

The Viney Family Weblog Annual Review of the Year – 2004

http://www.viney.com/html/news_resources.html

Lauren's clean sweep - January



After passing her tests for Newland House in 2003, Lauren passed the entrance exam for both Lady Eleanor Holles (LEH) and Surbiton High School in January of 2004.

Of course, there is then a fierce debate over whose genes she has to thank for her obvious high intelligence (with Grandad Victor putting in the strongest claim).

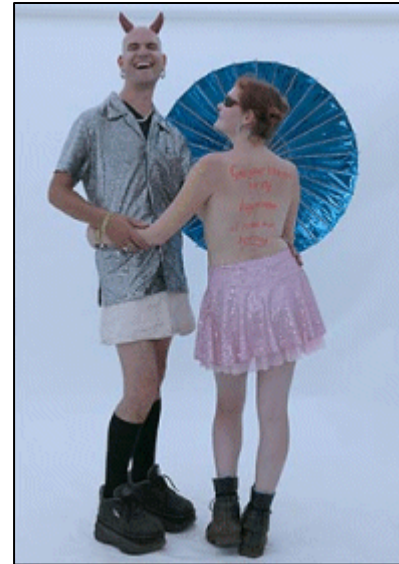
Lauren decided to accept the LEH offer and then just had the little matter of SATS at Collis to attend to (where she also did very well). Very proud parents!

The new Collis website – March

From early January until the AGM in March, David used some of his free time to design a new web site for Collis School (mainly as a way of saying thank you for Lauren's happy time there).

The site had a fresh and original look and feel that included lots of photos of the kids and staff. Was fun to do something positive and useful in the Community and work with what is surely one of the best state schools in Richmond.

Glastonbury Festival - June



2004 was officially the year of new experiences.

Most notable was a trip to the Glastonbury festival with Simon Wallwork (David fully playing his middle-aged, middle-classed part in what the Guardian later called the 'embourgeoisement' of the event).

Joe and Cat (pictured left at Lost Vagueness) were just one of many great moments in a cracking three days, which culminated in a naked pagan sweat ritual in a Mongolian Yurt (I kid you not). A spectator sport for our intrepid explorers!

The weather was actually better than the news would suggest. Yes, it rained a lot (and there was a lot of mud) but there was also a fair bit of sunshine (particularly on the Friday and Monday). Some wag managed to sell a lump of Glastonbury Mud on eBay afterwards for over £500... now why didn't we think of that?

In no particular order, other memories include hot spiced cider, Joss Stone, Stone Circle fireworks, James Brown, baby wipes, Space Ritual (Hawkwind's '72 line-up complete with 40 something Go Go girls), the Hare Krishna tent and Jazz at 3am in the Green Fields.

Henley Regatta – July

From the sublime to the ridiculous (or is it the other way around?) David (barely having removed the mud from his fingernails) donned his old school blazer for a first time trip to Henley. Highlights included Ross stealing David's car keys in the mistaken impression that he was unsafe to drive – and the whimpering that went with it!

The Capital-to-Coast Bike Ride – July

On the damp and grey morning of July 11th, David started out on a 60 mile bike ride from Hampton Court to Hove. If that wasn't bad enough, he had press-ganged five other friends and colleagues into joining the team (called appropriately enough "Liquid Lunch").



And so began an exhilarating ride through some of the most beautiful countryside in Surrey and Sussex.

And it was tough - make no mistake! From sea level up to 500m and back again, then 600m and back.. plus loads of ups and downs (literally) in between. Even the pros were feeling it!

David and Mark raised over £1,400 together for Norwood (a children's charity)!

There was the bit where David had a puncture (less than 1 mile into the race), the bit where Mark fell off, the bit where David got lost (a 5 mile detour!), the bit where Ross lost the pace (to his elders and betters) and the long wait at the end for the girls to finish. Great!

France in August

After such a great holiday in 2002, we were delighted to be returning to the Var Provence region again – this time with Dolly, Simon, Hannah and Ellie. We also made some new friends on the plane on the way out (as you do) – Andrew and Amarjot Ledger and family (who turned out so live in Richmond Borough too and be staying in the next village to ours whilst in France)!



Our Olive Grove villa in Claviers was lovely and a great base from which to explore the area. We went back to the Gorges du Verdon and also explored Cannes, Eze, St. Tropez and Ste Maxime by car, foot, boat but not (on this occasion) bike... we left that to the (super-fit) locals!

A brush with David Beckham's Bentley at Bargemon, boules in the main square with Pastis and gypsy festivals, pedaloing again on the Lac du St. Cassien (see picture above) and trips to Cap de Ferrat Zoo. These were just some of the wonderful highlights of another very successful holiday.

Really, once you have visited this part of Europe, it is hard to imagine really wanting to go anywhere else. It was genuinely hard to tear ourselves away and return home! Spending time with such good friends was also smashing – whether running around the countryside sight-seeing or simply lounging around the pool. Will we be back again? Yes indeed!

Florida for the New Year

As most of you read this newsletter, we will be happily holidaying in Florida, with a week in Orlando and a week on the Gulf Coast (that started after Christmas and takes us into the New Year).



Many years of "eating your greens" have finally paid off for Lauren and James, with both of them passing the all-important 48 inches cut-off for Disney rides that has been carved on their bedroom door lintel since they were in diapers!

So now it's time for some winter sun and a frenzied shopping and sight seeing bonanza. See you (tanned and relaxed) in the New Year!

Best of the Rest

- A bike trip up and pub-crawl from Teddington to London with Ross for St. George's day. A great way to start the spring.
- The Viney family all together for Sarah Neale's wedding in November and a relaxing stay at the Belfry to boot.

Life changing events

- David becomes a (blood) uncle for the first time with the birth of Richard's first. For quite a while she had the working title of "pumpkin" (being born on Halloween) but was eventually named Lucy (just hours before the deadline). What a beautiful baby!
- Grandad Victor continues his treatment for Osteoporosis, with groundbreaking injections to re-form his vertebrae. Here's hoping that 2005 will bring some stability.

Highs of the year

- The infamous Devil's Dyke held no fears in a year that had seen David cycle more than 650 miles in total and lose nearly two stone in weight. Plans to sell his (unwashed) lycra on eBay afterwards were eventually shelved after a chorus of protest from people at work... and a private bid from an adoring fan (I wish!).

2004 Predictions: How did we do?

- Sumi quits work to look after Hal in the early Spring and takes very well to being mumsie again. Much more fun when it's someone else's child!

Yes, Hallam does indeed prove to be a joy and Sumi doesn't reach for a copy of Crème until well into December!

- James wins a medal or three at Rugby "A" and "B" festivals at under 7... and scores a fair few tries along the way.

Again, an inspired prediction! James does indeed become a leading U7 try-scorer and wins a medal in the Chobham A festival. There may be more to come in 2005.

- Lauren settles well into her new school (after an anxious few days)

Wow! 3 out of 3 again this year! Lauren settles in well at LEH in the Autumn term and makes a number of good friends!

Predictions & big events for 2005

- James beats his dad for the first time in a non-handicapped chess game and dad promptly goes into a deep sulk!
- Saras and Sam finally sell their house after the longest running property saga not to be serialised on UK Gold!
- New directions and new faces – there, is that cryptic enough for you? Nostradamus would have been proud of that one!