

# NEWS

**Saturday 31 March 2012.** Fulham beat Norwich 2-1 at Craven Cottage this afternoon. It looked like Fulham were on for a rout but in the end they clung on. Any lingering doubts about relegation should be gone in spite of Bolton and QPR winning.

We have decided to splash out and get a decent 9kw heater for the pool and ordered it this afternoon.

I have fixed the date for the first sail of 2012. Sue, Ned and Nick are coming over next Sunday and we will launch the boat then. Story and pictures to follow next week.

This morning, I ran non-stop for 1 hour 24 minutes around the B roads and lanes between Butts Green and Danbury common. Really enjoyable and although I was not going very fast, to say the least, I overtook some cyclists who had previously whizzed past me a couple of times—admittedly they were wheeling their bike up a hill at the time and I was doing my last effort towards the end of my run. Meanwhile Luc was tackling an Assault Course and trying Orienteering at Danbury Outdoor Centre. He really enjoyed the Assault Course and got top points for Orienteering. The weather turned chilly after my run after days of sunshine and above average temperatures.

**Sunday 1 April 2012.** Swimming pool is full and chlorine tablets have been added. In the morning, we went to Tesco to get Luc and Georgie some new clothes. Georgie has a pair of Peppa Pig wellington boots that were getting a bit whiffy as they had collected large amounts of sand and water over several weeks. George is now in possession of a sparkling pair of Mickey Mouse boots. I took Buddy for a nice walk at Benfleet Yacht Club in the late afternoon. It was a lovely spring day, bright and sunny but colder than it has been.

**Monday 2 April 2012.** Mount Etna has erupted. Luc really excited this morning by this natural disaster, particularly as nobody seems to have been hurt. For me, today was back to work after a busy weekend whilst Luc started the Easter School Holidays. I hit the scales this morning at 13 stone 8 pounds which is still overweight but considerably lighter than 3 months ago! Georgie wants to keep her Peppa Pig boots ([see yesterday](#)), but I could smell them in the garden as soon as I opened the patio door.

Georgie, Buddy and I went for a walk at the Yacht Club before dinner.

After dinner, I watched Man Utd beat Blackburn Rovers 2-0 and probably secure the League title for this season.

**Tuesday 3 April 2012.** I went for a run before work and did my best recorded time from Home to Lobster Smack in 14 minutes 15 seconds beating the previous best time by over 50 seconds and breaking the 15 minute barrier (and 14 minutes 30 seconds as well). I am now looking to break 14 minutes when I recover! As a cool down, Georgie, Buddy and I went for a walk round the block. When I returned from my run, Georgie had already put on her new boots and her uva swim suit so a day at the sand pit beckons! I wonder whether some of the athletes that had been suspected of taking performance enhancing drugs when their running times improved dramatically had actually just given up Strongbow and Scrumpy Jack for a couple of months.

At work, I learnt the protocol for creating site maps and have built , uploaded and registered the maps with google for my site, [www.buildingcontractors.me](http://www.buildingcontractors.me), [www.buildingcontractor.me.uk](http://www.buildingcontractor.me.uk) and Luc Russell.

It started raining tonight for the first time in ages and has not stopped! Just in time to threaten the Easter Bank Holiday.

I finished reading Eagle Strike by Anthony Horowitz. It's another enjoyable read and once again lots of action and a happy ending tinged with sadness.

# NEWS

**Wednesday 4 April 2012.** I went for a walk with Buddy on my own this morning. Georgie has a cough which kept her up last night and was content to get herself ready for Nursery. Luc has the Dentist today and so I am expecting drama later. Just heard that the Dentist is sick so drama put off for a week.

My dinghy insurance is due for renewal and having received a quote from a couple of companies between £33 and £40, Saga rang at work to tell me that their insurance is double the cost with an excess is £89. I tweeted accordingly.

A busy day at work due to holidays and sickness. I built some more web pages and registered the remaining sites on Google and Bing. Interested to see the affect on rankings over next couple of weeks.

When I got in Luc was out with his friends on his new roller skates. I opened the car door just as Luc flew into the driving seat. He tried to keep his dignity by shouting that he was going out with his Dad, but his friends were all laughing.

Georgie, Buddy and I went for a walk round the block before dinner. Luc was still out and getting better at roller skating already as walked past him.

**Thursday 5 April 2012.** I ended up insuring both my Pyranha Acrobat 275 kayak and Skipper 12 dinghy with Towergate Marden. Insuring both the dinghy fully comp and the kayak 3rd party was cheaper than Saga Insurance 3rd part dinghy insurance.

It is the last day of the tax year. In my old insurance world, today, along with Budget day, was one of the busiest of the year.

I went for a walk with Buddy and Georgie around the block this morning. Georgie is feeling a lot better today. I had my breakfast (Toast and Bramble Jelly) listening to Sky FM (<http://www.sky.fm/hit70s/>). It is the internet radio station I have been waiting about 32 years for, well since 1980 and the birth of the World Wide Web anyway! Absolutely brilliant.

Went to the Doyle Club meeting this afternoon held in a secret location in the City. It was overcrowded, poorly organised (ie no organisation) and unwelcoming. On getting home, I went for a walk at the Yacht club with Buddy and Georgie. It was very cold but bright and sunny; the tide was going out but the creek still had some water in it. A new catamaran was moored in the Creek and looked terrific.

