



Christmas 2007

Rollicking Reindeer! it's the Heppell's Christmas Newsletter from Brightlingsea yet again;

Past editions: www.heppell.net/christmas

Hello friends: old friends, work friends, new friends Don and Brenda's friends, Facebook friends, family friends, Internet friends around the world, phone friends, **sailing** friends and just friends.

Happy Christmas to you all.

Well. We'd better start with the Maths. We are down one cat Magic and up one baby Amelie. So a few surprises this year, but a sense of settling



down across the family with everyone working and playing hard and spare time squeezed into minutes rather than days or weeks. We'd better expand on the fab news first: Melissa and Simon are now proud parents of baby Amelie - born 30th June, 8lb 10oz, half a metre tall (long?). All well. M&S dote on her, and indeed we all do - she has already been in the winning team in two sailing races (left), is doing underwater play at the local swimming pool and showing all the signs of being a full-on gorgeous water baby. With mum and dad both sailing in Olympic classes - Simon won medals in Sydney and Athens - and Grandparents all sailing too, she is presumably one to watch in 2024 or thereabouts. Meanwhile she is alert, giggly, strong (!), beautiful, doesn't sleep and of course is spoilt rotten. Perfick.



The whole family (above) will all be skiing together over Christmas and New Year in the French Alps, Amelie included although she will be tobogganing presumably - the Three Valleys seem to have heaps of snow this year. Carole and Stephen are taking the ship's van out (right) with all the stuff: skis, pram, cot, boots, booze, puds, crackers, nappies, and some flippin' enormous rockets for New Year celebrations (well, you have to make an effort).

Everyone else arrives by various means after that but without the explosives. Hopefully the van will return filled to near bursting with tasty things French. The family certainly will.





Christmas 2007

Sailing saw yet another lovely year. The new IMX40 Cracker is fairly flying and we had a blissful Cowes Week - indeed the whole season was pretty good - and windy - and the boat was properly sorted by the end with some very good results. The whole thing is now awash with computers so could probably do better on its own! This time of year she is safely tucked up in St Katherine's by the Tower of London and earning her keep as the company office decked in Christmas lights which she rather enjoys - alongside Frank Sinatra's old boat. see phone blog at <http://phone.heppell.mobi>



The **house** isn't yet finished (hah!) but having acquired a white van we can at least chat to builders, so this is some kind of progress. **George** and **Juliette** (below) have been far more successful on the house front having bought a delightful place in Hampton, almost (!) on the river and so now are bankrupted by paying their own debts instead of their landlord's. Their enormous cat (surely part panther?) seems delighted - a park behind offers all sorts of fauna treats for late lunch. Teachingwise, Juliette's form class (now 8L) are still excellent and she is immensely proud of them. They are taking part in education projects with ICT-everyone!, not to mention finding the time to squeeze in a global BAFTA project!! Juliette is also working with the BBC



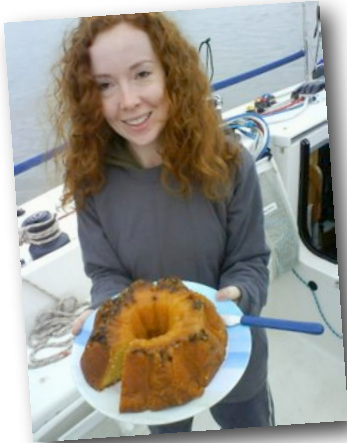
education department and therefore, like her dad, is constantly trying to fit more hours in the day than there really are! George, inspired by the "great Heppell change year of 2006" decided to join the bandwagon and moved jobs to Unilever this year. He is rather thriving and valued there and has already had a merger thrown at him to manage. His current project though, is choosing outfits for the pirate themed xmas party.....rather apt we all thought!

Toby and **Cali**: are still enjoying Southampton and indeed we all assembled there for a pre-Christmas meal together. Toby has made quite a name for himself writing at the subscription-yachting-website The Daily Sail and is now adding digital photography to his



Christmas 2007

portfolio - he figures he might as well take the pictures while he is there for the interviews - but he has an eye for it, which helps. Dad though is rather proud of Toby's writing and feels the newsletter will be safe in his hands as senility sets in. Cali (with yummy rum cake, left) is enjoying her new job much more - a bit nearer to her graphics roots at last and together they are cooking



the turkey for the family's mountaintop Christmas dinner.

