

## Look back on 2008

Last year (2007) after Christmas we set off to Germany for a few days to visit Liz's sister and her family. A trip to Winterberg gives us some real snow. We go tobogganing and quickly learn the German for "watch out!" We arrived back home on New Years eve too tired to party.



Liz gets back into training in earnest. weekends are dominated by canoe races. With her partner Tracy they pick up veteran Ladies prizes in the Watersides and Thamesides series. (veterans start at 35, does that make you feel old). It was all preparation for the big race at Easter, Devises to Westminster, 125 miles non stop. The weather in the run up to Easter was very wet, the race organisers had discussions with the Environment Agency. There was talk of cancelling the event but eventually a compromise was reached - the Thames section had to be paddled in daylight. the worst Easter weather for 40 years sees us scraping ice off the boat to fix our number plate on and paddling off into the moonlight with 3 degrees of frost. Ice slows us down at the portages, just after Newbury we slip on ice and drop the boat. We replace the rudder but don't notice the cracked hull until later. The hoped for

increase in speed on the Thames doesn't materialise, but headwinds and snow do. We take a swim at Sunbury but carry on. At 4mph we won't make the outgoing tide at Teddington and we retire at Molesey 103 miles from Devises. You can read a full account at <http://www.b3c.org.uk/waterfront>

Meanwhile Sarah has a birthday party, with 5 friends and we brew up cosmetics at the Kitchen table. Peter finishes at Scouts having finally achieved his Chief Scouts Gold Award and he starts a paper round delivering the Star and Courier free papers.

Easter wasn't during the Easter holidays. We visit Holland for a short break and stay at Centre Parcs. All the favourite activities are there - mini golf, flowrider and swimming pool. We have time to visit a local pancake house with Adrian's sister, Jane and family.

April sees a weekend Guide camp at nearby Walton Firs. Liz gets a nice meal out in Cheltenham on her birthday, but sadly we are there for the funeral of Adrian's Uncle David, his mum's brother. His mum, who now lives near us in a care home in Frimley isn't fit enough to attend.

In June Liz and Sarah join 5000 other Scouts and Guides for a camp at the Ardingly showground - Scoutabout. A weekend of partying, activities and crafts and thankfully dry weather.

August and we are on holiday in Brittany. the weather is cold and grey. The swimming pool is at least in sight and a quick walk back for hot showers! Peter has been studying coastal erosion in geography and gets another lecture on it on holiday. We also go to Brightwell, Liz's parents home, for the 'official' housewarming, but return home separately from our Volvo that limps back for a new clutch on a tow truck.



In September Matthew starts a new school - Crawley Ridge Juniors. Within his first week he is a patient at Frimley Park Hospital having fallen over and broken his arm - we have to postpone his birthday party - donutting at Aldershot Ski Centre until November when his arm has recovered.

In November, Liz and Adrian get away to Pathos in Cyprus for a short break (thanks to granny looking after the children) - a belated 20th wedding anniversary celebration. Full of culture, ancient remains and spectacular scenery for walking it was probably just as well the children were all at school - we had a very relaxing and

enjoyable time.

Liz is not training for the DW next Easter so has taken up open canoeing by way of a diversion. She is still active with the Guides and got her 20 year service award this year. She is taking 39 of them (including Sarah) to London the weekend before Christmas, they are exploring the sights, skating at the Natural History Museum and staying

overnight on HMS Belfast.