Watched TV including an excellent Criminal Minds and completed yesterday's crossword as Julie had bought me a Telegraph yesterday but forgot to tell me. Cooked chicken and pasta preceded by Minestrone Soup. Macros do an excellent packet soup for £1.39 made by McDougalls which makes 20+ bowls and is low in fat and salt.

**Friday 6 April 2012.** It's Good Friday and in spite of the children bouncing on the bed, I was able to lie in until 7.30 am.

In the end, I wasted the morning apart from fixing the stand on my trailer and charging the battery for my electric engine. It's a lovely sunny day and I really should have done more.

Luc had his friend Mitchell in to play this morning and the two of them cadged sweets and crisps in between playing on the xbox, acting suspicious in the garden and watching a DVD.

I collected the flower pots from Jean & Jack (parent in laws) and then we had a family trip to the garden centre this afternoon. The highlight for me was buying some sun flower seeds. They remind me of my Aunts garden on Hantone Hill in Bathampton. A couple of years ago, we grew some spectacular sun flowers in our old house in Sussex Way.

# NEWS

**Friday 6 April 2012 (continued).** Luc fell out with Mitchell and a few other friends this afternoon, but by this evening he was playing happily with Megan, Holly and Bradley. Luc had a few falls on his roller skates today including a spectacular one when he tried to jump from the kitchen door into the garden.

We had fish and chips for dinner—very traditional. I un-followed Syd Moore, the talented local author, on Twitter after she retweeted on behalf of a loser who was bemoaning the Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday. There's little enough holding this country together, so an inclusive non religious Bank Holiday seems like something that should be supported.

**Saturday 7 April 2012.** Georgie, Buddy and I went for a walk round the block whilst Julie went for a cycle along Canvey Lake. It's a classic grey day and I'm putting off doing the gardening as long as possible.

Well, the border has been dug by me with help from Luc and "help" from Georgie and the plants have been planted. In addition, the tomato plants are potted in new pots, some sun flower seeds sown and some other unidentified flowers are in pots. Obviously, Julie chose the plants and did most of the subtle potting and planting.

This morning, we went to Homebase at Rayleigh and bought some more plants and special compost for the Camellia. I also bought a new strimmer and after using a strimmer at the end of its days for the last 4 years was surprised by the efficiency of the new one. There's a lot of earth by the washing line pole where there was once grass.

I went to the tip (recycling plant) and then the Library and got the next book in the Alex rider series Ark Angel. George fell asleep this afternoon, so we went to the sailing club for a walk to wear her out after her tea. By 6.30pm, I was exhausted!

Luc decided to ruin yet another day by his behavior this evening. He is grounded and won't be playing out until after the school holidays and then under parental supervision.

On the sporting front the Varsity Boat race was won by Cambridge after the race had to be stopped due to a swimmer in the Thames. Oxford broke an oar in a clash with Cambridge so really they should rerun it! In other news, Fulham beat Bolton 3-0. It's possible but unbelievable that Fulham might finish above Liverpool who drew at home again this time with Aston Villa.

**Easter Sunday 8 April 2012.** It's strange that some of the best days are actually full of ups or downs or even when very little happens. Today was a very good day and particularly after yesterday, Luc behaved himself.

The day started with the news that Nick had been taken ill at the boat race and had gone to hospital - incidentally he wasn't the phantom swimmer who ruined yesterday's Varsity Boat race. Anyway, he is on the mend and well enough to be left at home as Ned and Sue visited us today.

We intended going sailing at Benfleet Yacht Club and after an early lunch we were all set to go. After rigging the boat and launching the Skipper 12, Luc and I were already in the boat (so technically we did sail), but we managed to catch the rudder on the slip way and that was it for sailing today. After putting the boat away, we bought replacement screws and Ned was able to fix the rudder better than before using my drill for the first time (it must be 5 years old at least). Before leaving the club, we watched the end of the dinghy race and were surprised to see a yacht being towed down Benfleet Creek by an RNLI rib. Ned, Georgie and I went to Jack and Jean's to borrow some drill bits.

Later, we did a 300 piece jigsaw with everyone joining in (that was really special) and then Julie did a nice buffet for dinner. It was a lovely day, really relaxing and we all enjoyed it.

# NEWS

**Bank Holiday Monday 9 April 2012.** We woke up to rain. 7 Water Authorities have imposed a hose pipe ban already this year after a mild winter and a warm March. It's wet, damp and miserable today.

The weather put paid to the gardening and so Georgie and I took Buddy for a couple of walks at the sailing club when the rain eased off. I really love it there and there were times last summer when work was ok that I felt so happy there.

Luc built a model of the Titanic with Magnetix. I took pictures and created a new [web page](#) for his [site](#). I added some info about the disaster which is approaching the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this week. Luc wrote a script to reenact the sinking of the Titanic. He now wants to film it!

I was hoping to go to the Canvey Island derby this afternoon, but a combination of children and rain meant that I followed the scores on Twitter, instead. Canvey beat Concord Rangers 2 – 1.

Tonight, Fulham played Chelsea live on Sky Tv and came back from 1 down to draw 1-1 so I went to bed not as wound up as I usually am when Fulham play Chelsea.

**Tuesday 10 April 2012.** Back to work today and the sun was shining in spite of the fact that rain had been forecast. I was really geared up for work yesterday evening but really struggled this morning. I had a much better afternoon.

