

Fiona and Colin write

Colin continues happily at work, surviving yet another round of redundancies! He is very involved in the youth work at church, both on a Sunday morning and helping to lead two mid-week groups as well (Beth attends one of them). As if that weren't enough, he is also the Health and Safety Co-ordinator for the church. Mind you, he seems to fit it all in okay and he enjoys it.

Fi still enjoys her one morning a week as an audiologist. She is more involved in the worship group in church, leading the singing every other week and helping to plan the services one week in three. She also leads the prayers or reads. Just as well she doesn't mind being 'up the front'!

Beth continues to enjoy school...although she's not so keen on the homework! She's made some good friends there and seems quite popular. We have the usual struggles that most parents have, plus a few extra because of her 'baggage' and attachment difficulties. The fantastic news is – she now likes Colin!! For over 4 years he has had to cope with her rejection of him (and he has, amazingly well) – but over the past year there has been a gradual 'thawing' and now she is quite close to him. His patience has been rewarded and it is lovely to see them together.

Beth finally threw away her swimming armbands in June. She was so chuffed and couldn't quite believe it. When we took her the following week, you could see the relief on her face when she realised that she could still swim! She has gone from strength to strength and can now swim 50 metres.

We holidayed in sunny Bognor this year

staying in the Butlins hotel...bit of a treat not having to prepare meals or wash up. Beth thought it was wonderful...and wants to go again...and again...!

We went away for Beth's birthday (9 years old, can you believe it?) with a Play and Stay weekend package. The 'Play' part was two days at Legoland, Windsor, and the 'Stay' part was staying in the Runnymede Hotel and Spa on the Saturday night. We enjoyed the facilities,



especially the Jacuzzi! The hotel put on a good show for Beth, decorating the table where we had our evening meal, and making her a superb birthday cake. Everyone sang her "Happy Birthday"... "I embarrassed" she said with a big grin. Think she quite likes being the centre of attention really. Legoland was amazing and we all enjoyed it! The models are incredible – London, Canary Wharf, people, animals etc. Beth especially liked the life-sized giraffes. Going to be difficult to top that next year!

In August Colin's niece got married. She was our flowergirl all those years ago and now it was Beth's turn to be flowergirl for her (pictured)! Beth coped really well with the whole

experience, even kissing the pageboy on cue for the photos! The reception was held on a boat that didn't return to port until midnight. You'd think Beth would've been tired, but not our party animal, she was still raring to go – or so she thought...she did fall asleep in the car on the way home – eventually!

We enjoyed spending time with Kath in the summer, especially enjoying a trip to the Isle of Wight.

Life is good and though there are ups and downs, we are happy and fulfilled.

**Fiona, Colin and Beth Mosling,
E-mail: moslingfamily@ntlworld.com**

Addresses are not printed in the on-line version of the newsletter for reasons of security

Kathy, Jem & Tim write

There have been a few changes in the Gibbs household this year.

Tim started studying at Bath Spa University on a Creative Writing course in September – hopefully he will have a best seller under his belt by the time he graduates. Andy has set him up with a website so he has been posting some of his poems and short stories (www.thelonemarmot.co.uk). He has moved into a shared house in Bath and is getting on very well with his housemates – lots of time seems to be spent playing Monopoly – things have changed a bit since Kathy was a student! He continues with his song writing but hasn't as yet taken the scary step of performing in public.

Kathy has also become a student (again) this year having started a 3 year accountancy course at college on day release funded by work.

A big change for Jem is that he left Royal and Sun Alliance, where he's been working for the last 3 years, and started a new job with Network Rail, more money and more chance of promotion so a positive step by all accounts. The only problem is that they have very strict alcohol rules so no more going to the pub at lunchtime!

Kathy's office went on a team building event to the Ashdown Forest in March. They stayed in a scout camp and did various tasks, such as clearing the forest of non-native

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Andy and Mel write

After a worrying few months Andy found out in January that the new owners of Exchange & Mart wanted to keep him on. The business is a third of the size it was before the takeover and only comprises two of the original long list of magazines. The IT department has nine people and Andy is kept very busy providing support to users, running the corporate intranet and developing software for his new employer.

Mudford hit the headlines in May when a 500lb unexploded Second World War bomb was discovered while a resident was building a home extension. At first we were outside the evacuation zone but after 36 hours the police extended the cordon. As we were right on the edge we were given the choice of whether or not to find an alternative place to stay. After three days the bomb disposal team transported the device out to sea and blew it up!

