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## *Wilson Family Christmas 2008 Newsletter*

Dear

Firstly to all those of you, whom we have passed close to, but not called in on, as we travelled about the country this year, Sorry but there was just too much happening. The year went by very quickly and we seemed to be constantly doing things. There is far more to tell you about than I have space for in this letter so you will have to put up with the highlights.

**Ian** – has had a good year at school and got 10 GCSE's during the summer. He has now hung up his school uniform and moved into the sixth form studying IT, Drama, Music Technology and Physics for AS and then A Level. While his results were good, there were a couple that he was a little disappointed by and he has been working hard since joining the Sixth form. At the start of the year he designed and ran the stage lighting for the school production of Disco Inferno which was an excellent production. He has also helped run lighting for the local Repertory Theatre. At Easter he heard, that Woodside, our local Animal Farm, was recruiting staff to help run activities at weekends and over the summer. It's only 10 minutes walk from home, so he applied for a job there and got it. While this has meant he has not always been able to be out and about with friends at the weekend, he has had a steady flow of cash. Ian still plays his trumpet and is in the school band but does not have lessons. He was recently asked to play the Last Post for his school and also for one of the other schools in Dunstable.

Outside school and work, he plays badminton on Monday nights and is still a very active part of the Scout movement. As an Explorer he completed his Diamond Chief Scout award this year (equivalent to the Silver D of E) and is now working on his Queen's Scout Award which he hopes to complete in the summer of next year. He attended a presentation day with other award winners at Woburn Abbey, in the presence of the Duke of Bedford and the older award winners were treated to a weekend in London, seeing the show Spamalot and going on the London Eye. During the year he took part in night hikes, wide games and several camps but the highlight of the year was attending an International Jamboree in Bavaria with 14 other Explorers from his unit and three leaders. There were about a 1000 other Explorers on site from loads of different countries round the world. They were on site for 10 days and could see the famous German castle used in the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang film from the door of their tents. He also completed his Scout Association young leader training at the start of the year and has continued to develop his skills working with my Cub Leader team, filling in the gap that was left when Peter went to University. He was instrumental in recruiting another Explorer who is now learning how to be a leader, guided by Ian and the rest of my team.

**Peter** – enjoyed his first year at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, making 4 documentary films of increasing content and length. This year they are concentrating on more drama related filming. He got really into Ultimate Frisbee which has just been finally recognised as a sport. Over the year the Ultimate activities took him to weekend tournaments in Cardiff, Bristol, Manchester and Nottingham to name just a few. In June, just before they broke up, he was appointed President of the Anglia Ruskin Ultimate Club.

During the year he got friendly with 4 other people in the hall he was staying with and they all decided to share a house for this academic year, so they went viewing, found somewhere they liked and set it all up. We helped Peter move in at the start of September. Since then he has been very busy with Ultimate, lectures, filming and his part time job in the Students' Union shop.

He still comes to help with Cubs when he is at home. He and his friend Edward took all the camping gear down to Newquay, after the university broke up, for a week playing on surf boards and then he spent part of the summer looking for work. In the end he was lucky as my company needed someone to do two weeks of testing and when that was done, someone else found him some Visual Basic/Excel work to do, so the 2 weeks turned into about 5 weeks which topped up his bank for the start of this term.

**Alison** – As usual I seem to have had a busy year. Having given up working at Ashton Middle School I have spent a considerable amount of time on my book that I have been writing. This is the transcript of my Grandfather's World War 1 memories and notes as well as a complete Family History of my side of the family. I have a couple of sections to complete but the majority of it is now with the lady from "Bound Biographies" who is publishing it for me. To help me with this I made a trip to see my Uncle and Aunt in Bramhope and on to Beverley where I spent time in the Archives doing research. I happened to be there when there was an earthquake in the Hull area which woke me when the hotel windows shook and rattled in the early hours of the morning.

I joined a Line Dancing group who meet in the village hall and took part in a demonstration at the Village Fun Day. I

have also decided that I needed some assistance to lose some weight and joined Slimming World, losing about 2 stone so far, which makes me feel much healthier. I have had a musical year, our choir, Cantata, have done a number of concerts and been on tour. We sing a range of music – show, popular and classical. I have had saxophone lessons and am improving my playing. I arranged a piece for an instrumental quartet to play for our Choir Tour and played my flute as part of that. In October I went to a singing day, “Sing with John Rutter”, organised by a local music association, which was great fun, being part of a chorus of over 250 people with such an inspiring conductor.

As Group Scout Leader I have had a busy year with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dunstable, lots of training, meetings and activities to attend and camps to go on. I also have other meetings due to being a Governor at Manshead School. I decided to do some paid work and have done some invigilating at Manshead as well as a little cover work recently for an ex-colleague at Ashton.

**Mervyn** – In general not a lot has changed for me over the year. I continue to work at BEKA helping to run the Quality System for the company and learnt my way about some database stuff to help out in the introduction of a new management information system for the company. I also went on a four day training course in Dusseldorf in October. Outside work, I continue to run the Cub Pack on a Wednesday night and we managed to get away on camp twice this year. I have a two assistant leaders and 2 young leaders all of whom take a very active part in the running of the Pack which is a luxury that some groups do not have. At home, I continue to manage the IT systems for the family, rebuilding and upgrading PC's as necessary.

I am almost at the end of another big tapestry that I started this time last year and am not sure what I will do next as the big challenging ones seem to be in short supply. I have also joined Cantata as a roadie as those of you who know me well, also know that I sing out of time and off key. I have been helping to set up and clear up after concerts. Also maintaining the sound kit and cabling which takes a bit of a battering especially when we travel on tour.

**General** – We have not spent as much time escaping from the world down on the South Coast as we would have liked this year. This is mainly due to the number of activities. Once Peter left school and went off to Cambridge we had to take over the full taxi service for Ian, roll on next April when he can learn to drive! We had two holidays this year. The first in late May was a trip to Holland and Germany with the Choir. Ian joined us too and played his trumpet as part of a quartet put together for the tour as well as helping with the percussion. We stayed in the town of Valkenberg, in the south of Holland on the borders with Belgium and Germany. Valkenberg is in the area of Holland which has hills (fairly rare for that part of the world!) One concert was there and the other in a Spa town in Germany not far from Köln.

Our second break was very unusual as we timed it to be while Ian was in Germany and Peter was working. So Alison and I spent a week on the South Coast in the Caravan by ourselves. This allowed us some time to go sight seeing in places that we would not have done if the boys had been with us, including seeing some Shakespeare at the Open Air Theatre on Brownsea Island which was really magical and an excellent end to a day out on the Island.

Alison and I managed to get a long weekend away in Chester with our friend Mark, we holed up in a Hotel (blow the expense) for a couple of days and took in the two and spent a full day at the Zoo. In November, all four of us visited Devon for the Christening of Mikka, my sister's daughter's daughter. It was a very rare chance to get the whole family together especially as my Father has not been too well this year and spent a while in hospital.

In general we have had a busy year at the theatre seeing several performances in London including Wicked, Phantom of the Opera, Tosca (in the round at the Albert Hall and most recently the stage production of Rain Man. There have also been trips to the local theatres in Dunstable and Milton Keynes.

Christmas and New Year greetings to all.

*Mervyn, Alison, Peter and Ian*