They are considering a move West at some future point, so the centre of gravity for us all seems to be heading South and West.

Toby missed his 49er, but not for long and now owns a foiling Moth (oo er! - right) which is about as



amazing as any boat can be. Moths are tippy enough - as you can see

here - you can imagine what adding lifting foils has done to all that. Fun though (search for "foiling Moths" on Youtube). Cali has been a bit of a regular on Cracker this year too - and a handy one at that - we look forward to her being on board even more next season.

Melissa and Simon: apart from (see page 1) being parents are.... well, being parents is such a big part of Melissa and Simon's life just now that this is almost the whole story for a few months. But the cottage is almost finished (sounds familiar?) and a whole new world of underwater baby-swimming, designer prams and mini-yoga seems to be opening up. Simon is still 49ering **very** competitively of course, but has also got the foiling bug - in his case with an



equally mad RS600 on foils - throwing in trapezing just to make the impossible racing boat even more difficult! Meanwhile they also have Blue Fin - a rather stately long keel little wooden yacht which, er, needs a few finishing jobs to be done (sounds even more familiar, oh dear). But Amelie, as you see here, is a proper little person already - how fast they grow, and her parents are already eyeing Melissa's old winning Mirror, which is still winning for its current owner. Melissa's car blew up during the year - she had lent it to Toby rather

cunningly so that she could get a bigger one (pram etc)! Simon wisely is looking for a smaller one! Christmas and New year will be fun for all - and it will be interesting to see how Amelie takes to the snow. Stephen is polishing the toboggan runners so it may not just be Amelie hurtling down the piste on it.



Christmas 2007

Carole: (seen here "navigating") has had a busy year as usual - 1,000 children excluded from school by behavior or circumstances take a bit of looking after although they are all lovely once they are back on track and enjoying learning. The Inclusion Trust thrives, despite no one much seeming to care about these unlucky children, so her drive to Stansted each day starts earlier and finishes later, but it is hugely satisfying work. On Cracker Carole has once again navigated us out of trouble and into success - a highlight was the complete collapse of the computer systems just short of the horribly-close-together rocks and wrecks that mark the Needles on the Isle of Wight. We just about nipped through unscathed "Um - find a bigger boat and follow it" are not normally words we get from the navigation station! Having been around the cottage for help and support early on in Amelie's life Carole is rather enjoying being Granny C since and spends a LOT of time in various baby and toy shops. Amazingly all the things that were absolutes in the 1980s turn out to be inappropriate in the 2000s, so there is much new Mumology to learn. Apparently rum is out nowadays. **Stephen:** is just doing what he always does - rushing around the world, helping here and there in an ever broadening portfolio of fab projects: developing future TV, building new learning spaces, enjoying geeky stuff, doing TV + radio stuff, and steering policy in a host of countries. As some of his project teachers said to him, having stayed 2 years after they were supposed to retire "If you think we're going to miss a moment of this - we've waited all our lives to have this much fun" and that is pretty much how Stephen feels. This time of year he is largely based on the boat at St Katherine's weekdays, and can be found pedalling distractedly round Westminster on his bike, from meeting to meeting, project to project. He worries that he might be turning into Young Mr Grace (if you still remember "Are You Being Served"), but no nurse yet. Away from work it is a simple recipe of family, boat, car and it seems to keep him cheerful. Indeed, why wouldn't it! He hasn't crashed the car yet.



So... it has been a rather a good year, once again (phew!). As ever, it would be good to hear from any and all of you on this circulation list - so see if you can't pop in to St. Katherines, or Brightlingsea, Cowes, wherever... or email us, or look for us on Skype, or iChat, or phone, Facebook, or txt us, or visit the website. Have a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful shiny new year won't you?

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Amelie doesn't have an email yet; but she does bash the keyboard, chuckle and dribble - quite like Grandad really

websites: www.heppell.net www.notschool.net www.thedailysail.com