

Fiona and Colin write

What's in a name? Quite a lot apparently because Courtney is now Beth!

During the summer of 2004 she repeatedly said she didn't like the name 'Courtney'. We responded with comments such as "it's a pretty name", "it's a special name" etc., but she continued to say she didn't like her name until at the beginning of November 2004 she said she wanted a different name. We tried changing 'Courtney' into something she liked, but there isn't much you can do with the name so we looked at her second name 'Elizabeth' which we gave her when we adopted her. She liked 'Beth' and has been called that ever since. Virtually everyone says her new name suits her better.

Apart from that life continues in much the same vein. Highlights of the year include:

a) Watching Beth perform in her first Ballet production. She was (in turn) a doll, a gingerbread man and a can of beans!

b) Going regularly to the cinema as a family. Beth can now concentrate for long enough to make cinema going a really pleasurable experience! Armed with popcorn and drinks, recent trips have included Wallace and Grommit, Nanny MacPhee, Valiant, Herbie-Fully Loaded and others. We're particularly looking forward to the new Narnia film due out next month.

c) In July we holidayed in the Cotswolds. Breathtaking scenery and reasonable weather helped to make it a fun week. Our chalet was by a lake and Beth kept the local swans well fed! The swimming pool had a flume and this time Beth did go down with Daddy – before she'd been too nervous. Col and Fi enjoyed the break from the normal routine. Beth's behaviour was a bit 'off' and we discovered why when we got home. She thought we weren't coming back! Poor love. In previous years we've always made a big thing of what we're going to do when we get home but forgot this year assuming that as we'd been away a few times she'd know the routine. Not so – 'baggage' from the past still rears its ugly head

from time to time.

d) Visiting an 'enchanted garden' last month at Kingston Lacey a few miles from us. The grounds are all lit up with different coloured lights and there is a mile long walk in the dark through the trees. There were also fairies dancing around – much to Beth's delight!

e) Beth starting a new school. Technically she should have moved to junior school this September but as she was backyeared we were expecting her to move schools in September 2006. However God had other plans! Earlier in the year someone mentioned that they thought Beth would benefit from education in a specialist setting. Fi's immediate reaction was that Beth's educational psychologist wouldn't agree. However, the ed psych did agree and mentioned 2 schools we already knew of and a unit attached to a mainstream junior school in New Milton about 5 miles from us. Over the summer, Fi visited all the options, both mainstream and special, and fell in love with the unit in New Milton as it had the best of both worlds i.e. specialised teaching and socialising with 'normal' kids. (It also happens to be Colin's old school!) There was a problem because it was in the next county and we would have to a) get Dorset to agree to fund her there; b) Hampshire to agree that she could have a place that rightfully belongs to a Hampshire child; and c) Ashley Junior school to agree to offer her a place and have one to give. Well we jumped through all the hoops and to our amazement Ashley offered Beth a place immediately – no waiting for next September! She started on 1st November. We were concerned about how she would cope with such a huge change but Beth amazed us by coping magnificently. Although she has only been there 2 weeks we can already see progress. They are working her hard, but she seems really happy. She used to say she was bored at her old school – no chance of that at Ashley! Her old school gave her a wonderful send-off and she has many happy memories of her last week there.

Colin and Fi continue to be active in their church. Colin doing work with junior school age

youngsters rather than the teenagers as before and Fi helping from time to time with worship, leading intercession and doing some children's work as well.

We are looking forward to the New Year with renewed hope and vision – not only for Beth, but for ourselves as well.

**Fiona, Colin and Beth Mosling,
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Addresses are not printed in the on-line version of the newsletter for reasons of security

Kathy, Jem & Tim write

In January Kathy attended a whole day assessment at the Ministry of Defence involving role play (with a professional actor!!), tests and an hour-long interview. 400 people had applied for just 20 positions!

After two further interviews she was successful and started her new job in May. She is working as a finance officer for the Imaging and Geospatial systems project team. The move gained her a promotion to the next grade up from her previous employment. She works in a building that was purpose built about 10 years ago along with a total of around 5,000 staff.

Meanwhile Jeremy was doing his bit for charity by enduring Brian McFadden and Lamar whilst attending a fundraiser in aid of the Asian tsunami at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. Fortunately performances by Jools Holland and Eric Clapton saved him from having to launch himself off the upper tier.

In February Jeremy hit 21 heading into town for a night on the tiles. Luck was smiling on him as friends, family and work colleagues subsidised his drinking for the evening. Appearing 3 days later still feeling the worse for wear and clutching an empty pizza box he was said to be both delighted and relieved.

In March Tim and Kathy went to a Doves gig, where merriment ensued. A new mortgage for Jeremy and Kath was arranged on 85 Oxford Street (Jem's hair fell out when he saw the repayments). More merriment ensued.

