

# Heppell Christmas 2012

jolly holly, puds and beer, 2013's nearly here!...

...well, we could deliver an 80,000 word Ph.D thesis sized newsletter on this year's events - so much has happened. Maybe this is the way now that we are more than a decade into the 3rd Millennium - pace, change, scale, unexpected stuff? No wonder we are all exhausted by it and there are 988 more years to go! But these are also exciting, delightful, challenging times and we wouldn't miss a minute of it all. So, let's get started with this year's family news of wedding, boats, jobs, kids, did we mention boats, cars, skis and more, for friends old & new, on & off the grid, tiny & ancient who annually read this or have it read to them, online or off:

We start, of course, with **George** and **Juliette**. As promised in last year's letter, **they married** - a wonderfully playful February wedding in an ancient Suffolk barn with heaps of friends and both families. The event saw us all involved: from Melissa baking the (fab) cake and creating lots of details, (which included bridesmaiding with Amelie) through Stephen who was let loose on the lights flowers and booze (so that everyone was lit up, one way or another), to Carole who did so so so much mega-organising. Both families were all there in "haven't seen you for ages" numbers, Pat was a perfect celebrant. George's bros were busied too.



The result? A magical sans-cravate day of ice-cream-serving tricycles, dressing up boxes, stalls of oysters, sweets, seafood and more, cakes, scones and cream, chocolate fountains, champagne and great wines, games galore, a wonderful everyone-up-dancing live and indefatigable band, and so many smiles that our faces ached for a week. At the centre of it all George and Letty looked stunning, delighted, and simply made for each other. A perfect day that folk are still talking about. **"This is how weddings should be!"** said on email afterwards. Stephen may have slightly (!) over-catered on the Chablis and Champagne, which we are still drinking - yum!... Only the enormously rotund cat Gizmo was unmoved by all this. Well, he can't easily.



Beyond that (!) G&J have been all over the place: walking in the Peak district, on last min dash to Meribel with friends, up to Newcastle to visit George's nanny Alice, and Letty has added Madrid and Barcelona for a school design project, Spain again with her school students, cycling in Holland with G and the parents, joint presentations with Dad (which he loves), sunny evening chugs up and down the Thames in the trusty launch Crusader, (they even go to John Lewis' by river!). Work sees Juliette now super-well-known,

feted around the world - and quite rightly so. These days Stephen is delighted to say that he learns heaps from her to. Juliette graduated with a second Masters degree this year. George is likewise working hard, but playing hard too with go-kart racing, plus some serious cycling on a fab carbon bike. Of course they "did" some Olympics as well.

In truth, we all went a bit **Olympic** mad. Simon was working 24/7 on the team GB boats (well, 25/7 really) and Cali was a purple-clad and up-at-dawn Games Maker volunteer. Although the rest of us just watched, we bid for **a lot** of tickets - if we'd got them all we would have had to sell the house, maybe a child or two, but in the end we were allocated just enough and toddled off to see: handball, volleyball (the sort with clothes though), synchronised

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swimming, trampolining, road racing (bikes), athletics, sailing, more sailing, and er, did we mention sailing? We were trackside when Bolt bolted to his gold, on the clifftops when Ben sailed to his (just - 10,000 people holding their breath...)... and just heaps more lovely experiences. We loved it all, and were amazed by the pace and excitement of handball, the athleticism of synch swimming and so on. The whole Olympic fortnight was blissfully exhausting; never mind the competitors, we were the ones needing the ice baths and massage. It was rather helpfully sunny too. Quite unprecedentedly lovely, in so many ways; Great Britain was a great place to be this summer Can't wait for Rio.

**Toby** and **Cali** have returned from four blissful seasons working in the Alps, to live in Brighton. Toby's lovely writing style saw him step into a

great job on the popular Sailing Today magazine where he is already pushing out the boat (pun intended) with Facebook groups, Tweets and more. He is boat testing and marina guiding, even finding time to write a feature on our old Oyster smack. Cali is back into design work in Brighton, so both are gainfully employed but at this time of the year, with all their pals txtng back deep powder reports, it is hard to stay focussed. Cali had a wonderful time volunteering for the Olympics and, as one of the army of helpers that made it so special, has been invited along to the BBC's Sports personality of the year event, following in a 13 year old Toby's footsteps some years back during his Mirror days. Toby and Cali have a new raceboat too - an RS200, with which they have joined Shoreham Yacht Club so will now be braving the mountainous seas off Brighton rather than off seeing mountainous France.



