

# 2007 Waddington Christmas letter



Even less time for letters than normal, as we are opting out again this year and plan to spend Christmas on a remote beach in the Pacific. No Turkey, no Christmas pudding, no mince pies, no washing up and no Christmas presents (well not many anyway).

So how was this year for you? We've had a pretty good time or at least the bits I can remember. Sarah is continuing to grow up, the amount of make-up, clothes and high heeled shoes I trip over has increased, all mixed in with discarded lolly sticks, sweetie wrappers, loose beads, crisp packets, yoghurt pots, coke bottles, odd socks and dirty knickers. It would be fair

to say that Michael also leaves things lying around (odd socks especially:- he came back from his school trip with 11 socks, only 2 of which made a pair. Even his school friends were impressed with this feat) but Sarah is by far the most successful litterer in this house at the moment. Mr. Squirrel has managed to open an ebay selling account and sold two old kayaks (and we gave one away to scouts) so maybe there's some hope for the future.



This year's skiing was to Courchevel (twice, in Sarah's case, as her school went there too).

Kayaking has again featured heavily in our year. Andy is continuing to run rivers at every opportunity - even in summer, as it was so wet. For my sins I've been helping with Scout canoe camps. Sarah went to Plas

y Brenin with the Florences and has come back very enthused. She wanted a colour customised kayak but eventually agreed to settle for a very pretty blue and white

one along with a £195 Werner paddle and a new buoyancy aid. I was very mean and refused the £90 helmet with flowers on. After that she paddled the North Tyne and

waltzed down Warden Gorge instead of falling in, in the time honoured tradition. Michael really enjoyed the front of the Topo Duo on the same trip. We're now trying to run swimming pool sessions to learn





the rescues and rolls in relative comfort. Andy and I had an excellent sea trip at Easter when we paddled across to Arran and back via Inchmarnock. I went to Anglesey with Ann Jones on a "rough water boat handling course". I don't think the wind dropped

below force 5 all week and was 7-8 the day we got blown down the Menai Straits. After that I told Len Hartley from the Peninsula Canoe Club that I was quite capable of paddling round the stacks....we met the North Stack tide race full on, Andy has it all on video to prove it was just as scary as it felt at the time. I'll be a bit more circumspect next time. We had a lovely trip to Coquet island, there were loads of puffins with mouths full of sand eels just like the RSPB posters, there were loads of seals as well and sadly at least two dead seal pups.



We went to Arisaig for summer half term, we did lots of messing about on the beach and Fern had a wonderful time although she looked a bit unhappy when Sarah put her in a kayak and floated her out into the bay.



Michael had researched the Yellowstone wolf packs (on TV and the internet) so we went to Yellowstone to find them (they

were a long way away - but that was lucky: so was the grizzly bear that had stolen their kill...). We also did a 3 day lake kayak trip into the Shoshone lake basin and a 6 day horse trek through the Thorofare trail (the remotest point from a road in the contiguous 48 states). There were loads of Elk, Pronghorn, Bighorn Sheep, Buffalo, Ground Squirrels, Marmots, Coyotes, Bald Eagles and River Otters, and we saw Moose in the Tetons. We also saw Geysers and hot pools and more Geysers and more hot pools. Sarah sat in the car and read the final "Harry



Potter" because she was geysered out. Guess what, Old Faithful looks exactly like all the photos except there's more people.

Love from Mary, Andy, Sarah, Michael, Fern, Snowball and Snowflake.

More via links through <http://pennine.demon.co.uk/family/xmasmissive2007.htm>