

At Home with the Harlands

Christmas 2011

2011 has been a very long year for us. We commenced our renovations in December 2010, and consequently things have been very messy. We have added an upstairs storey with a room for each of the kids and a bathroom, and re-modelled much of the downstairs rooms. It has taken longer to complete than anticipated (no great surprise there!), and you could say that we are a lot more experienced in the practice of house renovation than we ever wanted to be! The painting has only just been completed, and there are a few minor things to finish off. Thankfully the days of moving things around as some new part of the house is renovated are over. The kids seem to appreciate their new individual rooms, even though we tend to think that mess abhors a vacuum (almost as much as our kids abhor the vacuum cleaner) and that mess expands to fill the space available ... In the meantime we have been reminded about just how much stuff we own (and how hard some of it is to move!), and exactly how we can compact it all to fit into just about any available space ... Having done all that, the back yard and garden is next, once we get the energy!



Beau is a year older, but probably not much wiser, and just as energetic. He enjoys being taken for walks, and gets excited whenever anyone picks up his lead. He has managed to scoot out the front door a few times, showing no traffic sense whatsoever, and seems to think that people coming after him outside is an invitation to a game of hide and seek. Unsurprisingly, he is the only one to think this is fun.



Jeremy has just finished Year 4, which means that he has now completed the Junior School, and moves into a boys-only class in the Middle School next year. He was a House Leader for half of the year, and enjoyed that role immensely. He is getting very adept at preparing Powerpoint talks, and loves devising questions to use in them. He had some trombone lessons for the last term, but thankfully is not in favour of continuing this instrument, in addition to his less-hard-on-the-ears viola. For us, this also means the end of the Junior School years --- the countdown has started!



Emily has continued with the clarinet and choir throughout Year 6, and has generally tried to be involved in everything that is going in (and, thankfully, not always succeeding!). She has done very well with her clarinet, and spends lots of time teaching herself to play the piano. Now that we have a choice of two, she often shows off by learning pieces by ear and playing them in 'look away' style. She has again enjoyed the adventure club camp, but it was almost as much fun having a sleep-over (sleep-under?) with some friends and then going shopping...



Timothy has now finished Year 8, and spent the last few weeks of 2011 in Year 9, which is a clear sign that the Middle School years are now behind him. It is also clear that he is growing at a great rate. He got a lot of enjoyment out of a comment made by a salesman when buying some shoes, which was that as size 13 is the largest size they keep in stock, the next pair would have to be specially ordered! Volleyball and basketball continue to be his favourite sports, and now that Year 9 has arrived, he is very much focused on the possibility of a trip to Japan in 2012.



Joshua has just completed the first year of Computer Science, and has often found it useful to have a father who can help with his questions (although perhaps more concerned that his father knows some of the lecturers!). He has been involved in various social events, mainly based around computer games, and never seems short of an event to attend. He continues to play basketball with some friends of his from primary school (now a long time ago!), and has recently been disconcerted by the realisation that as he no longer plays in under-age competitions, James could (in principle) play in the same team! This, if Joshua has his way, will remain a theoretical possibility ...

Linda has once more spent some time recently in China as part of a Haileybury delegation, which is getting to be a habit (as is the freezing weather and fog-bound airports). Attending the School speech night on the way to the airport may sound crazy, but that was all part of the deal.

James has had another busy year at work, with a new Head of School on board. This was broken up by 10-weeks of long service leave between July and October, which was so enjoyable that it is on the agenda again for 2013 (when Linda's leave will also be due).

With best wishes from all of us for a refreshing Christmas and a prosperous New Year,

James, Linda, Joshua, Timothy, Emily & Jeremy Harland