

**Hello! Merry Christmas! Greetings from the Crawleys.** The tree is up, sparkling in the living room, making it feel all romantic and Christmassy and it is time (actually we are running rather late, so it is more than time) to write our annual letter to friends and family. As usual the year has sped by and here we are again, poised at the brink of another new year, like a reluctant swimmer, shivering as he dips his toe into the pool. It'll be fine once we are in and start swimming round a bit. The past year has been a good one. We have much to be thankful for and many reasons to celebrate.

This year has been all change in the Crawley house; we started with five of us and lost two of them sometime around the autumn! Yes – it's that time that you occasionally longed for, when they start making their own way in the world, but when it comes to it you don't want them to go. Joseph and Daniel both started University this year with Joe going to study History and the History of Ideas at Goldsmiths in South London and Dan going to study Film & TV Post Production at the Hasting campus of Brighton Uni. I think what we miss most are the impromptu jamming sessions.

### **Philip**

My year has been dominated with large projects that involve moving broadcast and film facilities to new premises. Starting in the summer of 2012 my team started designing ITV's new facility in Salford's Media City; a large government/EU subsidised media 'village' just outside of Manchester. The job lasted until April and then resumed in October and has just been completed. I didn't realise how much I wouldn't enjoy the 04:30 starts to go to Manchester and the seemingly endless overnights in the Holiday Inn (or worst still the Ibis Budget Hotel – "...if Ikea did prison cells" as my colleague put it). So, when you're watching any ITV show from Manchester (including Corrie) or any of the BBC shows done by ITV ("University Challenge" etc) then think of me! On that subject Joe has made it into Goldsmiths University Challenge team and so long as they don't get up to their antics of previous years (answering every question with "Lenin", "Karl Marx" or "Trotsky" – look it up on YouTube; the show was live-to-air then!) they may well make it through to the TV contest.

Aside from work I've been doing a series of video podcasts with an industry friend – [www.engineersbench.co.uk](http://www.engineersbench.co.uk) if you have a yearning to learn about broadcast engineering. The training aspect of my job has been one of the more enjoyable parts of work this year with me visiting several TV companies to stand in front of their bright-eyed trainee engineers and guide them a bit.

The last three months of the year has seen me and my guys decamped to the famous Pinewood Studios to build Technicolor's new digital film studio. Of course all of this working out of London has meant I haven't been cycling much this year and so I can't wait to get back in the saddle for jobs that are closer to home.

### **Sarah**

I am still working as a school secretary at a small CE primary school in Mill Hill (posh part of N. London, very north, almost in Hertfordshire). Unlike the rest of the working population, I head out from our zone 2 location to the wild, horse ridden North (here be dragons), whilst everyone else is heading for central London, which makes the drive quite pleasant. I do love this job. Although it is always busy and sometimes stressful, there is usually something funny or sweet to see you through the day. I have never once been bored at work.

I still attend my French conversation evening/French book club which I enjoy very much, apart from that it is mostly reading and the occasional evening out which occupy me and we still run a little home group at our house. Haven't quite got the work/life balance sussed yet, what with all the other, more mundane parts of life, such as washing, cleaning, cooking etc., but am trying. Having said that, amazed how much less washing there is with two boys gone although I am still cooking as if there were five of us.

### **James**

James is now in Year 10 and enjoying playing guitar in the jazz band and a rock band at school. He is also in the church band. James is still very much into skateboarding, music and spending time with friends. I think he has really missed his brothers since they left home, especially as all the parental attention is now focused on him. "Have you done your homework James?"



## Daniel

Daniel became an adult in August, which seems incredible, since it doesn't seem that long ago that he started school. He worked a lot of the summer for Arsenal Media, which was great, as it is only down the road from us. Daniel is living his student life in a shared house on Hastings sea front, with a very picturesque view from his kitchen window. Oh I do like to be beside the seaside, only not when there are gale force winds. Just before he left for university, Dan decided to get baptised, this was a great affirmation of his faith.

## Joseph

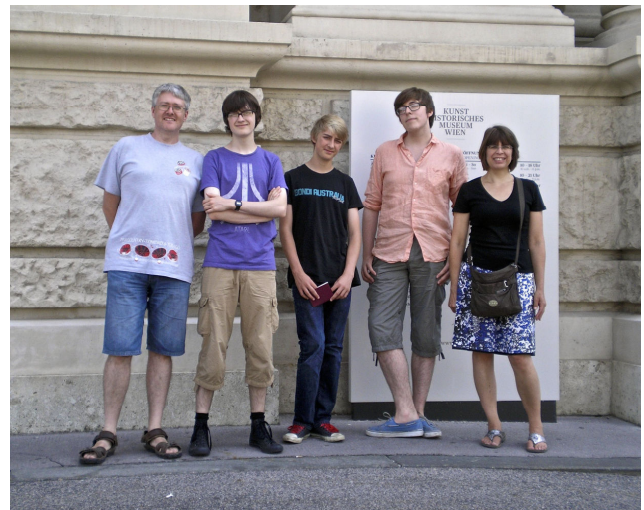
Joseph will be 21 in March and I think he is still growing. He makes us look short now. Joe spent a few weeks working as a technical runner for a post production company over the summer, which was great for him. His student house is in Peckham, made famous by Del Boy, but he keeps telling us that it is on the up. He has been quite busy with student life: as well as doing the University Challenge trial, he has got involved with various societies such as student radio and salsa, though I think he might have now mamboed off the salsa scene.



## The Summer Holidays

We had a great summer. First of all, James, Dan and I (Sarah) went to Soul Survivor, which is a Christian youth camp, and went to the week at the Stafford show ground. We camped with some other mums and teenagers from our church and had a wonderful time. Us oldies couldn't stay up as late as the youngsters and my abiding memory of the week is people singing "My Lighthouse" by the Rend Collective (great band by the way) at 1am. I did enjoy pretending to be young again.

We then had a week together as a family in Vienna, where we rented a holiday flat. What a beautiful city, overflowing with art, music, architecture, history and gateaux. It also gave me (Sarah) an opportunity to practise my very rusty German. One night we went to a famous restaurant on the edge of the Prater Park (home to the famous big wheel in the film "The Third Man"), where Phil and Joseph had the massive roast pork dish, for which the restaurant is famed.



The highlight of the holiday for me was the very long thin island in the Danube from which we swam in the river. The whole holiday was a real celebration, since we found out that Dan had got his place at Hastings as we came through luggage reclaim in Vienna airport and then, the next morning we woke up to find out that Joe had got his place at Goldsmiths.

## A Day to Remember

October saw a gathering of the clans for Sarah's parents' diamond wedding anniversary in Street and what a fabulous day that was. Sixty years of marriage is truly something to celebrate and it was great to get together with family and friends. Even the Queen herself remembered to send them a card. Ten years ago, just after my parents' golden wedding, my Mum confided in me that she and Dad were going for the Diamond. "Were you thinking you might jack it in then? Trade Dad in for a younger model?" I replied. Well, they did indeed reach the Diamond and I hope that they are "going for the Platinum" because it would be a shame not to.

## The Crawley Side of the Family

Rosemary, Philip's Mum, walks miles each day with her lovely dog Bonnie and continues to help at a local primary school helping with youngsters' reading. Philip's sister Heather spends her free time gardening and running. She has done very well this year, even running a marathon.



So, you've made it to the end. We wish you an extremely lovely Christmas and a very happy 2014.