

Happy New Year to everybody. Let us hope that 2012 is not quite as gloomy as pundits are predicting. My glass is half full.

Newspapers are full of reviews of last year and some brave souls are even trying to predict what is to come. What strikes me about last year (from a narrow viewpoint, ignoring politics and economics) is the progress of technology and its effect on the lives of us ordinary folk.

The Large Hadron Collider is a bit beyond me and, I suspect, most people, but the personal gadgets that abound are also getting more complicated. Just a few years ago it was easy to keep track of things as little was changing. Things are different now: the pace of change has increased.

It has long been true that even if you bought the latest model from the shop, your computer would be out of date by the time you got it home. Progress is continuous.

I once ordered a laptop on line at 11.00pm and found an advert in the next day's paper for the same machine with a more attractive incentive offer. I couldn't change my order, but I could cancel it. Rather than lose the order, the supplier rang; offered me a revised deal on the same machine that included about £350 of extras on top of the preferred incentive. And I got the original incentive as well!

That was a few years ago. I still have no desperate need to upgrade my hardware, but the time approaches and choices have increased.

I browse magazines and the web these days and wonder whether my computer should be a tablet, notebook or laptop. Do I want to buy a camera or a telephone? If I can decide what I want, how do I choose between the options available? It's not straightforward.

Some say that desktop computers are on the way out. Should I get a laptop with a docking station to convert it into an occasional desktop? I really prefer to use two monitors to make working easier.

My New Year resolution is to sort out my filing system before I buy any new kit. (Note the sneaky way it is not time limited. By the time you read this perhaps some of your resolutions will have already succumbed miserably.)

Then I am going to sort out my home network. (Or, more likely, I shall have to persuade someone to help me sort it out.)

Oops! I've just remembered that my wife wants me to buy and install a printer for her. That's blown my timescale to bits. Now where did I leave those computer magazines I was reading...? Help!

The next meeting is on Tuesday 10th January 2012 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth. 7.30 pm for 8.00. It's the AGM for brief reports, elections and programme. We expect to have time to have a chat about how to get the best from EBay. For more information ring Howard on 029 20708439.

