quarter for awhile in the sunshine and then I got a lift to the hotel where a co-worker was staying so that I could get a ride home – I read the whole 7 hours nearly in the third row of a minivan. The rest of the week was quiet – parents got back on Wednesday and we went to Blind Willie's on Thursday for their 17th anniversary evening – a lot of Blues and Mum was in her element – I bailed early – work to be done ! Friday evening we went to the Opera – the Magic Flute – which was fun. Saturday night we went to Dante's Down the Hatch for my parents last night in Atlanta which is a pseudo-pirate ship-place very odd – but had live jazz and great fondue – I loved it ! We had a good time and it was a nice ending to their visit.

Sunday was the trek to the airport and a fight over my parents broken luggage – they ended up with about 4 more bags than they brought ! …. I made sure that they got off safely and staggered home – my last day in the Golf for awhile – thankfully ! Back to my nice Boxster and off for Deborah's 40th Birthday bash – we went to one of these ceramic places and painted pottery for her which was a riot – many people did it in pairs and they all bickered a lot – I just kept to myself

in the corner and painted the moon and lots of stars – then on to Jonathan's for hard-earned food – I was exhausted when I got home !

That was February …..