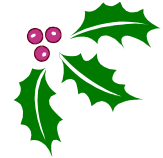


2000 Christmas Newsletter



from:

Bridget, Malcolm, James & Matthew



Matthew Patrick

Obviously the main event of this year (having spent most of it pregnant!) was the safe arrival of Matthew Patrick, just after midday on Sunday 8 October. Despite the threats of the hospital that he would weigh 10lb, he tipped the scales at a mere 9 ½ lb (4.3kg). As I write this newsletter in November he is only 6 weeks old, and still doesn't have much of a routine, although twice in the last week he has slept for over 5 hours. James seems quite content so far with the idea of a little brother, but can't quite understand why babies aren't as playful as some of his friends. Grandad Leathley managed to get to High Wycombe in time to see Matthew when he was only three hours old.



Grandad and Grandma Leathley with Matthew, James and Bridget

Holidays change once you have children. No more backpacking around Malaysia. This year we went to Centerparcs twice. In January we stayed at the one in Suffolk, and in September we took Brenda and Len (Malcolm's parents) to the one at Longleat. James enjoyed having his grandparents around, especially as by then mummy was quite tired.



Bridget (& Matthew) and James with Grandma and Grandad Woodman at Centerparcs

In June we headed to the South of France in search of some sunshine. James wasn't too sure about the sea and thought the sand was 'dirty'. He enjoyed the hotels and the mobile home, and especially the swimming pool. We went to the zoo – James' first experience of *real* tiger, lions and elephants.



James feeding an elephant

We rounded up our stay in France with a weekend near Menton, with Bridget's school friend Susanne and her family, who made us very welcome.



James & Malcolm on the water slide in the South of France

A significant amount of time this year seems to have gone on re-organising the house. The conservatory became the dining room, the old dining room became the new study, James' room became Matthew's room, and the radio / sewing room became James' new bedroom. James' bedroom has a transport theme, a new 'big, bouncy bed' and a wardrobe where the clothes are at a height he can reach; James is very choosy about what he will wear – down to insisting on his Thomas the Tank engine socks or his Bob the Builder t-shirt. The new study has space for two desk top PCs and a laptop, so all three of us can 'work' at the same time (with space for Matthew to sit and watch). We've also had a new kitchen this year, which took a lot longer than the pregnancy to complete, but looks beautiful and provides us with more storage, more worktop space and more power sockets.



Thomas does his flypast

James was two in August, an event marked with a weekend of celebrations. First, a ride on Thomas the Tank engine with a whole compartment booked for James and his friends. And then, a visit to Legoland with friends from Ipswich, Katharine and John, and their children Jemma and Alexander who spent the weekend with us.



James on another train!

Workwise, Malcolm moves office about once a month (or perhaps it just seems that way) and after a long sojourn in Richmond is back in Slough – but not for long. Next year the office moves to Hammersmith, which means a return to leaves on the line. Bridget was working three days a week in Abingdon until the end of August, with a particularly interesting project for part of that time looking at new air traffic routes over Europe. Outside of 'real' work, Bridget was awarded her diploma for teaching yoga in April, and hopes to start teaching again in 2001.

Happy Christmas and New Year to all our friends and family