

Malcolm, Bridget, James & Matthew's Christmas 2023 Newsletter



James

January started off on a high as James finally passed his practical driving test. With this weight off his mind he could focus on more enjoyable things, such as performing in the Prestwood panto as the handsome prince who sweeps Sleeping Beauty off her feet, both in a romantic sense and in a literal sense! He attended the Field Studies Council conference, which was about two hours of actual work and the rest was fun activities.

In March James bought a second-hand electric Nissan Leaf. This came after almost a year of research, resulting in his turning into a veritable James May of electric cars. He offers consultancy for a reasonable charge if you're interested...

Locally, he supports Prestwood Nature as a committee member and with projects in the orchard behind our house, and took a year's membership of the Chiltern Open Air Museum.

James has seen uni friends at Comic Con, the NHM, fossil hunting in Dorset, and on holiday in Wales.

September was eclipsed by Domino's illness and loss - forever missed.

November saw the beginning of Panto season once again. Due to the success of the club's Shakespeare production there was quite some competition for roles, but fortunately James was cast as the Big Bad Wolf, a return to form for him as he prefers (animal-based) villains to romantic heroes.

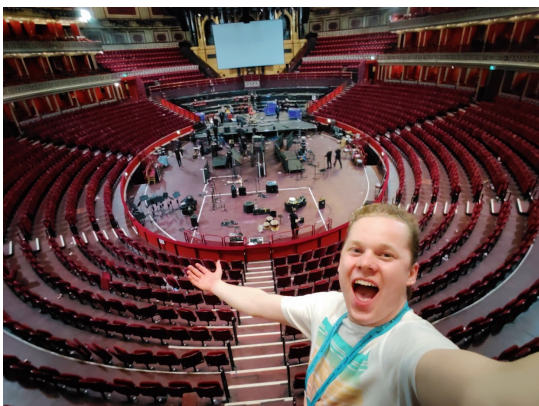


Matthew

Matthew has continued working and studying software, performing and teaching music and dressing up on stage. Having played Demetrius in *Midsummer Night's Dream* this October, he is now rehearsing for the role of Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland the Panto* at nearby Hazlemere.

Matthew decided to put some energy into getting more paid gigs this year. This has included pubs, birthdays, schools and local festivals.

He played bass guitar at The Royal Albert Hall with a group of students he has been mentoring for the past year.



Along with some friends from secondary school, Matthew visited Norway for a holiday. This was the first time he'd left the country since 2019 and the first chance to use his recently acquired Irish passport.

Matthew enjoyed a few UK based trips away including some time in Exeter, Bournemouth, Reading and London.

Bridget & Malcolm



Inspired by the previous year's holiday by train around Germany, Bridget and Malcolm took three weeks to travel by train and boat to Budapest, visiting Belgium, Germany, Austria, Czechia and Slovakia.

Later in the year they had a quiet week in Wales, climbing Cader Idris and walking on the beach at Barmouth.

Keeping up with the boys' drama, Malcolm is playing the Woodcutter in the panto, and Bridget is third villager and costumes.

We continue to support our local Methodist Church, which has happily seen a small increase in membership. Malcolm dines with the Methodist men once a month, and Bridget walks with a church friend regularly.



Family



No family holiday this year, but we've had some great family outings.

In February we saw the amazing show ABBA Voyage to celebrate Malcolm's birthday.

In May we went to the Chiltern Open Air Museum with friends Ruth & Hannah to watch historic re-enactments.



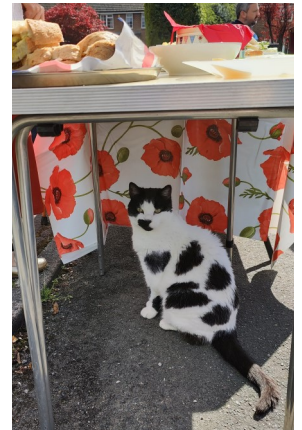
In August we watched the musical 'Back to the Future' with our friend Cecilia from Bristol.

Domino



Sadly, we lost Domino this year after a short illness. He was 12-years old.

He'd been such a big part of our lives since James and Matthew were children, and he was known and loved by many of our neighbours too. Here, our first photo of him as a kitten, and one of our last, joining in with the Coronation street party in May.



Marie

Bridget's Mum continues to manage her garden, with regular orders (via Bridget's computer) for bulbs and plants.

James' visited her on his birthday in August, and Bridget & John visited on her birthday in October.

She also had a video call with her brother Gerry this year!

