

Christmas 1997, from Brightlingsea

Merry Christmas and a Happy 1998



Melissa

is in the second year of her A level course at the sixth form college and is currently making her University choice. She is applying to do a course in Architecture (an expensively long haul at 7 years) and is in the process of interviews and open days. She is enjoying her A levels (at present she is doing 5, which includes General Studies), is working hard and seems set fair to good grades. She is especially keen on Art, enjoying the extra Life Drawing classes she attends (the Impulse advert has a lot to answer for!).



Melissa has learnt to drive this year, completing a crash (no pun intended) course after her 17th birthday in the summer and by the start of term was driving around in her own orange Mini, hence following the family traditions of Mini driving.

Like Letty, Melissa made the UK squad for the Mirror World Championship in Canada last August memorably helming her pink boat in her pink hat. The event was enjoyable, being won by a British boat, and a huge learning experience for the younger competitors with the best boats from 11 nations represented. Melissa has had a great deal of local success in her Mirror winning several open meetings and being the first girl to win the Eastern Area Championships.

She is looking forward to University sailing next year - having been well primed by Letty on the teams awaiting her.

Toby

Toby has really grown up this year, in every sense. He went to Canada and America for 3 weeks in February on a trip with the school orchestra and since his return has grown in stature. He plays the trombone rather well (much to his parents surprise - they are not renowned for their musical ability!) and now plays solos both in the school jazz band and on a recent school CD. He was recently playing at a schools performance at Wembley stadium and has even played on Breakfast TV (he has no shame at all). His grades progress satisfactorily.



Mainly, Toby's life revolves around sailing. No change there then! He helms a Mirror with Luke Constable (times never change - remember Stephen used to sail with Luke's dad, Gary) and they have had some considerable success representing the Eastern Region,

coming second in the junior championships and having fun in the Sun-Alliance Dart 18s speed challenge.

Toby has just started Year 10 at school - the dreaded GCSE round. As his attitude to school is ambivalent this is not anticipated with much pleasure at The Anchorage. Toby generally feels that examinations are not really required for those intending to base their life around sailing! Hopefully his natural ability and good humour will be enough to get him through. We'll see.

Letty

Life has changed considerably for Letty in 1997 and her year has had a somewhat chequered history which started with an injured back skiing in January (probably the trip in the Land Rover rather than the black runs), an intensive 4 month course of Physio, restricted sailing activities for several months, taking A levels in considerable pain, defending (but losing) her Mirror World Championship in title in Canada on **serious** painkillers and ending with a much more successful treatment of Acupuncture back home (alternative medicine here we come!). Quite a summer.

Nevertheless Letty's crew Hannah is RYA East Young Sailor of the Year and they've done TV work together so it can't have been all bad!

Letty year's news ends even better however and Letty is now enjoying life (at considerable expense to her parents) on the Solent as a student at Portsmouth University.



As might be expected she is heavily involved in sailing, enjoys team racing 4 days a week or more, is helming in the Ladies team and hoping to do enough work (just) to stay on her chosen course (Social Policy). And by the way she is on the University Sailing Committee (didn't take long!).

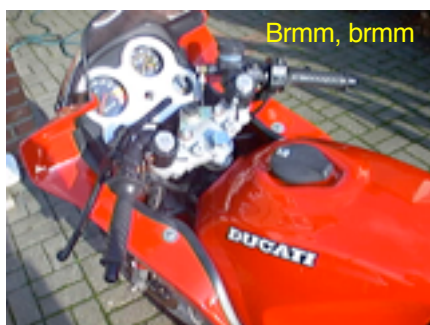
Letty is driving to team racing venues in her yellow Mini which, she informed us in a surprised manner, seems to have trouble with the South Coast hills when fully loaded with 4 occupants and towing a Lark full with sailing gear, camping equipment etc. Those were the days!

Stephen

The news every year seems to be more of the same for Stephen, as it is I guess for most of our friends and colleagues at this stage in their lives; work is busy, taking up a huge amount of time with a great deal of pressure but plenty of fun nevertheless seeing plenty of the world (mainly coastal bits curiously), Bermuda next after skiing.

ULTRALAB grows from strength to strength, employing more staff, undertaking more projects and involved with more national policies. All this means less 'creating' and more of the usual committee work (comes to us all in the end) but Stephen is still having fun, especially doing quite a lot of TV and radio, even Newsnight and Tomorrow's World.

Sadly Stephen has had little time for his own sailing in 1997 although he has been chugging around in Millie the family launch a fair bit and crewed for Melissa in a Hornet. He has made a vow (again!) to get his boat on the water (this year it didn't even get wet!) early in 1998. However he has been around boats a lot (in the early part of the year - trailing 3 Mirrors around the competitive circuit and later in August as British squad coach in Canada at the Mirror Worlds. With 2 children sailing at University next year some time should be released for his own sailing - see next year's thrilling episode...



Alongside the Land Rover, brought last year to enable us to tow boats and carry sails around (but very little fun) and his souped up Mini (lots of fun), Stephen now has a Ducati (probably way too much fun).

This is clearly a very deep mid life crisis! He has promised to only use the bike only on dry roads in the summer sunshine and currently spends any (rare) spare moments polishing it (it is red). Luckily there is 'some work to do' on it and given the Heppell reputation for finishing things it will be several years out of action!! Meanwhile drooling and purchasing Bike magazines seem to act as a temporary satisfaction.

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Carole

Carole is now working very full time at ULTRALAB in an attempt to earn enough to keep the children out of debt at University. With no grants, new imaginative ways to charge fees and long courses this looks set to be the pattern for the next few years.

Carole's research project continues until 1999 and at present she has been attending various conferences around the globe to present papers outlining the initial findings of her work. All this has sadly made her seem far too organised (you **can** fool some of the people all of the time) and Carole has now been drawn onto the national Mirror class committee with meetings conveniently located in handy Birmingham, sigh.

Whilst Stephen and the girls went to Canada this year Carole stayed at Brightlingsea with Toby (who had not been helming during the 1996 qualifiers and did not therefore get a chance to qualify) enjoying a very hot 3 weeks watching Toby sailing and actually relaxing. Well, nearly because inevitably Toby filled the house with his mates once the girls has disappeared so that the cooking and washing load increased rather than diminished but it was a change to be surrounded by males rather than females...

By the way, Carole is now officially dangerous on wheels too as she has acquired a pair of rollerblades and taken her first teetering steps towards Californian street cred. Can Lycra and a red swimming cossie be far behind?

G'ma & G'dad

...just as an extra, how are G'ma and G'dad doing? This picture of G'dad: afloat in our Millie, blue sky, oyster

Oyster Smack race, Sept. 97



smacks in the distance, smile as broad as the day was long says it all really. G'ma was on board too and looking quite intrepid.

Not a bad place Brightlingsea...