

Bateman Christmas News 2006

Another year, another Christmas and another newsletter. Where does the time go? We nearly didn't write this letter as it doesn't seem two minutes since we were writing the last one and it's hard to find the time to sit down and write, then we started thinking about the events of the past year and then the letter began . . .

Marcus always has lots of hobbies on the go and last autumn another started rumbling away when he booked himself on a 'theory of beekeeping' course. Here's me saying 'the fad will soon disappear' and 'there's no way you can have a beehive', when next thing, he has booked himself on a practical course. That was April this year. Now we have our very own beehive, complete with a queen and several thousand bees. The hive arrived in pieces and Marcus and Joshua (actually Joshua mainly!) spent many a happy hour with a hammer and screwdriver. Joshua also did a beekeeping course and he is now as enthusiastic as Marcus. Unfortunately the bees didn't arrive in time to get honey this year, but hopefully they have built up enough stocks to get them through the winter and next year we hope to be eating our very own honey. (by the way, stinging ratio to date, Marcus four, Joshua nill!).

We had two holidays this year. The first was in August when we went to India and visited Delhi and Jaipur. We did all the normal tourist sites like the red fort and the amber fort. We tried out various forms of transport from elephant and camel to rickshaw and auto-rickshaw. Five of us in the back of an auto-rickshaw didn't seem at all a problem to the driver, but then they don't seem to have any rules on the road at all. Abigail and Esther both seemed to be a tourist attraction themselves with Indian ladies coming up and stroking their blond hair and bringing their own children to shake hands with our girls. In tourist areas the girls had their photographs taken by Indians on countless occasions and thoroughly enjoyed all the attention. The holiday included some fun afternoons like the ones we spent in the swimming pools of expensive hotels and also some more sobering moments like seeing the slums from the train windows on our way out of Delhi and the beggars on the street and young children out at work. I think we probably sum India up as more of an 'experience' than a 'holiday'. Cyprus in October on the other hand was our 'relaxing holiday'. Sea, sand, pool and restaurants, that about covers it all!

		
<p><i>The Bee Hive</i></p>	<p><i>On holiday in Cyprus</i></p>	<p><i>Fireworks</i></p>

In September Joshua and Abigail each moved up into the second year at their respective schools, while September saw Esther starting school. Being a summer baby she is doing mornings only at the moment but is really enjoying it. Out of school she has started ballet lessons where she goes along with other girls from her school class. Joshua still excels at science and maths and his first year exams saw him coming top of his year for science. In November Joshua's school took part in the Lord Mayor's parade through the city of London and he was selected as one of the boys to walk along with their float. He had his moment of stardom when the TV camera's focused on the school's float and he was on TV for all of 3 or 4 seconds! Out of school his favourite hobby (apart from the computer) is tennis. Abigail is a good all-rounder and adds to her interests by doing piano, tennis, orienteering and going to the local cub-scout group.

We are splitting our church attendance between our local village church where Marcus does a family service once a month and a much larger church in Guildford called St. Saviours where we go the rest of the time. The Guildford church has a congregation of about 200 on Sunday morning and alongside this are active children's groups for all ages. We are very pleased that all our three have fitted in well to their respective groups and are keen to go along.

In the summer this year Marcus was accepted onto the Guildford Diocesan Ministry Course to train as a Lay Reader. This is a three year course which involves a study night on a Monday evening, numerous assignments, two residential weekends a year, a number of preaching sessions and a reading list as long as your arm. At the end of it he will get a diploma from the University of Wales Bangor. He will then 'officially' be able to do family services at church!

We hope you have a very happy Christmas and maybe we will see some of you during 2007. Best wishes

Marcus, Joy, Joshua, Abigail and Esther

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