



# 2007 Christmas Newsletter



from:

*Bridget, Malcolm, James & Matthew*

Early in the year the schools were closed due to a heavy fall of snow. Unfortunately James wasn't very well that day, but Matthew made the most of the opportunity to build a snow-bear.



The highlight at Whitmead was a two-hour birds of prey demonstration, held just metres from our apartment, where we all had the opportunity to hold one of the birds.



Since O2 was taken over by Telefónica Malcolm has spent more time in Spain. This made the basis of an interesting half-term break in February, when we joined Malcolm for a few days in Barcelona, and we took the opportunity for sightseeing.



We spent Father's Day in Suffolk, and took Grandad Andrew to Felixstowe for a run around the beach.



In April, Grandparents Marie and Andrew were kind enough to look after the boys for the weekend so that we could celebrate our 12<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary by finishing the Thames walk, (something I started just after my birthday in 2006). The weather was fabulous and a group of walkers

setting out in the opposite direction were able to take our photo at the end.

The only time we seem to get a photo of us altogether is at Lighthouse, the annual local Christian children's holiday week which we both help at, and which James and Matthew attend.



In the May half-term we headed to one of our regular short-break destinations, Whitmead in the Forest of Dean. On the way there we spent the weekend with Malcolm's niece



Caroline and her husband Jonathan, and toddler Samuel in Abergavenny.

We realised this summer that neither James nor Matthew could ride a bike properly and so it was about time they learnt. They took to it like fish to water, and indeed their swimming has also improved over the summer!



We decided to stay in England for our summer holiday this year. We stayed in Gosport, which was a convenient base, spending two days looking around every boat and museum in the Historic Portsmouth dockland (after which Matthew declared himself "museumed out").



Travelling by bus, boat, boat, train and bus (and v.v.) we spent one day on the Isle of Wight in Sandown, at the Dinosaur Isle museum and on the beach looking for fossils.

We also spent a few days in Lyme Regis, which was more relaxing, and despite the rain we enjoyed an excellent fossil hunt on the beach, guided by expert Paddy Howe from the local museum.



In nearby Milton Keynes is Gulliver's World, and James was keen to visit their new "Eco Park". There were plenty of dinosaur and other

prehistoric animal models for James and a climbing wall for Matthew.

Life has been easier since September, in that I decided not to return to teaching ICT to unwilling 17 year olds. Teaching Yoga, writing about health and safety, and helping with a school road safety campaign have all kept me occupied instead.

Plans for next year include a trip to the USA to see cousins in New York (and the American Museum of Natural History, of course) and to see Mickey Mouse and friends in Florida. Hopefully this will still leave enough time in the summer for the biennial trip to Ireland.

In the October half-term we headed south again, this time to Sussex and Kent. A day at Battle Abbey was fascinating, as was a day at Herstmonceux. Malcolm's brother Graham works at the observatory next to the science centre so we had the opportunity to see his "laser ranging" telescope in action.



From Sussex to Kent to see one of the "Roar" zoos, at Port Lympne. With the largest collection of black rhinos in Europe James was in heaven.

As the Autumn drew on the trees chose a wardrobe of gold, bronze and copper leaves. This demanded a walk in our local woods, and we enjoyed kicking up dry leaves and chasing sticks as much as the boys did.



*Happy Christmas and New Year to all  
our friends and family*

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