After work, the weather was still fine so Georgie, Buddy and I went for a walk at [Benfleet Yacht Club](#). There was a big black cloud that meant that for a few minutes it was pouring with rain in the creek but not on the river bank. I was reflecting that something similar had happened in Armoury way, Wandsworth where I caught the number 28 bus home from [Emanuel](#) school, when we got soaked!

Had a salad for dinner and watched Blackburn V Liverpool on Sky on my lap top. Liverpool won but the game but had their goalkeeper set off. Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool Manager, was his usual miserable self in the post match interview.

**Wednesday 11 April 2012.** Georgie awoke very early and having woken everyone up, then fell back to sleep. I took Buddy for his walk around the block on my own having put the rubbish out (recycling week).

I am reading "Ark Angel" by Anthony Horowitz having just finished "Scorpia" which ended dramatically. Both books are part of the Alex Rider series and really good easy reading. I'm not sure how I would have felt if I had read Scorpia and then had weeks or months to wait until the next book was published - probably the same as I did waiting for the next Harry Potter book or as I do for the next Power of Five book, due to be published in October 2012.

I had an ok work day. I took Buddy to the sailing club and had a lovely walk until I was challenged by some idiot as to whether I was a member. Considering the amount of time I spend at the club, it was a real cheek.

Watched QPR V Swansea and it was a poor game. QPR have a number of horrible players, particularly Taiwo, Ferdinand, Barton, Derry (suspended for this game) and (30 pieces of silver) Zamora whilst Swansea passed the ball endlessly to no purpose. QPR won 3-0 and will probably avoid relegation.

# NEWS

**Thursday 12 April 2012.** I woke early this morning as I was due to attend the Canvey Island FSB Network meeting. Buddy was surprised by my early start and refused to get up and so he missed out on his walk. The meeting was poorly attended probably due to a combination of the post Easter malaise, the roadworks at Sadlers Farm roundabout and Martin Engelman (Essex Will Writer) who emailed everyone who had attended previous events to complain about the new charge for breakfast.

I left my lunch at home so in my lunch hour, I went to Sainsbury in Rayleigh and tried to buy a commemorative DVD of the sinking of the Titanic for Luc. He is really into the events and has built several Magnetix models of it and performed a small ceremony of remembrance before bed yesterday. Unfortunately, there were no copies of the DVD available, so I'll have to buy one on line from Sainsbury or Amazon. I had a bag of miserable "Be good to yourself" crisps and a bottle of Coke Zero for lunch.

Work was ok and I was looking forward to taking Buddy for a walk this evening when the rain came. The rain was so heavy that the garden is sodden. Read my book this evening as there was not much on television. I had minestrone soup followed by chicken and pasta in Italian tomato sauce for dinner.

**Friday 13 April 2012.** Georgie woke in the night and so we all had a disturbed sleep. I slept in and consequently was running late for work. It poured down last night but was dry this morning, so I took Buddy for a walk round the block. Luc went to Multi Sports yesterday held at his school and really enjoyed it in spite of the showers and the fact that part of the day was spent in the gym. He was looking forward to today's activities, particularly as the playing out in the street ban is still in force. Luc seems a lot better when he isn't playing with Mitchell. It's fair to say that when the children are being good, they are both lovely. Luc had a good time but was upset that his friend Samuel is leaving St Katherine's to attend a school nearer to where he lives at the other end of Canvey Island (The Point).

I went to the sailing club this evening with Buddy and Georgie, but Georgie was tired after nursery and we didn't get very far on our walk. I was hoping to be challenged at the sailing club but nobody did today. Incidentally, I need an outboard bracket to fit to the Skipper 12 and still allow me to fix a rudder when the boat is used with a sail.

When I got back from the sailing club, Luc had been allowed out to play with amy and her brothers. Later, he played with Bradley, Megan and Holly without incidents!

After putting Georgie to bed, I watched Southampton V Reading which was a Championship decider. Jason Roberts who went to the same primary school as Mark Conway opened the scoring for Reading. Reading won 3-1, although Southampton had most of the shots and possession.

**14 and 15 April 2012.** Not the greatest weekend. It rained off and on and we didn't really do that much.

Watched the Chelsea against Tottenham FA Cup semi final on TV on Sunday. Chelsea won 5-1 but one of their goals didn't cross the line. If this is read 10 years from now, I don't suppose it would be credible to the reader that we couldn't tell whether a goal had been scored or not. When you see the technology at tennis and cricket and recently on the finishing line at cycling, it's incredible that the world's biggest sport leaves the decision as to whether a goal has been scored to the naked eye with 22 bodies in the way.

I didn't watch the other semi final on Saturday as it was on ESPN. I also missed the Grand National as well but it was the usual carnage and sadly a few horses died.

The rain on Sunday afternoon meant that we didn't go to the Funfair that had been set up at Waterside over the weekend. I'd intended combining it with the steam train rides.

# NEWS

**Monday 16 April 2012.** We are having the kitchen decorated. What this means in practical terms is that all the contents of the kitchen are in the dining room together with Georgie's pencil case, crayons, drawing book and pieces of paper (George calls it her homework). I've a small corner of dining room table to eat and use my lap top. If it was a bit warmer, I could retreat to the summer house but it is cold wet and miserable weather. I don't think Buddy is too impressed with the changes to his routine either as his food as been moved out of the kitchen.

When I got in from work after spending nearly 2 hours getting home due to the roadworks at Sadlers Farm roundabout, I had to admit that the kitchen already looks great. I didn't go for a walk this evening as I twisted my ankle over the weekend getting my drill out of the shed. I needed to drill holes into a coconut that Luc had chosen from Morrisons. At this rate, I might need to recharge the battery before the end of the year! Luc hadn't had coconut before but compared it favourably to a Bounty Chocolate Bar.

