

2009 has been a quiet year for us, though it has been marked by many comings and goings!

Ian continues to work in London for the Royal Bank of Scotland. It has been a year with far too much excitement at times, of course. He is glad still to be there, though commuting between Wirral and London each week is not ideal. He remains active at St Andrew's Church in Bebington, though during the week he attends events at St Helen's Church, Bishopsgate. Ian was also elected to Chester Diocesan Synod this year.

Viv is still doing much the same as she did last year, playing in the church music group, helping at a pre-school group at church, maintaining a disturbingly large number of websites and generally keeping the family in good order, though it's often like herding cats.

David is now well into his second year at Sheffield University, where he is studying Chemical Physics. He is captain of the University Archery Club, which seems to be taking up much of his time.

Matthew passed his "A" Levels this year, winning the school economics prize, and is now studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Lancaster University, where he is participating in a full and active social life too.

Christopher is in Year 11 at Birkenhead School, where he won an award for strength of character and personal development. At church he has moved from the "Pathfinders" youth group to "Life", which shows that he is getting older and wiser.

Viv and her mother went to Provence in the late spring. They were based in Avignon and the weather was fabulous. They saw many interesting sights, including the Pont-du-Gard, the Camargue and the Théâtre Antique d'Orange.

In July, Christopher went on a school trip to the battlefields of France and Belgium. He enjoyed the trip, but found the endless graveyards a little depressing.

Matthew went on a couple of end-of-school trips, to Newquay and to the Leeds Festival. Ian and Viv were amazed that he and his friends chose to fly to Newquay rather than going by train or coach like they would have done in the old days.

David again spent his summer in Canada, this time staying entirely in Alberta.

In late July, the family apart from David went to Malta, an exciting but tiny island in the middle of the Mediterranean, with more history behind it than they realised possible. It was a busy week, exploring the history, while also eating, drinking and being merry in a beautiful, hot country again.

A couple of weeks later, all five took a trip to the Disney Parks in Paris, which was another time of relaxation for all, but far too short.

Finally, Christopher's treatment for leukaemia continues to progress satisfactorily. He has completed the first year, which was intensive treatment, but nearly two years of maintenance treatment still remain. Nevertheless, he is quite well in himself and we are hopeful that he will do well in his GCSE examinations in the summertime. By contrast with last year, it was wonderful to see him able to do everything with us on holiday in Malta and Paris.

May you all have a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2010.

With love from Ian, Viv, David, Matthew and Christopher