**Amelie and Louis** - are officially big enough for their own paragraph (!).

**Amelie** moved into Year 1 in September (she is 5) and was a Letty & George bridesmaid too of course; she is busy busy with ballet, gymnastics, cycling, swimming (she does a fair crawl now too), and of course sailing. She has even started Modern dance (which is like dad-dancing but with panache). Phew! She is on her second iPad, plus iPhone for Christmas (shh don't tell yet), and has regular email conversations with the family. Amelie loves books, loves reading and seems to read pretty much anything. At 5. Amazing really. Brother **Louis** is 2 and has started pre-school full time; he really loves it. He sees his big Sis during the day and quite a lot of Nanny too while Mum Melissa does her



teaching qualification. Louis swims - underwater and on the surface, following his sister's lead and he starts ballet in January! Cute? Yup. Talkative? Oh yes.



Amelie and Louis' mum and dad, **Melissa** and **Simon** are looking very professional these days - Simon's business seems to be entirely recession-proof and his new premise's location right at the heart of the Olympic sailing venue is looking like a very smart move, with lots of coaching to add to the product development, repair shop and manufacturing ( <http://www.shocksailing.com> ). His foiling Moth is "airborne" and his carbon Moth bits all stay in one piece, which is impressive. Melissa is in the midst of a full PGCE training year to become a teacher.

Being a mum **and** a teacher **and** a student is not trivial (!! ) so there is not much else to report for her beyond flippin hard work! but at this stage, heroically, she is still

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standing. Phew, it's been a very long term. Nevertheless a host of costumes, cakes and parties continue to flow from the cottage on Portland so Melissa's PGCE course has not dampened her creativity so far. Louis made a very, erm, interesting pirate King for the nativity. Gold, Frankincense & Doubloons? Arrrrgh! Well, he liked it.

**Stephen** and **Carole** are clearly enjoying all this.

Stephen is still all over the world, with some fab projects - Work goes from Scandinavia to Australia (he even owns a bike in Australia he is there so often!) via

the Emirates, Hong Kong and all points in between. The school on

Portland is making very promising progress - Carole is a governor there now - and what with the Cayman Isles and Jersey, islands are becoming a bit of a family feature. Stephen is now in Who's Who (which mentions a fondness for fish and chips and silicon chips!) and the BAFTA awards each

year are a fun event for them both, largely because of the challenge of walking down the snowy St Katherine pontoons (see card images) in posh shoes and best clobber, and then walking back to the boat after 12 hours of champagne, cocktails and tiny film star food portions. And more cocktails.



Stephen finally finished the grandfather clock, and then bought a lathe. Noone knows why but there is a general expectation of small cylindrical Christmas presents. It's all he can do. He and Carole enjoyed a cycle break in Holland, (see above), have a gym in the house where their library once was, had a being-idle break in Cyprus to shelter from said gym, made it along to Letty's 2nd Masters graduation and fitted in a lot of hugely

enjoyable parenting and grand-parenting. Families are fab aren't they? Stephen and Carole are off skiing as usual with their lot for Christmas and the New Year; the van is packed already. And there is a lot of snow.... For once, the van has winter tyres, so plus vitesse n'est pas? Well, hopefully not. An overnight stay in Beaune is planned on the way. Training for BAFTA.

Our 1907 **My Alice** She might be 105 years old, but our lovely old Oyster smack is getting quicker and quicker as the whole team learn more and more about racing her. The 22 foot of bowsprit sticking out of the front has been replaced (stronger and lighter!) as have some more sails. She has a new gaff, and mainsail too for Christmas. Below she is looking very working-boat-smart and (almost) everything now works as it should.

Stephen spent **a lot** of August, with others, between Olympic events, painting her in what turned out to be at least 50 shades of grey, and although this was probably less interesting than the book, it was

certainly more relaxing. My Alice is one of the national archive fleet, a heritage role which was rewarded by a big adventure when she went up to London to be part of the Queen's Jubilee Pageant (seen here with our bling neighbours). Stephen watched all this at a distance from Australia as the crew and the boat got thoroughly soaked - one with rum, the other with rain. She is looking so lovely after all this preening and viewing, she has even been chosen [as a calendar girl](#), so we are all particularly looking forward to May next year! So, that's it for another year; we all got a bit excited about 12:12, 12/12/12 and it just won't be the same next December without such excitement, will it? Hah! But whilst we wait to find out, may we send you our hugs and mistletoe kisses and best wishes for a peaceful, recision proof, calm, 2013? **Happy Christmas one and all.**



