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Dear Friends, we hope that all is well with you. Here's a brief view of our year.
This year has again been one with much travel for pleasure, seeking to give Sam experiences and to enjoy good breaks together, in addition to the normal run of our responsibilities at home, school and work. Jane continues to help at the excellent Meanwood C of E school for two half days per week, enjoying the Yr 1 group. She is now using facebook to post key family pictures. She has not felt able to go to China with the Amity programme this year, but we did manage to visit Beijing, a city we love, in August. A family high point this year was the birth of our lovely 4th grandchild, Maddie, to Lucy and Laura. Jane was able to visit Bristol soon after the birth. We also celebrated our 46th wedding anniversary in July! Another highlight was the 5k colour run Jane did with Sam – the hilly course proved harder than expected after training on the flat! We were also able to share John's 31st birthday in Nottingham, and had several visits as a family to Bristol. Phil continues to lead a large research lab, now with 3 joint labs in China, and ran a UK-China meeting in July, attended by many of our very good Chinese friends – some of whom we met again in Beijing. He has just returned from Mexico where he received an international innovation award, and is due in Beijing in early January for a National Award for scientific cooperation, and in the USA for another international polymer award – all great honours (and reflecting a great team!) In the autumn, we began looking well ahead by visiting high schools for Sam, who is growing and developing rapidly, not only in height (on course for 6ft at 14); someone kindly commented 'you can see that he knows he is loved'.

Highlights of the year, by Sam: *In April we went to Lanzarote, and saw lots of dormant volcanoes all over the island. One we visited set fire to sticks! We explored lava tunnels and enjoyed a 'bumpy' dromedary ride. A great cactus garden had loads of massive and tiny 'wacky cacky', some like spooky fingers. I went to 3 Cub Scout Camps this year. At Challenge 17 we had a big, loud concert with fireworks. In another camp I learnt awesome capsizing of a kayak in the River Ouse – cool! I did quite a bit of painting earlier this year, and I especially enjoyed painting a large landscape. I also got a chemistry set with acids and alkalis. We all went cycling using my larger bike now (Nanna on her new electric bike!) In August we went to Croatia. We walked round the high walls surrounding the old city of Dubrovnik. I loved Lokrum Island with its rabbits and peacocks mooching round, and we were pirates for the day in a galleon sailing to 3 islands. In late August we went to Beijing! We visited the Temple of Heaven (Tiantan) the symbol of Beijing, and the enormous Forbidden City (Imperial Palace) with its dragons, sculptures, and its garden with weirdly shaped trees and rocks. We also saw an epic Chinese acrobat show. In September Nanna and I did a 5km colour run for St Gemma's Hospice at Harewood House, where we got coloured powder thrown on us every 1km! In October we saw my cute new cousin Maddie, with Auntie Laura and Auntie Lucy in Bristol, when she was about 5 months old. We enjoyed a great day out with them in Slimbridge wetlands park. On November 14th I passed my Grade 1 piano exam with a distinction. I was chuffed! On 3 December I had my 10th birthday party with 11 other boys, playing games and laughing so much at a Pirates of the Carribean film.*


Jane with Maddie, in June


With John & Ricki on John's birthday


Our 46th Anniversary, July



5k Colour Run, Harewood House


August: on Dubrovnik's walls, Lokrum in the background



August, relaxing in Croatia



August, Temple of Heaven, Beijing



In the Imperial Palace, Beijing



Sam, proud of his Grade 1 Piano certificate



With Laura, Lucy & Maddie, October



With Laura, Lucy & Maddie, July



with Emma, September



Sam, Amy & Adam



At Sinopec HQ, Beijing

We are grateful for the love and support we receive. May we all know the grace and love of God underpinning our lives, as we look forward to a new year.

With our love, Phil, Jane and Sam