



Christmas 2005

Whatho everyone, it's the Heppell's Christmas Newsletter from Brightlingsea again;

Past editions: www.heppell.net/christmas

Well, **yo ho ho** would seem to cover it well... And perhaps **yikes** too. A year ago... everything seemed to be progressing as per usual: house unfinished, motorbike in pieces, cat getting fatter, boat getting faster, life rushing by... ..but then a kind of collective madness seemed to grab at the whole Brightlingsea Heppell family and EVERYONE has changed jobs, lives, everything. Yikes indeed! We will have to go to a **fourth** page. But the family is still together, so don't panic, and everyone seems pretty happy, so let's get straight to details:

Sailing has been great. The Oyster 37 **Cracker's** repairs from the previous year (we ladled in carbon fibre and epoxy to sort things out as you may recall) made her a lot stiffer and noticeably faster. We had a great season, second in class at Ramsgate Week and flippin quick at home. Our spinnaker peels are the talk of the town (one way or the other!). We did have the odd moment with ropes and rubbish caught under the boat, but really we were generally unstoppable. Alarmingly, we averaged a steady litre of Pimms per race day (après race only though, of course). The boat is still in the water (we were filming on her last weekend!) and she continues to consume lorry loads of gear, Kevlar and now Winter Pimms, but



the usual gang of 10 to 12 friends pile on board for the races and we wouldn't miss a minute of it. Next year we have a VERY ambitious programme and new mast. Watch for the 2006 newsletter! The **big RIB** has a new more whopping outboard and much fun has been had as various kids and mates are towed around on wakeboard or inflatable donut. The Brightlingsea One Design **Aina** had a year off, but we were delighted to meet up with some of her previous owners (one from 1940s!), who we took for a sail in Cracker too and discovered more of our BOD's history. We enjoyed all kinds of waterborne Trafalgar events and parties all year too. Kismet Hardy?



Christmas Newsletter 2005 from The Heppell family in Brightlingsea

The Anchorage, George Avenue, Brightlingsea, Essex. CO7 ONE +44 (0)1206 30 40 38

page 1 of 4

Work has become VERY interesting (see below) but having set up a family business (Heppell.net Ltd). none of you will be surprised to hear that we are currently exploring buying an "office" in for it Cowes and have a bid in for one overlooking the river, next to the chain ferry. Some office! The fact that it happens to sleep 12 is just a fortunate coincidence, (honest!), but we are in a race with others to buy it.. so wait to hear how it went next year. Meanwhile, we are building a "workshop" for the business in Brightlingsea too... Hmm. Funny old company; but it would be, with such an eclectic project list, wouldn't it?

Skiing is back on again this year and we are all decamping to the Three Valleys for Christmas and New Year (we leave this week, back next year!) with a couple of Cracker sailors joining all of us too. Hot buttered rum, vin chaud, kids, partners, and peace. Sounds like heaven and at Val Thorens you are pretty close to heaven, it's SO high. There is good snow there already. Mmmm.



Juliette had visited so many "way cool" schools as a journalist and PR person that she finally succumbed to the inevitable and signed up for a PGCE course to become a secondary teacher. Like her parents before her she seems to be drawn to the "liveliest" schools but is thriving and gaining great marks (for herself AND her students!). So that is the **first** "new life" for this newsletter. As usual she and George are moving again, this time from Fulham to Putney (regular readers will detect a slow creep Westwards). Their cat Gizmo is now resigned to all this travel, and indeed himself wandered off for a few days just to maintain the itinerant life. Juliette has been racing on Cracker this year; it's great to see her afloat competitively again, and loving her new work too. She was born to teach, although the workloads are scary. George's accountancy exams have progressed well this year too.