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Andy and Mel write

For the first time Christmas 2004 was held at Clayton Towers. We hosted a "do" for both sides of the family starting with Christmas dinner for ourselves, Mum, Fiona, Colin, Arthur and Beth. Mel's family joined us for the evening festivities and in total we catered for 19 people. We're pleased to say it all seemed to go well and everyone appeared to enjoy the games and activities we subjected them to!

For our holiday this year we visited Switzerland. After flying via Zurich and travelling on an impressive double decker train we spent the first 8 days of our stay in Interlaken (which means "between the lakes") situated between Lake Brienz and Lake Thun in the heart of the German speaking part of the country. Like so much of the area it is surrounded by snow-topped mountains and pretty meadows. Wherever you go you are confronted with stunning scenery. From our room we were able to see the mountain peaks including the Jungfrau, at 13,642 feet, the highest in the area.

We made use of the regular boat service to visit many of the towns and villages situated on the banks of both lakes. Travelling around Switzerland is comfortable and cheap and we enjoyed using trains, funiculars and cable cars to visit locations of both high and low altitude. The Schilthorn (10,000 feet) was, quite literally, one of the highlights. This is where some of the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* was shot. Although covered in snow it wasn't too cold and we had a great view of the "3 peaks" (Jungfrau, Eiger and Monch). We enjoyed a nice warm bowl of soup in the revolving restaurant situated right on the top of the mountain!

After a very enjoyable time in Interlaken we took a scenic journey by train south west to Montreux on the banks of (the huge) Lake Geneva. After a hectic schedule during the first part of our holiday, we had a more leisurely approach to our 4 days in the area but still found time to visit Chateau Chillon and Rochers-de-Naye where we had close encounters with marmots! We flew home from Geneva with over 300 photographs and have ended up with 2 albums (plus a DVD of the holiday to follow soon).

You can find out more about our trip, including photographs, on the family web site at www.claytonfamily.org.uk/family/holidays/

It's been a year of change for Andy on the job front. Following months of speculation it was announced in June that the firm that he has worked for since 1990 plan to relocate their local operation to London and sell the main magazine they publish: Exchange & Mart. In October, Newsquest, who own many magazines and local newspapers across the UK, bought E&M and said that they would like to keep on some of the existing staff. This leaves Andy not knowing what the future holds as it is likely to be Spring before any decisions are made about the IT department. It is obviously a worrying time and we wait to see how everything will turn out.

Apart from all this, Andy started his own web design and hosting business in the summer. Called Triple W (www.triplew.co.uk) he already has a small customer base and hopes to build on this over the coming months and years. This is a very competitive market and Andy thinks it unlikely that he will be able to earn enough from it to make a living. However, the small extra income will come in handy. Initially any money he makes will go back into the business and he hopes to be returning a small profit within 2 years.

Andy has continued to enjoy photography and entered a local competition "By The Water" in aid of a local autism charity during the summer. Although he didn't win the competition, the charity have asked if they can use one of his photographs in their 2007 fundraising calendar, something Andy was only too happy to agree to. Another of his photographs was used by the local BBC television station alongside their weather forecast one evening, a broadcast Andy and Mel managed to miss!

Andy has continued to help with the local Parish Magazine changing the design for them again this year whilst also taking photographs and working on the layout in his spare time. On the computer front, Andy this year switched to an Apple Macintosh and finds this system a vast improvement over Microsoft Windows!

Mel has started making her own cards this year and is thoroughly enjoying this absorbing hobby. She has also been helping her aunt (who runs a ceramic pottery painting party business) to paint some "stock" items to sell at local school Christmas fayres. These are enjoyable outlets for her creative side now that she is no longer working at the florist. She has also started going to pilates classes and is finding this challenging.

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With love and best wishes for Christmas and the coming year from Joy, Kathy, Fiona, Colin, Andy, Mel, Jem, Tim, Beth (and Sally)

November 2005

Joy writes

We started the new year with our usual family get-together when Kath, Jem and Tim were able to join us, Kath having been busy as organist with

services on Christmas Day.

Fiona, Colin, Beth, Arthur and I spent the Yuletide celebration at Andy and Mel's. It was the first time

in many years, in fact since the children were young,

that I did not have to cook Christmas dinner and it was

wonderful to be able to relax and be waited on. Mel is

an excellent cook and served mouthwatering fare which

would have made a restaurateur proud.

This year I have enjoyed several outings with the

family, the most memorable being an exhibition of

Highland dancing at Highcliffe Castle, and a walk in

the New Forest where we watched the deer being fed,

these in the company of Andy and Mel, and visiting a

country park with Colin, Fiona, Beth and Sally where

we enjoyed a picnic and a long walk. Kath spent a few

days with me in September prior to her Washington

visit.