I had soup followed by the remains of the Chinese Take-Away from Saturday night for dinner and then watched a bit of the Arsenal V Wigan football match which Arsenal somehow managed to lose 2-1.

I finished the book "Snakehead" by Anthony Horowitz and think that this is the best book in the series so far. The plot as usual was fast paced but the subtle clues that were laid about the betrayal of Alex Rider and previously of his mother and father were very clever. This book had a bit more depth than the rest of the series. Definitely a 5 Star rating .

I slept badly as my ankle hurt and so read a bit of the next book in the Alex Rider series "Crocodile Tears"

**Tuesday 17 April 2012.** I woke up in agony and could barely stand on my injured ankle. Fortunately, after a couple of tablets, I was able to empty the rubbish bags (Black bag collection this week). Luc had built a superb house out of Magnetix. The traffic on the way to work was heavier than yesterday morning but I was still in work by 8.35 am due to an earlier start.

I had my favourite type of work to do today: updating the web page descriptions, editing sector, service and case study pages and putting in a news story as well as preparing data and last minute editing for our Newsletter. For some reason 170 people every month spend time on our contact page and then do not contact us. Using Google Analytics, I also discovered that some of our case studies bring in a fair number of visitors but the meta page descriptions on the web pages needed editing as what is appearing in the search engine results are not selling Ruggles & Jeffery as well as they could.

It was a big night of football with Champions League semi final (Bayern Munich V Real Madrid) and a full programme of games in the Championship (tier 2 of the English pyramid) which could decide if Coventry and Portsmouth are relegated and Reading promoted. Bristol City (who have struggled again this season) V West Ham (who are 3<sup>rd</sup> and were expected to romp the League having been relegated last season but invested in new players and kept most of their better players from last year) was the pivotal game. Coventry played Millwall, Portsmouth played Crystal Palace, Southampton who are second were away to Peterborough and Reading were at home to Nottingham Forest.

Coventry were in the top flight when I was a child and for most of my adult life whilst Portsmouth are facing enormous financial problems. I used to live in Emsworth close to Portsmouth so I have been following their results with interest for the last 22 years.

By the close of the evening, Reading were promoted but Southampton and West Ham must battle on. Bayern Munich won 2-1 in the first leg of the Champions League semi final. Tomorrow Chelsea play Barcelona in the other semi final.

# NEWS

**Wednesday 18 April 2012.** We had a disturbed night as Georgie woke at 12.30. Due to a misunderstanding, Georgie then slept the rest of the night peacefully in the spare room double bed.

My ankle is nearly 100% better so I was able to take Buddy out for a walk this morning. It's Georgie's first full day at Nursery today, so hopefully she will be brave and last the day.

I made some rash predictions on the football last night, but I got Reading's victory and West Ham's draw correct.

When I got home from work, Georgie had enjoyed Nursery today and liked her marmite sandwich that she had for lunch. Tonight, I watched Chelsea surprisingly beat Barcelona 2-1.

I made some changes to my website and my daily blogs will appear on blogspot.com with the archived news updated weekly.

**Thursday 19 April 2012.** Another disturbed night. Georgie woke at 3.30 am and I'm now wondering if there is something that's happening outside that's waking her up. After a busy day at her Nursery yesterday, Georgie was wide awake by 6.30 and wanting to talk about the things she did there. She also chatted about her trip to the beach with Luc, Mummy and Luc's friend Michael. When it stops raining, I will take her there after work.

It rained again today and I had a pretty miserable journey into work. The traffic was quite heavy and for some reason the work on the Sadlers Farm roundabout was centred on a stretch of road (A130 north of Sadlers Farm) where there is rarely any queues and did not need widening etc rather than the maze of flyovers and the roundabout that causes the mayhem every day.

I had a meeting in Southend this morning at the University of Essex. It went really well and I love being out of the office during the day in spite of the rain. The view of the estuary from the Southend high street always takes me by surprise. Before the meeting, I bought some sugar free Sherbet Lemons and Sherbet Strawberries from Mr Simms Olde Sweet Shoppe.

Had an ok afternoon and then drove home in the rain. Luc was out playing on his skateboard with Megan and Holly in spite of the rain.

I watched a super programme on ITV4 called "From the Ashes" about 1981 Ashes series. Wonderful to see Willis, Botham, Brearley and hear the magical voice of the brilliant Peter West.

**Friday 20 April 2012**

A bit of a surprise this morning - it's not raining and the sun is out. I took Buddy for a walk round the block before work.

I managed to book Luc on to the next 10 Saturday of activities at the fantastic Danbury Outdoor Centre. It means that I can run along the country lanes and B roads around Danbury Common whilst Luc is mountain biking, climbing, shooting arrows (the real thing not darts), orienteering, etc...

By 2pm the rain had started again and it was accompanied by thunder and lightning.

Another dreadful journey home because of the roadworks and then read my book. I finished Crocodile Tears tonight and it was another excellent Alex Ryder story by the genius Anthony Horowitz.

Our garden pool is still not working as the cost of fitting the heater seems to be spiralling out of control!

