

## Bateman News 2008

2008 was a difficult year to start with. Joy's father had been very ill at the end of last year and had been admitted to hospital a few days before Christmas. After numerous tests and investigations he was eventually diagnosed with an aggressive colon cancer which by this stage was untreatable. We were able to move him to a hospice local to Joy's Mum where he died a few days later on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. All of this meant numerous journeys to and from the Midlands in the early part of the year for visiting and then for organising the funeral which took place in early March.

Not much has changed for the children over the past year. Joshua continues with the same interests in anything technical and also tennis. He has also started playing some squash and at school he has now started his GCSE courses. In the summer he spent a week in Poole on a dinghy sailing course and passed his RYA level 3.

Abigail continues tennis and swimming and has now moved up to scouts which she says is even better than cubs! She too did dinghy sailing in the summer and is working on RYA level 2. She has also passed her piano grades 1 and 2 this year, but sometimes needs a little encouragement to do the necessary practicing! In their final year at junior school, Abigail's year get all the best parts in the Christmas play and this year she was delighted to be asked to do the coveted role of operating the lighting.

Esther, age 6, is still our "girly" girl and likes her ballet and dresses and anything pink, although this year she broke out of that mould a little and joined the beavers at the local scout group. Esther is a narrator in her Christmas play; her teacher told us she has a very big voice! (I guess that's what comes with having two older siblings to compete with!).

Marcus completed 25 years with Barclays this November and was presented with a lovely watch. He also continues with his numerous interests. He started the final year of his Lay Reader course in September and this continues to take much of his time. The bee hive is now re-stocked and as of the end of the season seemed to be thriving. Marcus acquired his bees this year by collecting two swarms and then merging them into his hive. If they survive the winter we may even have honey next summer.

Joy spends much of her time doing things at the three schools, helping with homework, reading and spelling and taxiing the children around. She has continued playing the piano and (to the amazement of Abigail) succeeded in passing Grade 1 in the summer. She also still finds time to continue 3 days a week at Barclays.

We have had a number of trips and holidays this year which started with five days at Easter at a church based holiday camp, Spring Harvest. The girls in particular loved this time as they had games, craft, stories and songs with lots and lots of children their own age. Our main summer holiday was two weeks in Cyprus to our usual villa near Agia Napa. This year we decided to do a short trip to Cairo in the middle of the two weeks. We thoroughly enjoyed this change of culture, particularly Abigail who is doing Egypt at school this year. The best part was of course the trip to the pyramids which we did by camel and approached the pyramids from the desert. They really are an amazing sight!



We had two other trips away this year. The end of August saw us on a ferry to Caen to spend a few days with some friends of ours who have gone to live in Dinan. 4 adults and 6 children – it was busy but we all had a super time.

The final holiday of 2008 was a "Bateman trip" to Disney. 16 Bateman's flew to Orlando for October half term, including Marcus's parents and his brothers, wives and children. We all thoroughly enjoyed the week and Esther couldn't get enough of seeing the Disney characters that were around, but I don't think I want to see another Mickey Mouse for a very long time!

Well that is it for 2008. Best wishes to you and your family at this special time of year. We say it every year, but please feel free to visit if you are in the area.

With love

Marcus, Joy, Joshua, Abigail and Esther

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