



# The Williamses Annual Christmas Newsletter for 2006



We hope you're all well and that you've had a good year. Yet again we've had a busy one with a few significant events, the most important of which was the arrival of Charlie, on 12<sup>th</sup> August, to Lynne and David. He is progressing very well and is now a very bonny, bouncing 4-month old! We're up and down the motorway to see them as often as possible.



We started our year with a traditional Scottish Hogmanay at Culloden, where we enjoyed great hospitality, food and dancing but found ourselves over-educated about the Battle of Culloden in 1746. We got some good walking on Culloden Moor and in the forest, trying to avoid this chap - a 'ghost' of the battle, supposedly.

In February we took a trip to see Elizabeth, Samantha and Mike near Strasbourg. This time we stayed at the Schlosshotel Bühlerhöhe in the Black Forest, which was truly great. It snowed heavily and apart from some excitement keeping the car on the road, we enjoyed a lovely week and did some serious walking in the snow - our hiking boots have never been so clean! And of course we had to try the authentic Black Forest gateau - not

a bit like the version you get in England. We discovered that Sven-Göran Eriksson and the England team had booked the hotel for the World Cup in June. Definitely a place to return to, but we'll have to save up for it next time. Elizabeth, Samantha and Mike came over to spend a weekend with us at the hotel, and they've been over here for a visit this autumn. They are soon to move to near Basle, on the French/Swiss/German border, where Mike has a new job. No doubt we'll be going over there to see them before long.



*View from our room, over the Black Forest.*

*Elizabeth, Samantha and Jean at the pool - the snow on the trees right behind them makes it look cold but it was really very warm.*



In May we were delighted to be invited to the wedding of Mark, son of Rhys' cousin Geoff and his wife Kath, to Marie at Wedderburn Castle in Scotland. We all had a great time in a part of Scotland we have not been to before. We also went for a very 'bracing' walk along the coast at St. Abb's Head and watched the seals at Eyemouth.

We wish Mark and Marie every happiness.



By the middle of the year we had finished our work contracts and Rhys restarted his former photography business, taking a couple of courses to get up to date with professional digital imaging, including a visit to Rhinefield House in the New Forest, where Jean did some horse riding and prompted Rhys to have some riding lessons.

We had a short holiday in France in July, at and around Gordes in the Vaucluse (Provence). Gordes turned up on TV shortly afterwards in a series with Esther Rantzen, Marcus Brighthouse and Ron Atkinson learning to speak French. Celebs continue to follow us around!

We also put our house on the market but, although we've had a couple of viewings, no sale yet. Our original intentions to downsize for our 'retirement' aren't working out quite as originally planned as we're now hoping to find a building project or maybe farm (or even better, both in one) to get into!

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We've had a number of trips to Dorset during the year, primarily to see Rhys' mother Edna, and in September we rented a cottage for a week in a Purbeck village, Worth Matravers. David, Lynne and Charlie joined us for a few days so here's a 4-generation picture. It was also good to see Jean's Uncle Graham there and we managed to get some walking in as well, and we went horse riding in the Purbeck heathland between Corfe Castle and Studland. We went down again a couple of weeks ago and stayed in a B&B on a farm this time, at Kimmeridge, and enjoyed some good walking there as well. B&B is a new experience for us and we really enjoyed the place we found.



Meanwhile, Jennie and Ian are doing well; they've had a few nice holidays and are planning an extension on their house, and Jennie's got promoted at work - congratulations.

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And Peter, Lianne, Jack and Tommy are also doing well - they had their holiday in Florida again this year. We're continuing to look after Tommy two or three days a week and he's becoming a real star - especially posing for photos!



Towards the end of the year, Rhys' photography business has got off the ground quite encouragingly with some portraiture done and some bookings for weddings next year in the bag. He's been putting all his efforts into getting it up and running, preparing portfolios and albums, working out costings and pricing etc, so he's now got a long list of pictures to do for people - he'll get through them all soon - promise.

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Our latest news is that Jean has just signed up for her own new venture. She's going to open a Kumon centre in Romiley in the New Year. Kumon is the maths and English programme for children that really helps them to succeed at school, so it should be very satisfying.

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So now we're both into new part-time semi-retirement careers. They won't make us rich but they'll be less demanding than our big business contracts and should give us some time to enjoy life and see people more, and help us to keep going on the holidays that we like.

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You can see more about our exploits on the internet at: [www.williamses.org.uk](http://www.williamses.org.uk)

Or catch us on MSN Messenger at [williamses@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:williamses@hotmail.co.uk)



**We wish you peace and happiness for Christmas and 2007**

**Love and best wishes from Jean and Rhys**