# NEWS

**Saturday 21 April 2012.** Before I got up, I read the first few pages of *Scorpia Rising* the final book in the Alex Ryder series by Anthony Horowitz. It was a really busy morning as I had to go to Tesco to get a present for Georgie to give to Lillie at her Birthday party. Whilst I was there, I picked up a digi-box for Luc. The UK has just switched over from analogue to digital TV and many televisions are now redundant without additional digital receivers.

The 2 big sports news stories are about allowing athletes (notably Dwayne Chambers) who have served a ban for taking drugs to be allowed to compete for Great Britain later this year at the London Olympics and the F1 Motor Racing Grand Prix which is taking place this weekend in Bahrain against a back-drop of civil unrest. The Dwayne Chambers issue is not only that he has been caught once but that he had retired from athletics after the ban was imposed, so he was not regularly drug tested during his ban which athletes in training normally are!

I went to the library at Canvey and took out "The Devil and His Boy" also by Anthony Horowitz before I dropped-off Georgie and Julie at Farmer Tom's play barn in Benfleet for Lillie's 3rd Birthday party. We managed to get nearly there before we realised that the present was still at home. Nevertheless, we still managed to get to the party in reasonable time for the 10.30 am start.

Luc and I then went in hunt of a model Titanic and managed to get one in Smyth's Toy Shop at Rayleigh. It is a Revell model so I'm expecting lots of glue and swearing next weekend! Luc and I drove on to Southend and took in the Activity Centre open day but it was cold, windy and Luc was a year too young to take part. It was nice at the seafront, though.

Georgie had a lovely time at the party even if she wasn't sure of the rules of pass the parcel. Having picked-up Julie and Georgie, we went to Homebase to pick up more paint for the kitchen and then on to the Post Office to collect a kitchen clock that couldn't be delivered, earlier.

After, a quick Dairy Lea roll, I went to the recycling centre whilst Luc played out with Mitchell, Abi and Scarlett against our wishes.

I took Buddy for a lovely walk in the late evening sunshine at Benfleet Yacht Club and had a nice chat with an experienced yachtsman. As I got home, it started to rain yet again!! In the car I found out that Bristol City had won their game today so Portsmouth and Coventry City are relegated. Fulham beat Wigan at home and are 9th in the table on the same number of points as Liverpool.

# NEWS

**Sunday 22 April 2012.** I was woken up by Georgie at 5.55am (digital clock) to glorious sunshine and it felt almost like summer.

I took Buddy for a lovely walk at the Yacht Club this morning. There was a man sitting by the slip way having breakfast rolls and coke reading his Newspaper in the early morning sunshine.

I made some rolls and sandwiches for a picnic before we all went off to Landbourne End Activity Centre open day. Luc went caving, kayaking and climbed on the low ropes across a pond. Luc was very wobbly on the low ropes and I managed to capture some excellent video footage parts 1 and part 2. Luc attracted quite a crowd of expectant parents as he tottered inches above the water. He made it across the pond 3 times by the hanging ropes, on a single plank and on a wire with single rope before succumbing to the hanging tyres.

Luc found he was quite good at kayaking and won the kayak race and really enjoyed it. We all did some pond dipping, visited the farm where we could stroke goslings, hens, piglets, lambs and kids (baby goats), went on a garden trail and rode in a cart pulled a pony. On the garden trail, we potted some pumpkin seeds and it will be interesting to see how they do. We all had a lovely time and we were exhausted by the time we got home at about 3.30pm.

I went to Jean & Jack's with the trailer to pick up a bench seat to house the pool pump and heater and also some plant pots. As I left their house, it poured down with enormous hail stones and wild gusts of wind. I had to stop twice as the bench turned over in spite of being tightly wedged between very heavy pots.

Manchester United drew with Everton 4-4 and so the title race between Manchester City and Manchester United is back on again after Manchester City beat Wolves 2-0 later in the day - Wolves are now relegated. Liverpool lost again and unbelievably have the same number of points as Fulham.

In 2012, football matches take place all over the weekend from Friday night to Monday night with most matches still taking place at 3pm on Saturday. A second set of league matches, domestic cup games and European games (Europa and Champions League) take place in the evenings from Tuesday to Thursday. Shortly after the BBC started screening live games on Friday nights in 1983, I predicted 7 day a week live football getting TV audiences from across the globe with hardly any one actually attending live games as they could view their team on TV. It's not there yet and the capacity of Premier League stadiums are still increasing, but it still might.

# NEWS

**Monday 23 April 2012.** Georgie has a bad cough and was choking in her sleep last night, so she slept in the spare bed. I had an eye test at the new health centre on Canvey at 9.10 am which meant that I was able to take Luc to school before going there. It was ok and the blurred vision and stinging caused only minor irritation . First signs are that things are ok.

After a sunny morning (I even got a bit sun burnt yesterday), by lunchtime it was raining again. I had a meeting with Tony (my boss and Commercial Director at Ruggles & Jeffery) this afternoon.

Drove home in torrential rain. The traffic was ridiculously busy even though or maybe because of an underpass from A13 to A130 that looked like it was now open.

Georgie had been to Nursery this morning and was tired and poorly. I sat reading in her room for nearly 30 minutes before she fell asleep.

I watched a bit of the Championship game between Leicester City and West Ham on my lap top. There is a slight delay in streaming matches over the internet so I am in danger of receiving goal alert Tweets before actually seeing the goal. I listen to a radio station called Talk Sport in my car and follow one of their sports reporters (the Moose) who is a West Ham fan on Twitter. Anything other than a West Ham win would mean Southampton would be promoted and West Ham would go into the end of season play-offs. West Ham won 2-1 so it's all down to next Saturday's matches.

