



# DafNews



## Issue Number 12

December 2009

With the grandchildren all growing up and fewer funny anecdotes to relate (the main reason for publishing this newsletter) **DafNews** is now undergoing a change in format and content. Following this issue it will in future be published annually, reporting on various activities of family members throughout the year. The present issue therefore covers the final six months of 2009.

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We sadly commence this issue with two upsetting family events. The first, not previously reported, was Darren's final break with Mel in 2007 and his new relationship with Martie. The second event is the breakdown of Melanie & Lee's marriage. By the close of the year, tensions surrounding the first of these events appeared to have been finally resolved allowing a return to near normality.

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Both July and August were busy months in 2009. Following Hayley's Sports Day, Geoff & Sheila spent a few days with Janice & Graham, visiting Eastbourne to see their niece Zoe and taking her son Roman to playschool. This allowed Murphy & Twinkle to have another short break at the Turnpike Cats 'Hotel'.

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### Gillingham Girls

Beth & Hayley came to stay for two weeks with Grandma & Grandpa at the end of July. Days out included Wim-

borne, Weymouth (where Grandpa & Hayley putted whilst Grandma & Beth went shopping) and the Tank Museum at Bovington. Melanie joined them in the second week and days out included Monkey World (yet again), Longleat Safari Park & attractions, Cheddar Gorge and Lyme Regis, where they had lunch and dinner in the car due to the rainy weather.



Meanwhile Nicola, Mike, Jonny & Andrew spent two weeks with Mike's family in Aberaeron watching dolphins whilst eating fish & chips.

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### Dave & Jenny Visit



In mid August Dave & Jenny (Parcell) came to the UK to meet up with family & friends and spent a few days with Sheila & Geoff visiting Yeovilton Fleet Air Arm Museum, Swanage, Corfe (with a trip on the Swanage railway) and Shaftesbury.

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### Jonny's Jaunts

Following Dave & Jenny's departure, Jonny came to stay for a few days. In Weymouth, Grandpa and Jonny had a ball battle in the sea followed by a putting round with Grandma in which all scored well over par! Another day was spent at the Tank Museum where they also observed a 'practical' display of tanks

and a troop carrier. Grandpa grumbled about having to go and fetch the lunch from the car prior to the display.

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### Moving On

Following a review earlier in the year of the reasons for relocating to Gillingham, family issues and travelling costs Geoff & Sheila finally decided to put their property back on the market in September with the intention of moving back nearer to family and friends. It was a difficult decision as the attractions of their present location were the prime reason for moving.

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### Hayley Joins her Sister

As with Beth two years ago Hayley started Yateley Comprehensive School this year. Another one growing up!

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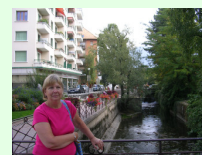
### A Decade Old

Yep, it was Andrew's 10th birthday celebrated with the family at home.

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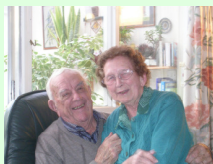
### Lakes & Mountains

Geoff & Sheila's holiday this year was spent in Annecy (in the French Alps) and Geneva. Day trips included a tramway ride to see Mont Blanc, a walk through the Gorges du Fier and a circuit of Lake Annecy. As usual they nearly got lost trying to find the hotel!



### Relatively Old

At the end of September Geoff met up with his oldest surviving relative (to the best of his knowledge) when his Uncle Leslie, 89 year old brother of Kathleen, flew over from Australia for a whirlwind tour of the UK. He was accompanied by his wife Peggy and his eldest son Barry and his wife Heather. They all met up at Sheila Harrison's house in Mudeford.



### The Three '0's

A triple birthday celebration was held at Paul (Hawke) and Melody's house on 3rd October to celebrate the 70th birthdays of Geoff's sister



Valerie and her husband John and Paul's 50th birthday. Son Stephen and his family and other friends were also present. After, Geoff & Sheila travelled to Uckfield to spend the night with Sheila's sister Janice & Graham.



### Lion Geoff

Geoff joined the Lions Club and volunteered to organise the annual Christmas Float. This followed involvement with the charity during the past year. Good fun with a nice bunch of people

### Andrew's Antics

Following the celebration of Geoff's birthday with the family at Nicola's home, Andrew accompanied Grandma and Grandpa when they returned to Gillingham. Visits included the Tank Museum and the Haynes Motor Museum, which was surprisingly impressive. However, Grandpa was really upset during the



visit to the motor museum because, although an MGF and a Mazda MX5 were on display, there was no **TOYOTA MR2**; and there was no apology from the staff! Shameful don't you think?

They were later joined by Mum, Dad, Jonny and Monty with further visits to Stourhead and Shaftesbury and to take Andrew home.

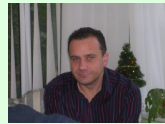
### Sean and Beth's Birthdays

A busy December started off with Sean's thirteen birthday followed by Beth's fourteenth. Whilst Beth is turning into a fashion conscious teenager, Sean is shooting up and might overtake us all in height!



### Cats are for Christmas

Well, they nearly spoilt it by taking ill just before they were due to stay at the cattery for the Christmas break. First Twinkle decided not to eat, followed by visits to the vet for diagnosis and medicine; then Murphy decided to give up eating in sympathy. Once the cattery stay had been cancelled they amazingly started to eat again! I reckon they had an inkling of where they would be spending Christmas and plotted between themselves to feign sickness. Seriously though, it was identified that Twinkle has serious problems and is now on a special diet.



However, Christmas turned out okay after all, although Geoff & Sheila had to drive to Nicola's and back on Christmas Day. Melanie came to stay Boxing Day night and Lee brought Beth & Hayley down on the 27th. On December 30th Geoff & Sheila called in to enjoy a pint of Cider (Geoff) and a cup of



coffee with Darren & Martz. There was a family gathering at Nicola's and a visit to Mel's to hand Christmas presents to Sean and Jay.

### Other Events in 2009

- \* Geoff started writing his autobiography but only one person has expressed an interest in reading it ... Beth!
- \* Sheila's Mum had a few falls and spent some time in hospital but was back settled in her flat after a short stay at a care home.
- \* Sheila had a checkup following her operation in April and was reported to be doing well.
- \* Geoff attended the annual Christmas Lilly luncheon for long serving employees and met old colleagues to reminisce and sympathise with those still working.
- \* There were a scary few days in mid-October when Geoff's sister Valerie was rushed into hospital with breathing problems. In some ways this was an eye opener for Valerie and an alert for a change in lifestyle. Janice & Graham again kindly provided bed & breakfast after the Geoff & Sheila's visit to Eastbourne Hospital to see Valerie.

### This Year and Next

Overall, this year has not been good: with Melanie's marriage, tensions with Darren, Sheila's Mum's falls & hospitalisation, Sheila's operation, Valerie's alert and unhappiness at being so far from family & friends.

Let us hope that 2010 will be better, particularly with two more milestone 40th birthdays - Melanie and Lee.

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**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**

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