

## Malcolm

Lockdown doesn't really affect radio waves, and Malcolm has taken advantage of the enforced isolation by improving his aerials and spending more time communicating with people all over the world.



*Malcolm playing with aerials*

It's fair to say that the rest of the family doesn't quite understand what Malcolm gets up to in his 'shed in the garage', but they remain tolerant.

He's started 'remote invigilation' of amateur radio exams. Exams used to be run via clubs, but COVID put a stop to that, so the national society cast out for volunteers to invigilate exams remotely. He's met over 100 candidates and overseen their exams, just like being in a school hall without the pacing up and down.

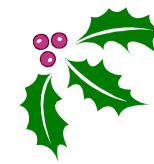
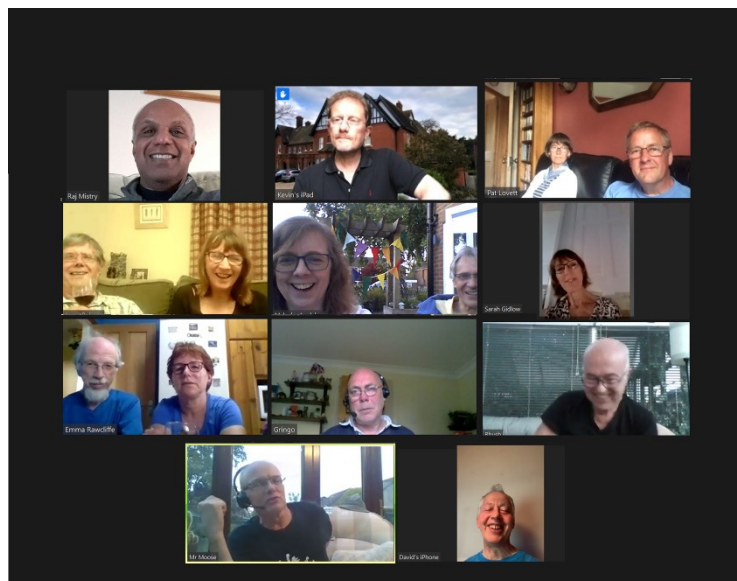
Having not been allowed on the Eastbourne trip in July, Malcolm, James and Matthew were invited to join Bridget for a holiday in Cornwall in late September (timed to overlap with her friend Sue). Waterfalls, castles, walks and of course a zoo filled the itinerary, in a variety of weather from sunny, through foggy to pouring rain. Although we live in a beautiful part of the country, the change of scenery was very welcome, and we got to see the sea, so rare for our landlocked home location.



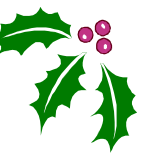
*St Nectan's Glen*

We'll miss our Christmas dinner with friends in Ipswich, but ironically we've probably seen more of these friends this year than any year since we left Suffolk, all via Zoom on the "small screen". And nobody had to drive home afterwards. Thanks to you all - you've helped to keep us sane!

*Staying in touch, via Zoom*



## Happy Christmas from Bridget, Malcolm, James & Matthew



### 2020

Despite the pandemic, it's not been a bad year for us. James started a full-time contract in May, and Matthew started a degree-apprenticeship in July. More about each of us follows.

### Bridget

A mixed year workwise, with clients like the National Theatre shut down and magazines cutting costs on the one hand - and the market for e-learning and remote learning thriving on the other.



*Family walk on Good Friday, within our lockdown exercise allowance*



Before lockdown, Bridget fitted in a presentation on the role of robots in safety in Birmingham, and a trip to Cornwall to visit colleague and friend, Lucie.

The lockdown provided plenty of opportunities for local walks, and there was a joy in studying the way each field and patch of woods changed as the sun grew warmer and the days longer. In between lockdowns Bridget headed to Eastbourne with friend Sue, to at last finish the South Downs Way with three days of walking.

*Finishing the South Downs Way in Eastbourne*

In September, some more walking, this time in Cornwall. Again meeting Sue for the beginning of the week, and with Lucie for a glorious walk along the cliffs. There was also a chance for a reunion (in their garden) with university friends Steve and Brona, so plenty to do, despite many attractions still being shut or restricted.

Bridget didn't manage to write that book, despite lockdown, but she did have a small section in someone else's [health and safety book](#) (along with 141 other contributors). Perhaps 2021? We shall see.

## Matthew

Matthew has continued to work for a local software company, cycling to an empty office throughout lockdown.

His paper on 'The round trip time simulation' was peer reviewed and published, and he presented it at the Lift & Escalator Symposium, appearing with academics and professionals who started their research before Matthew was born. Having looked at physical universities, Matthew decided instead to opt for a distance-learning degree apprenticeship, where the training and support are set up to be provided remotely. His course is entitled 'Digital and technology solutions apprenticeship - software development pathway' but for anyone not sure what that is, it means 'Works with computers.'



*Matthew working with computers*

Matthew's music life had to go online for much of 2020, and he's played at church services, via Zoom and [YouTube](#), for youth groups, and for [Guitari Lounge lockdown](#). He also spent a week in the summer as the sound engineer for [Lighthouse Live](#).

Similarly, much of his social life has been online, keeping in touch with friends from primary school, secondary school, and sixth form.



*Matthew with friends at Kew Gardens*



*Matthew managing the sound for Lighthouse Live*

In the period between lockdowns, Matthew managed some face-to-face get togethers, including a trip to Kew Gardens with school friends.

## James

James started a part-time job with the Northampton Methodist District as a Green Champion at the start of 2020, alongside some volunteering for a local charity. The part-time job was a good idea, as through that he heard about some full-time opportunities. He applied, and had an interview in London a few days before lockdown. COVID caused a few delays, but in May he started work for the Methodist Church in Britain as a climate change campaigner. This job has given him the chance to read widely, and discuss widely, how politics, economics, faith and science all impact on attitudes to climate change. The goal of his team is to encourage Methodist Churches around the world to take action for climate justice in the run up to the COP26 UN conference in Glasgow in November 2021.



*James takes to homeworking*

James has kept in touch with University friends during lockdown. Unable to visit each other, they have regular Zoom evenings, which can get quite lively. He's also seen a couple of local friends, all within socially distanced rules.



Never having worked in an office, James adapted to homeworking very quickly, and has formed good working relationships with colleagues from Italy, Zambia, Fiji and Uruguay via Zoom. His contract has been extended to December 2021, so that he can cover the postponed UN Climate Change conference.



*James' entertains for his birthday in August*

James' lockdown project was to set-up a chicken pen. Starting with a wooden chicken coup he found in the woods, he constructed a cage and set up feeders. In spring 2021, he'll get some chickens to occupy the cosy home he's prepared. So watch out for chicken photos next year.

*James checking out chickens*