**Tuesday 24 April 2012.** Had a rubbish night's sleep which featured Georgie waking up several times and a milk man delivering milk at 3.20 am! It's raining again and the hose pipe ban might be lifted if this carries on. Apparently it's heading for the coldest April since 1981 and this morning was windy, wet and cold.

The good news is my weight is now down to 13 stone 2 pounds, so I'm closing in on breaking the 13 stone barrier and significantly I am 1 and a half pounds lighter than Henry Cooper when he fought Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali as he became) for the first time in 1964. My target is 11 stone 10 pounds - the same weight as Martin Peters (Spurs, West Ham, Norwich and World Cup winning England footballer famous for "ghosting" into scoring positions unseen, being described by the late England Manager, Sir Alf Ramsey, as being "10 years ahead of his time" and for being a wonderful footballer). It might be a struggle to achieve this target as I struggled to make this weight even when playing regular competitive sport.

Had an ok day at work and surprisingly easy drive home. I went to the Yacht Club with Buddy and Georgie for a walk. After the rain earlier, it was a lovely evening and we had a very nice leisurely walk.

I watched an amazing second leg of the Champions League semi final between Barcelona and Chelsea before Georgie woke up unwell at 9pm and I had to stop viewing. Chelsea had their captain John Terry sent off for a bit of sly thuggery, had the other centre half (Gary Cahill stretchered off) and were 2-0 down before half time. Surprisingly, Chelsea pulled one back just before half time and having laid siege on Chelsea's goal for 45 minutes of the second half, Fernando Torres who had come on as substitute and looked awful, then ran from his own half to score!!!! Chelsea win 3-2 on aggregate. Terrific game.

Luc had created an excellent PowerPoint presentation about the sinking of the Titanic that I will put on to his [website](#) tomorrow.

# NEWS

**Wednesday 25 April 2012.** Georgie's cough has got worse and so we both slept on the sofa bed so that she could be propped up. She was uncomfortable all night and neither of us slept well. She woke this morning and seemed a lot better whilst I was shattered.

More rain and another ok day at work.

I took Buddy for a short walk at the sailing club after work. Buddy seemed to sense that it was about to rain again and was a very reluctant companion.

Georgie was ill again just after she went to bed and was sick everywhere. She then went downstairs and having sat down quietly for 10 minutes was running around like nothing had happened.

I watched another terrific game of football as Bayern Munich beat Real Madrid on penalties in the second of the Champions League semi finals.

I completed the Telegraph cryptic crossword, killer sudoku and kakuro.

**Thursday 26 April 2012.** Georgie is still poorly and so a trip to the doctor is in order.

My weight is now down to 13 stone 1 pound, but significantly my big fat beer belly which I have grown to love over the last 20 years has nearly gone. I'm still a bit podgy but the scales are moving in the right direction!

I took Luc to pre school this morning and he seemed quite happy although a little tired. On the radio on the way to work they mentioned a new report that concluded that mobile phones don't cause harm and that the report was based on aggregating multiple pieces of research. I was very excited that my favourite bit of Statistics featured on the news - how sad.

In between working hard, I exchanged tweets with Syd Moore (the author of the "Drowning Pool"). At lunchtime, I tried to find somewhere for Luc and I to go kayaking together but it is proving difficult.

I went to to Macro on the way home.

Georgie is still unwell. Luc's behaviour has been pretty poor recently and he has caused rows with neighbours. He is not allowed to play out as he can't be trusted to play nicely without an adult supervising him. He created a load of fuss before he did his homework tonight.

I watched "New Tricks" on television and completed the Telegraph cryptic crossword.

# NEWS

**Friday 27 April 2012.** Wow, we all had a decent night's sleep for the first time this week and I woke up feeling better than in ages. I took Buddy for a walk round the block in the early morning sunshine.

Georgie is still coughing, but the Doctor was confident the cough would just go as quickly as it arrived.

My weight is now 13 stones 0 pounds.

Had a ridiculously easy drive into work and was there in 20 minutes. Karen (Julie's friend) was moving today, so Julie had to pick up Mason to take him to school with Luc. In spite of her cough, Georgie was looking forward to Nursery.

Ok day at work and I created some ace case studies for some of Ruggles & Jeffery's work at Virgin Active.

Buddy, Georgie and I went for a nice walk in the evening sunshine at the sailing club after work. The tide had just turned and was going out but Benfleet Creek looked lovely. Georgie was exhausted after Nursery and went straight to sleep.

Watched "Life Stories" which is a chat show hosted by Piers Morgan. In this episode he interviewed Carl Vorderman about her life. Julie reminded me of the time that we stayed in Bembridge (Isle of Wight) in October when we first met. It was quite cold and I suggested that we went to bed in the afternoon. Julie was really miffed when I went to bed with paper and pen so that I could join in with Countdown!

**Saturday 28 April 2012.** Luc's Danbury Outdoors Saturday morning activities started today. He went mountain biking and BMXing in the pouring rain whilst I ran a circular route of 6.2 miles from the Outdoor Centre to Butts Green and back. It was a lovely undulating run on the country roads and I even had to run through a ford. It took me 1 hour 13 minutes 39 seconds so I wasn't exactly pushing it. I read my book (Scorpia Rising by Adam Horowitz) whilst I was waiting for Luc to finish and stiffened up.

