

# Wigney Christmas Newsletter 2014

This year has been a lot like 2013 so I could almost have just done a reprint! Mike continues to ring a lot on tower bells and to organise Quarter Peal days and ringing outings. I continue to ring a lot on handbells and have progressed to an inside pair this year. We both continue to sing with Chiswick Choir, although I shall leave the choir next year when the current conductor retires as I don't feel I can expect a new Musical Director to put up with my absences when in Devon. I stood down as Secretary at the AGM in October which has freed up a bit more time. Mike still sings with Cantanti Camerati, and they too now have a new Musical Director after Geoffrey Bowyer retired on ill health grounds and are apparently rehearsing much more seriously these days.



On 6 January our family increased by one when Bethany Patricia arrived—Amanda and Sam's first child. She was tiny when she was born, requiring premature baby nappies, but she is now big and bouncy and very beautiful. I went over to Magaluf for a week when she was born—I got an amazingly cheap deal for 7 nights and had a self catering apartment in a hotel so could make myself breakfast and hot drinks. Each day I would walk over to Son Ferrer (about a mile) to be with Sam and Amanda for the day and then get a taxi back at night. It was lovely and warm and Magaluf was really beautiful—miles of golden sand without any sunbeds, no drunks and no noise, because nearly everything was closed except the little cafes and restaurants which the locals use. It was delightful. I had cross stitched a baby afghan for Bethany with an elephant alphabet and her name and date of birth, and had lined it with baby fleeces.



Ollie started big school this September—doesn't time fly. He enjoys it and is doing well with his phonics. Leanne has now started a course in child care, with a view to becoming a teaching assistant, and has a work placement at Ollie's old nursery.

Lorraine finished her two-year college course in Health & Social Care this year and got the highest grades possible—triple distinction started. She also achieved Level 3 Counselling. She is carrying on with the Level 4 course which will take another 2 years of two evenings a week. She now works with Thames Outreach going out at night with a team and finding people sleeping rough and finding them somewhere to go. She goes out at 7.30 and comes home between 2 and 3 in the morning, and then has paperwork to do before she can go to bed. But she absolutely loves it. She also does one day a week at the Convent nursing home helping the residents with activities and conversation.

My sister, Carolyn, finally got a move from her 3-bedroomed maisonette in Walworth (which was incurring bedroom tax) to a lovely little one-bedroomed ground floor flat with garden in East Dulwich. She is very happy there and is busy reclaiming the jungle which was the garden and putting in a new kitchen.



We have given up the family crematorium day, preferring to go at different times, but as a family we went to Butlin's again for 4 nights. This time Amanda came over with Bethany from Majorca and so we were all able to be together and had a lovely 4 days taking the kids swimming and to the funfair etc. We were very lucky with the weather too. We also had a family get together one weekend in November in Manchester.



Amanda, Sam and Bethany came over again for a visit and we all went up on the train to stay at the Victoria Hotel in Oldham. I had found it on the internet but luckily it was a great hotel with lots of charm and very friendly staff. John treated us all to a meal in the restaurant in the evening, and to breakfast at TGI Friday's the next morning. Again a good time was had by all.

I have managed to get to Devon quite a lot this year—at least one week a month and often more. I didn't go to Turkey at all, but treated myself to a two-week break in Devon in June. With Jayne there (she stayed in the house this summer and worked at Trago Mills), and with a lovely hot summer, it felt like being on holiday anyway! I am now a





regular member of the Moretonhampstead Handbell Ringers and I have been to several handbell rallies with them, and will be performing with them at their Christmas concert. They are extremely good and I am very much the novice, but I absolutely love it and the three hours that we practice on a Thursday evening absolutely flies by. I also ring method on handbells regularly with a band in Exeter with mixed results! I ring with the local band at Bovey on Sundays, and Monday night practices and also go to a method practice at Wolborough in Newton Abbot on Friday nights—I get picked up by a friend which is really nice. Mike complains I do more ringing in Devon than I do in London these days!! But mainly I have had lovely walks with Suki on and around Dartmoor—we have explored some new ones this year armed with map and a guide book especially written for dogs and their walkers.



We went to the Sidmouth Folk Festival in August with Jayne—Mike and I had not been to a festival before but Jayne is a seasoned veteran of the event and showed us where to park and the best free venues for dancing and music. The weather was good and we had a brilliant day and thoroughly enjoyed it and will definitely go again.

Mike organised a ringing fortnight on the canal boat *Intrepid* again this year—and Suki and I went along too although I didn't do any ringing (my wrists are somewhat arthritic and cause some pain so I have cut down my tower bell ringing to the minimum). The boat is now moored at Upper Heyford in Northamptonshire, and we took it out to Redhill Marina with one crew and back again with another. There is a full report and photos on my blog <http://jillwigney1.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/intrepid.html>.

Mike went on Roving Ringers again this year, which was based at a bunkhouse on the top of the Ridgeway—so had that to climb at the end of each day. The bunkhouse didn't take dogs, so Suki and I booked a cottage nearby in Aldbourne for the week. We had a lovely time going out to do walks on the Ridgeway Trail, and also in Savernake Forest—and my friend Maryanne joined us for a couple of days which enhanced the enjoyment.

Also in May we went with Cantanti Camerati for a weekend to Fontainebleau on a choir twinning visit.—travelling by Eurostar where the wheelchair space is in first class, so we were treated to first class luxury for less than standard fare. We stayed with a lovely lady called Brigitte who ferried us around and fed us extremely well. She lived in an apartment block with a lift so was able to cope with the wheelchair very well. The two choirs gave a joint concert in the church and there were parties on both evenings (not my cup of tea but they were very hospitable). We had the final day available to wander round Paris, and Mike and I went up the funicular to Sacre Coeur and had a delicious lunch of croque monsieur and a beer and watched the world go by (we couldn't actually get in to Sacre Coeur as there is no disabled access!). Again there is a full report and photos on my blog <http://jillwigney1.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/fontainebleau-weekend.html>

Mike had a health scare earlier in the year when he was admitted to hospital and had surgery for a suspected perforated duodenum—but they didn't find anything and are still not sure what had caused his initial symptoms, they just seemed to go away after a week. So he now has another zip of a scar all the way up his front, to add the to the many on his back. He also nearly got himself hanged when he took a work colleague to a tower near work to see what bellringing was all about. The bells were tricky, and the locals were inexperienced, and the one next to Mike managed to hook his rope around Mike's neck, which then pulled Mike up! He had a nasty rope burn round his neck for quite a while afterwards—heaven only knows what the work colleague thought!

The Barnes ringers summer trip (organised by Mike) went to Evesham for 5 days in July. We stayed at the Evesham hotel, which was very quirky but very good. There were teddy bears everywhere, sitting in chairs in the lounge, in the bedrooms and one on every key ring! We had a good 5 days—again I didn't ring at all so was able to enjoy it all the more.

So now we have the usual run up to Christmas—Chiswick Choir concert (Christmas Oratorio), Messiah at the Albert Hall with Goldsmiths Choral Union, Cantanti Christmas Concert (with handbells), and finally the carol service at church followed by handbells at the convent. Then we can breathe a huge sigh of relief and go down to Devon for a fortnight and enjoy a slower pace of life for a while.