



Happy Christmas from Bridget, Malcolm, James & Matthew



2021 was a year of two halves - with us thrown together as a family for much of the first half of the year, and opportunities for us all to go our separate ways in the second half.

*A team effort for
Lighthouse 2021*



Bridget

The first half of the year ended with a family holiday to Poole (see James' entry) and the second half started with the others heading home while I stayed on in Swanage with friend Sue to catch up on some much needed walking.

After that, it proved difficult to arrange long-distance walks, but I enjoyed lots of local walks, on my own, with local friends, and sometimes on the phone to Sue as we both walked!



As the world opened up, so too did requests for face-to-face training. It was good to be back with people in a room talking about safety.

My work calendar is already looking quite full for 2022, with two new clients, and one returning after a COVID lull.



Malcolm and I managed two holidays without the boys (see Malcolm's entry). In August it was so lovely to see friends we hadn't seen for so long (and in the case of 18-month old Liam north of Aberdeen, had never met) and everyone made us very welcome.



Bridget

Matthew

I spent much of the 2020 lockdown learning how to record and produce music and video. This year presented me with many opportunities to use these newly gained skills. As well as releasing original music videos on my YouTube channel 'MapplebyMusic', I had an enormous amount of fun producing a five-episode series for Lighthouse (a local Christian youth project which runs every summer) called 'The Camel and the Teapot from Space'. Having co-written the script, directed the actors, operated the camera, composed and recorded the score, I then took two weeks off work to edit the series together.



As well as a family holiday in Poole in June, I took the opportunity in July to go on holiday to Cardiff with some friends for a few days. Although much of Cardiff was still locked down at the time, we found plenty to do whilst we were there. I also fitted in a couple visits to see friends at Durham and Cambridge Universities.

My work at Peters Research alongside my degree apprenticeship has continued during 2021. 18 months down, 30 to go!

My role at the company has gradually expanded. I'm now in charge of front-end development for our leading software, and responsible for mentoring the newest member of our software team.



My camera provided a perfect excuse to go out on more walks with friends, reconnecting with many contacts I haven't seen in years. This year has obviously had its challenges, so I'm extremely grateful to all the friends who have supported me.

Matthew

James

For me 2021 was dominated by my work with the Methodist Church on the Climate Justice for All (CJ4A) campaign, alongside activists from other parts of the world. I built up a network of volunteers, helped to edit most of our seven short films, and coordinated the signing of a national call to the government from 1871 people from Methodist churches in the UK, as well as a declaration for climate justice from 23 leaders from Methodist and United churches around the world.



James with some of his CJ4A team in Glasgow during COP26



I managed to meet up with a lot more friends in 2021 than in the previous year. Our family holiday to Poole meant I could meet up with some of my university friends, and enjoyed a trip to Kimmeridge with some of them.

As has become tradition (except for 2020) I met a group of Ecologists at the Natural History Museum in London for my birthday. I have also been meeting with my old quiz team every Sunday evening on Zoom, and in mid-August we gathered in Prestwood and later Blewbury for our first in-person meet up for two years!



The other big milestone this year was the addition of six chickens to our family. Named Ginger, Bidy, Bunty, Babs, Beryl, and Bertha. They are hybrid hens who lay one egg each nearly every day over the summer and autumn. As you can imagine we have been swamped with eggs, which we share with our neighbours, friends, and anyone who comes to visit us!

James

Malcolm



Despite COVID restrictions, my local amateur radio club has remained active. In May we set up a special event station at the ancient Brill windmill (sadly damaged in a recent storm), and operated in two “Field Day” contests near Tring.

I have continued with remote amateur radio examination invigilation, and by the year end will have supervised over 300 exams. The national society have recognised this effort and awarded the entire team the “Kenwood Trophy” at the society’s AGM.



Our area is known for being staunchly Conservative, but in a recent by-election we returned a LibDem MP, and the Parish Council now has a Green Party Councillor. Our Green Councillor has started a monthly “Climate Café” for the local community to meet together and discuss green issues, and the whole family is happy to support this new initiative.

With the Green Councillor and LibDem MP

Bridget and I enjoyed two trips away this year (without James and Matthew). In August we took a trip north, seeing Jenny & Dave, Liz & Stuart, Alan, Anne, Colin & Liam, Mark & Junko, and my niece Caroline and her gang (too many to list - see photo right) - all in 6 days!

In October we had a long weekend in Cromer, taking advantage of my bus pass to leave the car alone for 3 days, and maximising on the nightlife of Cromer with an end of pier show and the cinema.



Malcolm

As 2021 draws to an end, we hope this letter finds you well, and managing to find joy in what you do. If we didn’t see you in 2021, perhaps we’ll do another tour in 2022.