

The Westhead Times

December 2008

Another year on and doom and gloom is in all the newspapers. We hope we may cheer you with some of our news from 2008 and that this newsletter finds you happy, well and crunch-free!



Julia... has had a big year of change and challenge. This year saw me begin to fulfil an ambition I have had for many years – I have begun to train as a music therapist. Some of you will immediately know what a music



therapist does and others will not have heard of the profession. (Don't be put off by the word 'therapy,' the Greek root word simply means 'accompanying someone who needs help'). It is hard to describe in one sentence, but it is basically using music to improve peoples' wellbeing. Traditionally music therapy has happened with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but there are now many different client groups who benefit from it. I am currently on my first placement working with elderly people with dementia and I have been amazed to see withdrawn and confused people becoming totally orientated and 'alive' within music. My second placement will be in a special

school and my third placement may be in a category B prison. The course, an MA in Community Music Therapy lasts until February 2011 when I will be fully qualified, have gained some letters after my name and will be registered with the Health Professions Council. I am already in danger of becoming a music therapy bore but if you would like to find out more, please visit

<http://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/musicTherapy/index.html>

Brian... is still at Teradyne and on course for 25 years (though still a bit to go for the gold watch). Good to have a job in the current climate and rather hoping that major customer Ford doesn't go down the tubes. Most of the year has been spent working for Daimler with trips to Stuttgart not as glamorous as they sound – no discount cars at any rate (but how would I get a piano in one?).





Musically I had a chance to have a bash with my old mates from 'The Predators' (<http://www.preds.eu/>)—described by Cross Rhythms as 'fondly neo-punk rockers'. In the spirit of Take That, The Police and The Spice Girls there was a suggestion we might reform and blow the dust off the pyrotechnics, ku-klux-klan hats and collapsible tailor's dummy that characterised the live act – however I felt I wouldn't be able to offer the necessary commitment so let that one pass! In any case a frequent comment used to be 'I didn't know the Preds had a keyboard player'. One of our 'small world' stories is that Julia

went to see 'The Preds' when she was fifteen and guess what? She didn't even notice they had a keyboard player...

The dust did however get blown off my wallet in the form of a rather lovely 5 String Warwick Bass (Julia called it 'sexy' which I can live with). I played more wrong notes in the subsequent month than in the previous 5 years (but they were great sounding wrong notes) – a case of right fret, wrong string. A bit like suddenly getting an extra pedal in your car.

Sasha... is free spirited as ever. At 13 she seems to manage her own life in her own way. Brilliant at cooking (especially cakes) and other household tasks we know she is perfectly capable of fending for herself. She enjoys going to school because it is a good place to meet her friends but her academic effort can



be rather selective. She has a large circle of friends and we often come home to find a shoe-shop's worth of footwear lined up by the door. Count the shoes and divide by two and it gives you an idea of how many teenagers are crammed into her bedroom. She will take her options at school this year and will probably err on the side of the performing arts.

Lydia says... I have now less than two years left at primary school - Mum and Dad say that it is horrifying! I am still at dancing school and I am still learning the piano and the violin. I'm ten years old so I only have three years until I am a teenager! Mum and Dad are in danger of losing "Mummy's baby." They are in no rush for me to change.



Other children/grandchildren

You may remember that Adam and Adèle were expecting their first baby this year. In January, Fionn (pronounced Finn) Adam Westhead was born, a lone boy in a sea of girls and the insurance that the rare name of Westhead will continue! Betsy Meredith Simpson, Rob and Lorna's third daughter was born in February. The Simpson family are hoping to move back to New Mills from Sheffield just before Christmas and Lorna has applied to train as a midwife – after all, she has plenty of baby experience! We have decided to stop at four grandchildren for now...



Lydia & Fionn



Blackberrying with Abigail & Ivy Simpson

Sasha & Betsy



Other stuff

We still head up the two church worship teams, but we have taken a slightly different direction this year. As well as holding joint responsibility for staffing



Revival Church, New Mills

Sunday services, we now take a team into prisons some Sundays for their morning service. Initially this was quite a daunting idea and none of us knew what to expect, but it has been a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience. It is through this that Julia has decided that she would like to work with prisoners when she is qualified— she has had to face and address a lot of her prejudices and preconceived ideas.

We continue to host foreign students – (China, Singapore and USA) and have had a couple of unexpected short-term (British) lodgers this year. In one of those ego moments we Googled ourselves only to discover an exhaustive blog of the visit by two Singaporean lads (Ben and Derek) so if you want to know what our dining room looks like, what food we serve, what Brian's local looks like etc etc just take a trip to eicko2000.blogspot.com/2008/08/hostuk-part-i-meet-westheads-25-apr-08.html (and newer posts) and read about the 'middle aged couple' they stayed with...



With Ben & Derek

We discovered this year that the rain in Spain falls just about anywhere – including the house we borrowed from some friends. In fact rain was the dominant theme of Holiday '08 (and more mud than we have ever seen in Whitby in August). The caravan has been put to bed until next Spring when we hope that the sun might remind us what it looks like.

Animals... Millie dog sustained a nasty back injury in the Summer while running for a ball – not funny when you are an active border collie. She is mainly fixed now but we have stopped throwing the ball for her in an attempt to avoid this happening again. She hasn't quite got the message that taking it a bit easier might be the thing to do and we still cringe when she attempts to chase squirrels up trees or bite passing car wheels. We also succumbed to gerbils...



As usual the open invite is extended to all to come and see us - spur of the moment drop-ins (and drop outs!) are always welcome as well as longer pre-arranged visits. We hope that in the current financial climate, nothing is 'crunching' too much with all of you and we would like to wish you all a happy and healthy 2009!



Count and divide by 2...



Darwin was right



Gurning Competition—Whitby

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