

## Christmas Newsletter 2011

Another year is about to pass, and for once we will be glad to see the back of it.

This year started off as last year ended. Dad not so well, and then being admitted to King's College Hospital, with Mum a few wards along the corridor! A seemingly endless round of trips between Kent and London for my sister & brother-in-law as well as Caroline and myself.

Unfortunately Dad passed away in early February, on the very day that Mum was being transferred to a Nursing Home here in Rochester. After one more stay in our local Hospital Mum sadly passed away in early May.

As you can no doubt appreciate the end of last year and this year have been somewhat of a blur! Helen came home for Christmas, and we spent Christmas Day with Steve (Caroline's step-brother) & Di, along with Pat & Jim and other members of the family. We would have also spent time with Andrew, Maria and their family.

In spite of this, we have managed to do a few things throughout the year.

Easter saw us spend a weekend in and around Chartres, France. We have often driven around Chartres on our journey to the South West of France, and we have often said we should visit there. The old town around the cathedral is lovely.



**The River Eure in the ville basse.**

We spent a few evenings in la Place de la Cathédrale trying desperately to dodge the thunderstorms by having meals in restaurants!



**La place de la cathédrale**



**View of the Cathedral**

We also visited a nearby château just to see hoards of kids going on an Easter egg hunt!



**The château at Maintenon, near Chartres**

But we still thoroughly enjoyed this – kids are exactly the same wherever you come across them. We may have seen a notice that said 5 eggs per child!

This summer has been strangely very quiet. Early May saw Nicola & Jonathan (with the 2 boys) here for Pat's (Caroline's Mum) 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. A lovely time was had by all. It also gave Nicola a chance to introduce Christopher

to his great grandmother and for Nicola to say goodbye to her Nan. Mum passed away 5 days later.



**Pat with a few pressies!**

The end of July saw us get together with all of our children and grandchildren. We met Helen in York and spent the afternoon in the National Railway Museum – a place that both Caroline and I have wanted to visit for some time. We managed to see some impressive sites including the Mallard as well as The Hogwart's Express which was being readied for a run just in case it was needed!



**The Mallard**

We met up with all of the family at Drayton Manor, Tamworth near Birmingham. We had arranged a day for the entire family at Thomas Land. All had a wonderful day, dads with sons and granddad with grandsons. Ewan and Robert found Thomas, Percy, Rosie, Trevor, Bertie the Bus and the list goes on. The evening was spent at a canal side pub in Tamworth.



**Ewan and Robert on Thomas's train**



**Riding along!**

The following day we spent with Nicola & Jonathan near Wellingborough.

Caroline's birthday weekend was spent in Copenhagen. We have both in the past visited Legoland near Billund with our children. We spent 3 nights in the heart of old Copenhagen and had a wonderful time. We saw the Little Mermaid, the Amalienborg Palace, the Marble Church, The Ny Havn area and the list goes on. The only place we didn't get to see was the Tivoli Gardens, and I'm not sure that we'll be going back too soon! My wallet has yet to recover!



**The Little Mermaid**



**Sunset on the Weissensee**

... and again the night before we came home.



**The Amalienborg Palace**



Whilst in Bavaria we visited the Zugspitze,



**Ny Havn**

The cabbie who took us from Copenhagen Airport to our hotel (not far from Ny Havn) told us that we should eat in the Ny Havn district. Lovely place!

We spent early September in Bavaria (about 2 km from the Austrian border) near a town called Füssen. The view from our hotel balcony was to die for, and on 2 occasions we were not to be disappointed. We had a day/night of some serious rainfall but once the rain stopped we were greeted by an amazing sunset....



**Oberammergau**

Oberammergau with its painted buildings, Füssen Altstadt, the Wieskirche, the Tegelberg mountain, the Forggensee and not forgetting Neuschwanstein Schloss.



**Neuschwanstein Schloss**

Late October saw us again in France, but this time we ventured a bit further than usual – the South of France. We stayed about 10 km from Carcassonne, but also visited Le Pont du Gard and Avignon. On the way down we stopped off at Sarlat in the Dordogne to meet up for lunch with our friends Pete & Anne Kykot. They are in the rudest of health!



**View of Ramparts at Carcassonne**



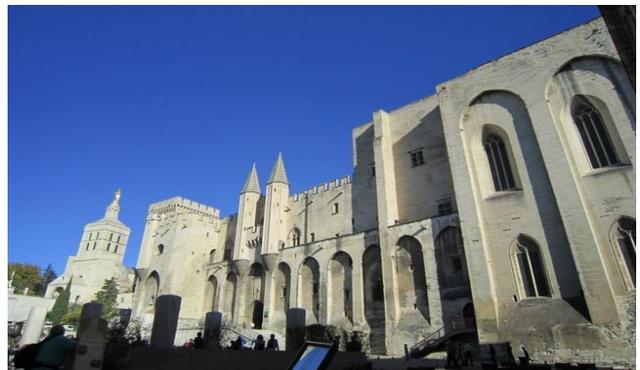
**Le Pont du Gard**



**Avignon, near the Opera House**



**Le Pont Saint-Bénézet, Avignon**



**Le Palais des Papes, Avignon**

Yet again we appear to be running out of space! Ewan and Robert have just had their birthdays. Stephen and Nicola are expecting their second child by January 6.

May we wish you all a peaceful and restful Christmas and all of the best for 2012.

Clive & Caroline

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[www.medsan.org/2011](http://www.medsan.org/2011) for colour pictures!