This year we have made great progress with our family history investigations. We made contact with a couple of long lost relatives who were very helpful with the initial stages. This, coupled with family records and census information, enabled us to go back several generations. National records began in 1837 so it was while on holiday in Suffolk in June that we visited the family records office in Bury St Edmunds enabling us to go back even further. We discovered one relative while grave-hunting in Walsham-le-Willows—Jeremiah Cater born in 1766! We still have a long way to go, many other branches of the family to investigate and we've only scratched the surface on Mel's side.

We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Suffolk. The weather was very sunny all week so we were able to visit lots of interesting places, including The Otter Trust and Bressingham Gardens and Steam Museum which included

The Dad's Army Exhibition (the series having been filmed in nearby Thetford).

Andy has continued to run his web design business part-time and now manages nine sites on behalf of customers with more on the way. He even has one client in Washington, USA!

This year we celebrated our 10th wedding anniversary so marked the occasion with a trip to Bruges, Belgium. We travelled all the way by train, going from Bournemouth to Waterloo then taking the connecting Eurostar direct to Brussels. A further short train journey took us to our destination. We had not been on the Eurostar before and found it an easy and relaxing way to travel.

Just off the The Markt (main square) we stayed in a small hotel that had a wide selection of breakfast fayre that set us up nicely for our busy day trips. Much of the city is unspoiled by modern development while still catering for the many tourists.

We climbed the 366 steps of The Belfort giving a panoramic view of the city and surrounding area. The tower contains 47 bells that ring out tunes every 15 minutes and three times a week there is an evening "concert". We were treated to everything from Mozart to Andrew Lloyd Webber. Some tunes were more recognisable than others, however this was a very pleasant way to, quite literally, pass the time.

We also visited a picturesque bridge at St Bonifaciusbrug, Begijnhof (a huddle of white cottages owned by nuns), as well as the windmills on the outskirts of the city (one of which is open to visitors). As well as a boat trip on the canal, on our anniversary we took a horse drawn carriage ride through the cobbled streets of the city. More details of our stay are at www.claytonfamily.org.uk/family/holidays.

In the summer we went to Beaulieu Abbey and House. During our visit we were lucky enough to see a low level fly-past by World

War II aircraft. It was nice of them to put on this display for us although we later discovered that Princess Anne was also there that day so no doubt she enjoyed the spectacle too! Joking apart, the event taking place was the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Special Forces Club which itself was created at the end of World War II to keep together those who had been in the Special Operations Executive. The SOE had part of their training at Beaulieu before being sent to carry out secret operations in Occupied Europe. We knew nothing about the event, just happening to visit on the same day, but found an exhibition on the subject most interesting.

Mel has continued to make greetings cards and has had stalls at craft fayres to sell her creations. In preparation she unseasonally started making Christmas cards during the heatwave! No doubt by the time you read this the Easter collection will be coming along nicely.

With love and best wishes from us both.

**Andy and Melanie Clayton
E-mail: andy@claytonfamily.org.uk
Web site: <http://www.claytonfamily.org.uk>**

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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)

Joy writes

November 2006

www.claytonfamily.org.uk

October once more and it is time to give my "report" to Andy who does a marvellous job producing our yearly newsletter.

It has been a sad year with the sudden death of my brother, Arthur in April. I miss him—he would spend two Saturdays a month with me and I visited him the other two, always taking Sally

who enjoyed the bowl of tea he provided her with on our arrival.

Social History has been my special interest this year, mainly through books and documentaries on the telly, but also a visit to an exhibition.

Kath spent 5 days with me in August. We went out twice for tea in the New Forest with Fiona and Beth. It was school summer holidays at the time. One tearoom is in a beautiful setting, it being a former flour mill with ducks and swans gliding on the stream and an enclosure with an unusual variety of hens and rabbits. Two goats and a dove-cote with two white doves, and swallows nesting under the eaves completed the idyllic atmosphere.

For some time I have felt prompted to once again offer my services as one of the leaders of our Bible study group. You may recall that some years ago I gave up because of difficulty with my hearing, although having hearing-aids. However, I now have digital aids and feel I must give it a go as we have lost a few leaders over the past couple of years and the group organiser is almost at her wits' end trying to find replacements.