Melissa (right), as promised, ended her picture editor for Yachts and Yachting job. With crew Bex (left) she is now a full time sailor, like boyfriend Simon, with a bit of web and video work to subsidise their isotonic rations. Melissa bought a house (left) on Portland in Dorset this year (with quite a bit of help from parents...) and it is a lovely Portland Stone cottage right by the National Sailing Academy and the site of



the 2012 sailing venue for the Olympics. Perfick! Moving in was slightly wobbled by a burst central heating system on the first night. On the bright side all the steam helped strip the wallpaper; pity it didn't need stripping, sigh. But they have been slaving at the decorating and it is looking very cottagey and lovely again. During the year the two of them raced all over: Hyeres, Palma, Keil, Poland.. what fun. Dad is deeply envious, but at least his zoomy and spacious car gets to go to all these exotic places without him. Hmmm, but Melissa's is the **second** "new life" for this newsletter.

Toby was employed within days of his last exam, to our general amazement (what happened to all those long hot post-study summers of yesterday?). But his job is **brilliant!** He is the dinghy editor for an on-line based sailing publication "The Daily Sail" (www.thedailysail.com). With long term girlfriend and muse Cali he is based on Southsea seafront and lives on broadband, so to speak, wandering the country, and sometimes the world, to scoop the best stories for his daily deadlines. And they pay him too!

There is no justice in the world. It is the perfect job, even if he does have to use a PC (eugh) instead of his beloved Mac. Dad is again deeply envious + quite proud. And, of course, Toby's is the **third** "new life" for this newsletter.



Carole is the **fourth**. Life in Ultralab had become a bit stale after 13 years and she thought it was time to be re-potted. A pay rise helped her to decide and she left Ultralab in November to join the new charity that Stephen and others had set up to run the huge virtual school for disengaged youngsters "Notschool". She is now based up the road at Stansted, right by the airport. Notschool is exactly what it says on the tin, so to speak: it is NOT school, but it is a whopping on-line community that has been spectacularly successful at re-engaging the disaffected. It is hard to imagine more satisfying (or more stressful!) work. She takes with her a vast experience of running big scale ground breaking on-line projects and already Charlie Clarke is exploring with the team whether they can apply the

"Notschool way" to young offenders in prison. Carole has, as ever, also had an excellent year navigating Cracker to her great race results; we have thus hit relatively few things this year although we did have a couple of bashed heads. As we go to press, Carole is exploring a new car - next year you will know whether her quest for MPG or Stephen's for MPH have won in that choice!

Stephen had left Ultralab too, after some 22+ years and instead of the intended rest, book, snooze, etc., was head hunted to start up a new research team in Dublin. He was there working a 9 day week and 28 hour day right through the summer, until about October, but by then he was being seduced into so much other work all round the world that he has largely returned to London most days and is fully living in Brightlingsea once more. Hurrah. And no more weekly (or weakly) commuting by Ryan Air - double hurrah! Stephen's work now is wonderfully eclectic: designing a new South Bank museum, helping design a new school in Yokohama, steering a new TV channel, sitting on heaps of boards (including the one responsible for Cowes On-Line!!), advising the DG at the BBC (!), developing a new "portfolio GCSE" where the kids define what they learn, podcasting, making a few TV programmes, advising governments, defining "learning gains" for the World Bank et al, sitting on the film committee at BAFTA, and so much more. But the big change is working for himself and he **loves** it (as does the bank!). But, there is still time for sailing, just. Stephen's is the **fifth** "new life" for this newsletter!



Lawks-a-mercy, only the cat has consolidated his long term job as full time door stop. He remains in training for this taxing role. Hopefully next year will see a bit of staying put for the rest of us too. And we might finish the house, maybe....

So, after a quarter century of stability, 2005 has brought five new lives, two new houses, and is about to give way to one New Year throughout which we wish you peace and delight. Oh, and a very merry Christmas too, to old friends and to those of you from Don and Brenda's address list, and from our many rather unexpected website readers too. Keep us posted with your news, we love to keep up to date with you and yours, all around the world.

emails: stephen@heppell.net carole@heppell.net juliette@heppell.net melissa@heppell.net toby@heppell.net no, the cat doesn't have an email yet; if you could eat it, he would.

websites: www.heppell.net <http://www.heppell-marriott.co.uk> www.thedailysail.com