Luc fell off the mountain bike into a big puddle but he had a great time. Fortunately, I had 2 towels and a fleece to dry Luc and wrap him up.

We all went to Wicks and Homebase to look at kitchen tiles, sinks, taps and work surfaces. I went to the library and took out the "Falcon's Malteser" by Anthony Horowitz - it's the first Diamond Brother story so I'll see what I think of that series.

It was the last day of the regular Championship season and West Ham missed out on promotion as Southampton beat already relegated Coventry 4-0. West Ham, Blackpool, Birmingham and Cardiff will now take part in the play-offs. Southampton and Reading were promoted. Fulham got thrashed by Everton 4-0, just as I was thinking they might finish above both Everton and Liverpool. Canvey Island FC won 5 - 0 but remain in the Ryman Premier League having failed to make the play-offs.

Luc went out to play with Mitchell, Megan and Holly and got soaked. There are now 4 sets of his clothes in the washing machine just from today.

# NEWS

**Sunday 29 April 2012.** After another disturbed night with Georgie waking up at midnight and Luc wanting to sleep in the spare bed with me, I woke up to more rain. I'm starting to worry that the pool will overflow!

I finished reading "Scorpia Rising" by Anthony Horowitz last night and the writing style is a little different, at times judgemental and a lot more detached particularly at the end of the book than the other Alex Rider stories. In this, the last book of the series, the reader is made far more aware of the tragedies that have beset Alex Rider.

Anyway, it's an excellent read with a lot of twist and turns, but I feel the ending was difficult to write as I'm not sure that the author knew when was the right time to say goodbye to Alex Rider.

I spent most of the day building the Titanic with Luc - it's a Revell model. The set came with a big and a small version and the small one is taking ages. Still with all the rain, it's a welcome distraction. Whilst Luc was watching CBeebies, he complained that there were too many adults on children's TV - 2 words Luc: Junior Showtime.

Chelsea beat QPR 6-1 today and Spurs beat Blackburn 2-0. Blackburn were actually worse than QPR!

By early evening the Titanic was built, the rain had stopped and Luc played happily with Megan and Mitchell.

**Monday 30 April 2012.** Back to work today and the weather was bright and sunny with a glorious blue sky.

Had a meeting with Paul Sullivan from Intergage - a web marketing agency. He was very interesting and came out with lots of ideas that will be useful to me and Ruggles & Jeffery.

Roy Hodgson, the former Fulham manager who took them to the final of the Europa League is being interviewed by the Football Association for the role of England Manager. It's a surprise as nearly every press report suggested that the Manager would be current Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp. Hodgson's current team West Bromwich Albion like Fulham under him are very well organised. Hodgson left Fulham to be Manager of Liverpool but was not so successful and was dismissed inside 6 months. A well organised side has brought success to the German national team for the past 40 years, so he just might be the right man for the job.

Tottenham have played some great football this season but their form has dropped off dramatically recently apart from yesterday. Harry Redknapp has gained a reputation as a "wheeler dealer" on the transfer market (a term he doesn't like), but both Southampton and Portsmouth who he managed in recent years went into administration after he left. Whether true or just my perception, Spurs seem to have a very large back-room staff and I wonder whether the FA could have afforded or were willing to take on Harry's team. For some reason, Stuart Pearce's position appears sacrosanct and I'm not sure that Harry would have wanted to have his number 2 forced on him.

Big match on TV as Manchester City beat Manchester United 1-0 to go level on points at the top of the Premier League but with a better goal difference. 2 games to play and the title is still up for grabs. It's been an exciting season at the top and bottom.

# NEWS

**Tuesday 1 May 2012.** An earlier start to the day than normal as it was dustbin day and I had a meeting re the estimating success rate and the costs of estimating. Some baffoon had left their rubbish bag out overnight in Palmerston Road so their was rubbish strewn all over the place.

Luc had an appointment at the Lighthouse Centre today to discuss his ADHD. He looked a bit of a sight as he had fallen off his scooter yesterday and had a cut over his eye and cuts and bruises on his legs and arms. I met Julie and Luc there and it went ok.

It's been confirmed that Roy Hodgson is the new England football manager. I expressed my guarded satisfaction on his potential appointment yesterday and I hope he brings about the start of a summer of sporting success ahead of the 2012 London Olympics.

A new regime at home for Luc and he has to be in at 7.15pm and then can read quietly before bed. As it was the Doctor's directive, Luc seems to have accepted it!

Unbelievably, Fulham beat Liverpool at Anfield tonight 1-0!

**Wednesday 2 May 2012.** Georgie woke up again in the night and ended up in the spare bed. Her cough seems no better at night, but it's barely noticeable during the day.

The traffic layout has changed again at Sadlers Farm roundabout and I ended up going down the A13 and having to take A132 to work via Basildon. Consequently, I was late.

The Sun newspaper has done a front page news item on Roy Hodgson's inability to pronounce his "r"s. Clearly, that will be the difference between success and failure at the forthcoming European Championships.

A more productive day at work.

All sorts of drama awaited me when I got home. The pool heater is installed but not working and Karen and Steve (2 parents) had a fight in the playground when Julie picked Luc up from school.

Luc did his homework without making much fuss. It was to add up the numbers on a telephone keypad and Luc did it easily.

Watched Spurs thrash Bolton 4-1 away. I think it's now Wolves, Bolton and Blackburn for the drop. Wigan play Blackburn on Monday, whilst Bolton play West Brom and QPR play Stoke on Sunday.