I still attend Bible study and support groups and

have occasional trips to Christchurch to view art and

craft exhibitions by local artists. Arthur spends two

Saturdays a month here and I visit him on alternate

Saturdays. Beth sleeps over occasionally and I

"babysit" her every Tuesday night whilst Colin and Fiona attend their church group meeting. During holiday time Beth spends Wednesday

morning with me while Fiona is at work. We have great fun together either on the beach or local meadows, always, of course, accompanied by Sally.

Apart from this I enjoy reading, doing crosswords, listening to music and watching the telly (only the "good" programmes, no "rubbish"!)

Life is enjoyable and fulfilling and echoing the psalmist, "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places, surely I have a delightful inheritance".



Colin, Fiona and Beth playing games at Andy and Mel's on Christmas Day 2004

Joy Clayton

E-mail care of Andy or Fiona (see inside pages)

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In June Tim turned 19 and went for a "quiet drink". No, it really was a quiet drink... Kathy went to the Glastonbury Festival, the plan being for Tim to join her on the second day after sitting an A Level examination. This was probably fortunate as meanwhile Kathy fought a losing battle with the elements trying to prevent her tent from floating away! Tim arrived the next day with a handy pair of wellies and a snorkel. An entire weekend of music and merriment was had by all, except Jem who had no ticket.

We all headed to a local music festival at Ashton Court in July. Jem decided to get revenge for missing out on Glastonbury by hiding the car in a dark 3 acre car park. He later went home and left Kathy and Tim walking around empty fields for 2 hours. They were finally rescued by a steward with a torch who found the car hiding under a tree nowhere near where Jem said it was.

In August Tim received his A Level results and was delighted with 2 B's and a C. September saw Jem and Kathy attend her works bowling night which was great fun.

Kathy went on a business trip to the USA for a week in October. Luckily she made it to Washington DC in one piece and managed to spend more time shopping than she spent in meetings.

In November we all went to see Elbow at a local venue. At the end of the month Tim visited Gloucestershire University where he hopes to go next year to study creative writing – at least they now know what they're letting themselves in for. Jem went paintballing with work – he didn't have much paint on him when he got home so he must have done OK.

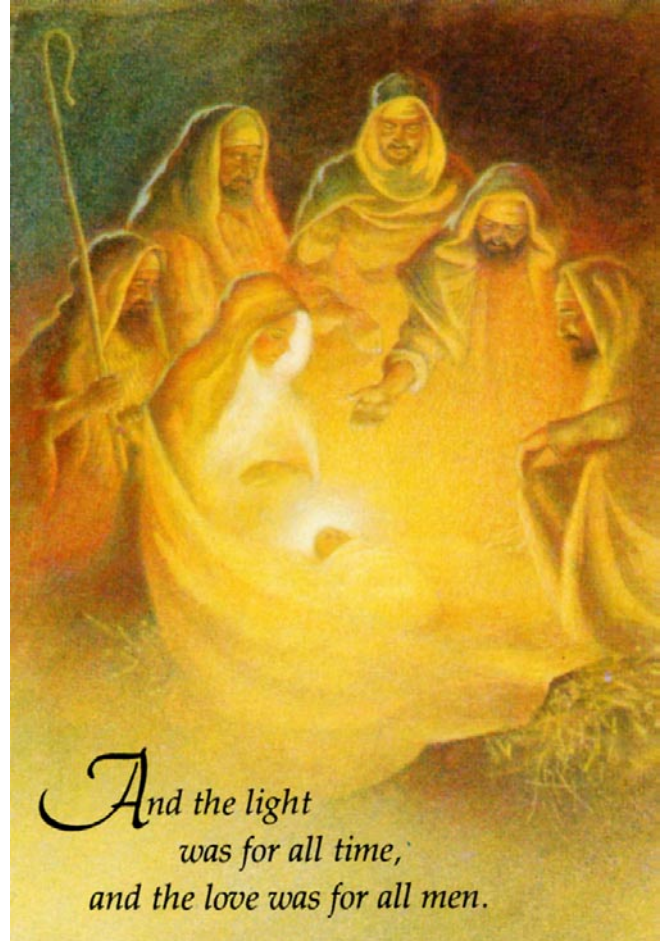
At the time of writing we have plans to see a performance of Aladdin in December. Kath and Jem have their Christmas work celebrations on the same day, so will be able to support each other on the way home from town.

Kathy, Jeremy and Timothy Gibbs

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See inside page for news from **Melanie, Andy, Fiona, Colin and Beth**
More information and pictures on-line at www.claytonfamily.org.uk



*And the light
was for all time,
and the love was for all men.*