

Looking back on 2006...

Has this year just whizzed by or are we just getting old?

January started with Liz in a frantic hunt for a new meeting hall for the Guides. The Old Church Hall, a 15th century tithe barn with wonky exposed beams and dry rot failed a public liability insurance inspection. St. Michaels Church Hall in Camberley provided a temporary home, it was too small for 24 Guides and the carpet limited our mess making activities but it kept us off the streets. May saw us back to the Catholic church, but no room for September. So we have moved again to the 1st Frimley Scout Hut - we hope to stay there a little longer!

In February we joined Bridget (Liz's sister) and her family for a weekend at Centre Parcs, Longleat. Taking turns at babysitting meant the big kids could enjoy the 'white water rapids' in the pool, mountain biking round the forest and civilised restaurant meals. With the little kids Sarah enjoyed crafts, Peter archery and mini golf was popular and even the pouring rain wouldn't deter Matthew.



April saw a trip to Diggerland, the mud was just great and a great time was had by all. All the family got to drive diggers and dumper trucks, not to mention the 'ride' in a huge digger's bucket.

Adrian is still working for HSBC in London. His hotel stays haven't been quite so glamorous this year - 3 nights in Canary Wharf doesn't set the pulse racing in quite the same way as Dubai, Hong Kong or Mexico City!

Liz's birthday (the big 40) was shared with family and lots of other canoeists in a field outside Bedford. The BCCC annual trip to Cardington country park. The weather wasn't as good as the previous year. The demands to dam the top pool were only made once as it was quickly realised that perhaps it wasn't warm enough to swim in the river! Matthew has his first trip in a canoe on moving water.



May saw Sarah join "Mummy's" Guides. We went camping at Foxlease in the New Forest. Meanwhile Peter was just up the road with the Scouts. Sarah made her promise at the top of the abseiling tower and then abseiled down. Other adventures with the guides have included an overnight bivi, patrol camping at Tilford, the Big Gig at Wembley Arena singing along to the likes of Orsen, Lemar and the Sugababes, also a day of space themed activities at the University of Surrey.

Liz also got a job in May! She is a bailiff for the Basingstoke Canal Angling Association. Several fishermen were amazed to see the bailiff arrive by kayak. On the canal, paddlers are public enemy No 2 after mountain bikers (Liz's alternative method of patrolling the towpath!)



The other part of Liz's birthday celebrations was a short break in Iceland. Liz has always wanted to go, so with Granny and Grandad looking after the children Liz and Adrian set off for the longest day in Iceland. It is true it doesn't get dark. Over the four days we included whale watching (although not many sightings on our trip), a day touring Reykjavik, another on the Grand Circle tour (we took ourselves by hire car) taking in Geysir, the fantastic Gullfoss falls and Pingvellir - original parliament fields. Our final day included relaxing at the famous Blue lagoon and touring volcanic mud pools, mountains and lakes.

Peter took up paddling again in the summer months and achieved with Sarah placid water 1 star awards. It also counted towards the Scout Fitness Challenge and his Scout Water sports badge. Enthusiasm has

waned now it is colder.

Sarah has tried her hand at lots of activities. She started guitar lessons in January and gave then up in November with occasional practice in between. She has made good progress with her swimming lessons. Matthew is still at the arm bands stage, though his frogs legs are more proficient, without arm bands he still spends a lot of time under water.

August and we were off to Southern Brittany. Staying at a Yelloh holiday village; we soaked up the sun - the weather was generally kind to us - and we explored the fishing ports, played on the beaches and enjoyed chocolate pancakes for lunch.

Much of August Adrian spent helping his Mum, who celebrated her 80th birthday in July, to move into a flat in sheltered accommodation. Her health is not as good as it was, and together with having to give up driving, she relies more heavily on our support. This has involved numerous trips to Cheltenham for Adrian in the second half of the year.

September see Matthew's 6th birthday celebrated with a trampoline and bouncy castle party at a local sports hall. It was a very boisterous affair but everyone enjoyed themselves. Sarah again took up cross country running at school and competed in a couple of competitions until she fell awkwardly in a race in November fracturing her arm just above the elbow. This has meant having to miss out on trampolining and swimming for a few weeks whilst her arm healed.

In November it was time for the Canoe Club AGM. Liz collect the trophy for 'Fastest lady' for the 6th year in succession. She also managed elected as 'Madam Chairman', the first lady in the club's history. November also saw an attempt at the Exe Descent Canoe Race. This resulted in swimming real white water rapids, a wrecked rudder on the K2, grazed shins for Liz and a broken toe for her paddling partner. They are talking about another go next year, but not in a K2 and maybe not with each other!

Early December and the Christmas shows are with us. Matthew was a soldier in the infant school production and Sarah a narrator in the Junior school production of 'The pied piper'.