

Christmas 2006: News and Greetings

from Colin and Elizabeth Hicks (and their family) - addresses overpage

Joanna, James, Miriam, and Joshua

In September, [Joanna](#) and [James](#) settled back into Beckenham after their year in Freiburg (Germany). [James](#) will be continuing his research collaboration with Freiburg colleagues. [Miriam](#) missed a year of English schooling but is now learning to read in English though she speaks fluent German. Unfortunately that is not on the English primary school curriculum.

[Joanna](#) is doing an MSc at Imperial College in science communication. You can learn more by reading her weblog on her student year (see over page for the link).

[Joshua \(aka JJ\)](#) speaks much more clearly now. He is able to stand up for himself in an argument over what he will or won't eat. So far he refuses to be bilingual - if asked "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" he replies "Nein"

Because of this German connection, Christmas 2005 was spent in a rented house in the Black Forest. It snowed all Christmas morning but stopped in time for us to go out tobogganing just by the house in the afternoon. On Boxing Day Narnia came to life for us when we heard the jingling of sleigh-bells in the forest. Later in the week we went for a ride of our own (see photo). During the week, [Jasper](#), [Miriam](#) and their parents went off to learn to ski. [Jasper](#) was such a natural that he went back in February with the Carpenter skiing party.

Colin and Elizabeth

[Colin](#) took up cycling again on retirement on his 60th birthday in May. Since then he has kept himself very busy. He spent most of May working on the computer network at our church and the first half of July helping [Richard](#) with renovation work on their house in France. In June he became President of a European organisation called Eurisy which works to ensure that space applications are properly applied to down to earth needs. This makes him the Chairman of a French registered company!

As last year, the whole family rented a house in France for two weeks in August. The party included all our children and grandchildren, plus [James](#)' parents (Robert and Gwyneth) [Richard's](#) mother (Rose) and [Elizabeth's](#) sister (Heather). This time we were in the same village as [Richard](#) and [Rachel's](#) house. It now has a septic tank so proper plumbing may come soon! As the weather was very changeable and cool during our holiday, lots got done on the house. Rose was queen of the shutter painting and hedges were cut back until a neat front garden emerged.

"We have seen His star in the East"
Matthew 2:2 (KJV)



A sleigh ride together though the Black Forest at Christmas 2005 with all the sleigh-bells a-jingling.



[Colin](#) and [Elizabeth](#)

Pictured at our retirement party in Sept 2006 on a (pseudo) paddlesteamer on the Thames.



[Joshua \(aka JJ\)](#), [Jasper](#) and [Miriam](#)

Playing together in August 2006 in the grounds of our holiday house in France.

We all spent a morning on a cycle ride along a disused railway track peddling specially adapted railway trollies. We did not realise how uphill the outward journey was until we found we could sit back and coast home.

By September we had both finally retired. Which really came home to us when [Elizabeth](#) did not go back to school at the beginning of the autumn term (the first time for 28 years). So we had to begin to adjust to life together rather than in parallel. Our first big demonstration of this was our Nile cruise in November which was booked on 31 January – the same evening that [Colin's](#) successor accepted the offer of the job!

Monday is our day together and we are finally getting our money's worth out of our National Trust membership! Now [Elizabeth](#) is not working she will have more chances to travel with [Colin](#) both on semi-business trips and on holiday. In October [Elizabeth](#) accompanied [Colin](#) to Valencia where he was attending a conference as Eurisy President. There may be other opportunities like that next year but we have also booked a holiday in New Zealand for early in 2007.

Richard, Rachel and Jasper

[Richard](#) and [Rachel](#) are still busy in their jobs. [Richard](#) sings in a local choir and we were impressed by his solo at their summer concert. [Rachel](#) has really established herself as a key member of her team at Esher College and acts as deputy to her head of department.

[Jasper](#) has a new bike with 18 gears which he loves riding around the park and towpath. This was an early birthday present given in September before his 9th birthday in November. In late July we spent a day on the Thames in a small cruiser with [Jasper](#) and [Rachel](#). He loved reliving the stories of his mother's childhood when we spent many holidays on the Broads. He even managed to have a (supervised) go at the wheel.

The Church Family

For three months (August-October) [Colin](#) stood in for Richard Littledale, the Minister of our church he was on sabbatical. He is still very active on the London Baptist Association (LBA) Board and has added to that a new appointment to the equivalent national body, the Baptist Union Council.

In March, [Elizabeth](#) was re-elected to the leadership team at church and took on responsibility for the buildings. Guttering and plumbing, suddenly had to be discussed with some pretence of knowledge! She was proud of herself when she discovered a fault on the roof before any of the men.

Addresses and Contact Details for the Hicks Family: Christmas 2006

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