**Thursday 3 May 2012.** Julie wasn't feeling well, so I dropped Luc off at school. It was raining and the traffic on Canvey was ridiculous so I had to drop the car off in a side street and run with Luc to school. The snotty headteacher was in the play ground to look down her nose at the children and parents as they arrived. Consequently, I arrived a bit late for work this morning.

In spite of my diet, I have a yearning for pizza that only a Friday night Dominos pizza will solve. There's something wrong when I'm looking forward to a meal that I probably won't actually have tomorrow.

This evening, I had chicken and pasta for the third day running for dinner.

Luc did some excellent homework again.

Watched a very poor game of football as West Ham bullied Cardiff 2-0 in the first leg of the Championship play-offs.

# NEWS

**Friday 4 May 2012.** I slept very well, probably because Georgie slept through the night. I finished reading "The Falcon's Malteser" by Anthony Horowitz before I got up. It was a very light easy read and the pages seem to fly past. Consequently in the last 7 days, I've read "The Devil and His Boy" which was an historical drama - my first ever book in this genre - set in the reign of Elizabeth 1 and, of course, "Scorpia Rising". I really enjoyed all three books even though they are very different.

It's a Bank Holiday weekend and the weather looks like being cold and cloudy. As I've got plans for us all to spend the next few days outside, it isn't looking promising.

I had my mid year review at work and it went ok. It certainly has got me inspired to achieve more in the next 3 months but particularly in the next month. I'm hoping to create some video content.

The traffic at Sadlers Farm tonight on the A130 was really light largely due to an accident or incident just north of the junction of the A129 and A1245. It delayed my journey by 10 minutes but I sailed through the rest of my journey. I could see tow trucks, police and fire engines with hazard lights flashing but I couldn't tell what had happened.

We are now expecting frost tonight (in May) so I put the plant pots into the summer house. The tomato plants are already looking poorly.

My treat for dinner is an Indian take away from the Village Balti House. It was absolutely brilliant.

Luc played with Harvey and Mitchell this evening. Luc played in Harvey's garden and ended up watching a movie at Harvey's house - he really enjoyed himself and outstayed his welcome!

**Saturday 5 May 2012.** I woke up to pouring rain and was worried that Luc and my trip to Danbury would be ruined. However, it hadn't rained at Danbury and stayed dry all morning although the ford had flooded when we drove round to take a look at it before checking in at the Danbury Outdoor Centre.

Luc did bushman skills and archery and did really well. He really enjoyed the archery. Whilst Luc was doing his activities, I did the same run around Danbury as last week but set off far too fast and subsequently suffered all the way round without going that much faster overall. The course took me 1 hour 13 minutes and 9 seconds which was 30 seconds faster than last week. There were loads of cyclists on the roads and at one point I was zig-zagging across the road to avoid the bikes.

In the afternoon, we all went to Basildon and bought clothes for Luc's and George's "Build A Bear". We also bought Luc some lego with Luc's W.H. Smith's voucher.

I watched the FA Cup Final in which Chelsea beat Liverpool 2-1. Chelsea were 2-0 up and cruising to victory, but Liverpool substitute Andy Carroll nearly turned it around. The Cup Final controversially kicked off at 5.15pm which suited our family timetable.

I had the rest of yesterday's excellent Indian take-away for dinner.

Luc played with Charlie, Harvey, Mitchell and Megan this evening. He also built his lego.

# NEWS

**Sunday 6 May 2012.** We went to Southend to do the Rotary Pier Walk. It was raining and windy as we drove to Southend, but fortunately the rain stopped but even so it was cold and windy. We met Chris (Julie's Aunt) and we walked all the way to the end of the pier and back. Georgie managed the walk as well.

We stopped off at the end of the pier for an ice cream and looked at the in-shore life boats. I had to yomp most of the way back to the car as we had only put 2 hours on the parking meter. It was an off-shore wind blowing so it was a less happy walk back. We were all given medals for completing the walk. There was lots going on in the estuary. As the tide was in there were lots of dinghies and yachts sailing including lasers, Dart 16s and lots of small keel boats with an S on the sail.

We had a picnic in the car and then went to Tesco for a few bits of shopping and clothes for the children, the bill was more than £100.

Jack and Jean called in to say hello before dinner. Fulham won again, this time beating Sunderland 2-1 at home to go eighth in the Premier League table. Elsewhere, Manchester City beat Newcastle to top the Premier League table with 1 game to play.

**Monday 7 May 2012.** Georgina woke at 3am and wanted to chat before she eventually went back to sleep nearer to 4am. She also wanted me to read whilst she got back to sleep. I was very tired this morning, but as I had promised Luc a trip to Mersea Island, I got up earlier than I would have liked.

I cut the lawn for the first time in ages and tried to fix the pool heater. The grass looks great but the pool heater still isn't working.

I made rolls for the picnic and then we all set off for Mersea Island including Buddy. It's a lovely drive to Mersea Island on the B1026 and B1025 and we listened to Five Go to Mystery Moor and Five On A Treasure Island. We decided to go to the Country Park at East Mersea where it was very windy and quite cold but the children still had a good time on the beach and Buddy enjoyed running round. We went home via Danbury in order to drive through the ford but then got stuck next to a 4x4 with an enormous caravan!

When we got home, the weather was sunny and quite warm. I had yet another attempt at getting the pool to work. I played a bit of football in the garden with Luc in the evening sunshine.