

Happy Christmas from the Applebys



James chose (and edited) the photo above to illustrate my continuing interest in Virtual Reality in health and safety applications. VR work has replaced some of the magazine work this year, alongside more traditional areas of fire evacuation and risk assessments.



In April Malcolm and I abandoned Matthew and James to spend a week in La Palma - our longest time without the boys since they were born. We saw dolphins and a sea turtle, had an early morning visit to the Observatory and enjoyed ideal weather for walking.

My Dad turned 80 in January, and while he didn't feel well enough for a big party, we had a small family celebration in Ipswich, with Malcolm turning out an excellent canal barge-shaped cake. After a spell in hospital, my Dad died in August, with me, my Mum and my brother by his bedside.



The boys had their own holiday plans, but we had a week in Suffolk, which included a trip down memory lane with Mum to Oulton Broad.



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Ahead of a week's holiday in Suffolk, Bridget, Matthew and I went to Ed Sheeran's gig in Chantry Park, Ipswich. This was the last leg of Ed's three year tour, and he was clearly excited to be back on home territory. Supporting acts were Passenger (or Mike as he's called) and The Darkness, also from Suffolk.

We had hired a large cottage in Suffolk with the expectation that an unknown number of sons and their friends might join us. In the end they all went elsewhere, so we had a quiet and relaxing time in a beautiful spot, co-incidentally very close to Ed Sheeran's country house. We took our bikes, and made good use of them cycling between the local villages.



Having been left home alone whilst everyone else was out of the country, I went to the Radio 2 Live in Hyde Park gig, featuring Clean Bandit, Status Quo, The Pet Shop Boys and others. A well organised event finishing at a very civilised 9.30, to give plenty of time to get home from London.

I've been playing radios again this year after a 20+ year break, both at home and with the Chesham and Northampton Radio Clubs. The antennas at home are gradually growing in size, so far with no complaints from the neighbours. And I managed to win the inter-club quiz last year and this year, so they are likely to ask me to set the questions next year.

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My year got off to an interesting start as I suddenly and unexpectedly came out as vegetarian. During my final half a year at University I focused on my dissertation (which predominantly involved measuring small shark teeth) and revision, with the rare excursion to Monkey World and Kimmeridge Bay. Following final exams and a dinosaur-themed house party

for the Ecologists, I had a brief stint as a research assistant, trading in shark teeth for oyster shells. After an excellent birthday at the Natural History Museum (above), I flew off to Jersey for two months work experience at the zoo, where I made many feathered friends, including QT the Sumatran Laughingthrush. I returned in time for the year's Tetrapod Zoology conference as well as my graduation, the latter of which turned into almost a week of meeting up with old friends in Bournemouth.



I am currently rehearsing for the role of Shere Khan in the village panto production of The Jungle Book, while also learning to drive and trying to find some sort of employment!

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A lot has changed for me this year. I finished my A-levels in June, and therefore completed my time at school. I was pleased with my results, especially in computer science and maths.



Highlights of my extra long summer holiday included a road trip to Brighton with some old school friends, the Ed Sheeran concert in Ipswich, a few days at Soul Survivor in Peterborough, and finally three weeks in Peru with Jay, an even older school friend (from primary school).

I was home in September in time for my Grandad's funeral, and the day after that started work. I'm working full-time at Peters Research, a software company based a cycling distance from home. It produces mathematical simulation code for engineers and architects when designing buildings with lifts. I'm absolutely loving the job and I hope to work there for quite some time.



Having surpassed the age of 18, I have started playing in pubs and adult open mics, I hope to continue gigging alongside work in the year to come.