Apparently we had the longest summer on record. Autumn has been very slow in coming this year. I'm hoping all those breath-taking colours of red and gold will appear soon. They remind me of our arrival in this country in October 34 years ago.

My thoughts as always will be with friends and relatives far and near at Christmas. May you have a blessed and peaceful one.

(above) Andy in Bruges, Belgium

(right) Jeremy and Kathy prepare for their absell

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

Joy Clayton

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plants, and making fences. It poured with rain while they were there but all had a good time, and very much enjoyed the extra curricular team building in the pub in the evening.

Tim has had quite a busy year, visiting Butlins for a boys' weekend with a group of friends, and attending various folk festivals with his girlfriend Sarah and her family. He also went to a production of "The Seagull" in London.

In May, Jem and Kathy took their life in their hands when they completed a sponsored abseil on behalf of BIBIC (the British Institute for Brain Injured Children). They had to descend 120 feet, which is a very long way when you're looking down! Between them they raised £260.

In June the whole family went to see *The Who* at a local football stadium. This was a wonderful experience although Kathy doesn't remember too much about it as she was suffering from flu and was drugged up to the eyeballs (with paracetamol we hasten to add!)

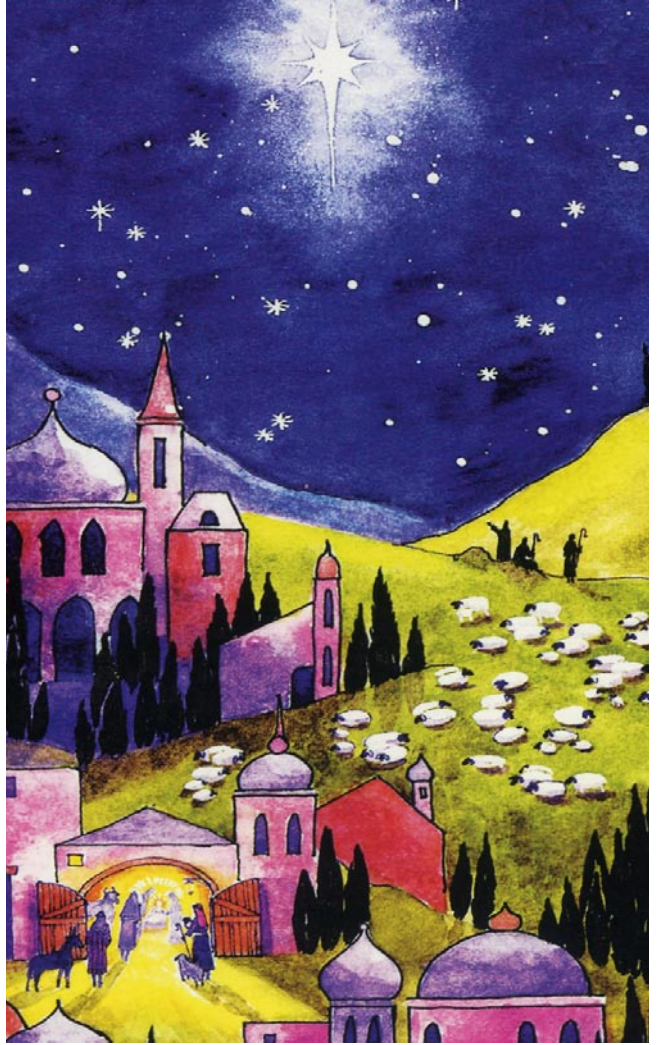
Kathy, Jeremy and Timothy Gibbs

E-mail: nickath@blueyonder.co.uk

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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



In August Kathy went to see a one day cricket international between England and Pakistan in Cardiff. Unfortunately only one innings was played as rain intervened but it was still great to see all the players in the flesh. Later that month she spent a week at Mum's, and Fiona, Colin and Beth took her out on trips. In September she went to a Proms concert (Mahler's 2nd symphony). Jem had to replace his car as the engine was on its last legs so he decided to upgrade to a BMW – one of Jem's friends is a BMW mechanic and this will save us lots of money when repairs are needed. The week after he got it, we drove down to Mum's and all the family met up for lunch. We don't all get together very often so it was a chance to catch up on news.

In October Kathy and Jem joined a local gym, a chance to get a bit fitter and lose weight, although it has to be said that this applies more to Kath than it does to Jem!

All our love and best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.