

1999 for the Kenefecks



We started the year (well almost) on the front page of a newspaper. Most will have missed our appearance in the *Gloucester Citizen*, together with a group of Gloucester Ukrainians, all of us dressed in national costume, about to set out on a carol singing tour of Gloucester. This was the first Ukrainian Christmas (6/7th January) we had joined in and we all thoroughly enjoyed the day - especially the hospitality" offered at the various houses we visited.

The only other January highlight was Rob's first Scout camp overnight (!) - yes, we couldn't believe it either. He survived and has since spent several more nights away with the Scouts.

A quieter February but in March Daria was busy co-organising a Red Nose Wine Evening (aren't all her wine evenings like that???) . This actually tied in with Comic Relief Day and raised £200.

Apart from various events to celebrate the girls' birthdays, April was notable for Maria doing work experience with the Navy. For 2 weeks she assisted in the Medical Centre in Portsmouth, dealing with admin and minor injuries. Fortunately for the sailors, she was confined to shore, but still enjoyed the experience enormously.

In May, Rob was confirmed at St. John's Cathedral in Portsmouth. With his birthday only a week later, he found May both spiritually and financially uplifting.

Maria took her first GCSE (Maths) in June. Frightening how fast time passes. We were all delighted to hear later in the summer that she had got an A. One down, about another 10 to go!!!

Continuing on an educational theme, Daria and Tony went to Cambridge in mid June. No, actually this was just a weekend away to celebrate their 19th wedding anniversary. Hopefully, 2000 will see a party in Gloucester to celebrate the 20th.

June also saw a major milestone in Tony's life. With a cycling experience that has until now comprised of a few miles, mainly on footpaths away from traffic, one Sunday saw



him joining Rob and Maria on a sponsored cycle ride around Portsmouth Harbour, some 30+ miles. A confident Maria started slightly earlier with a group of friends and teachers from school, with a wobbly Tony and apprehensive Rob definitely bringing up the rear.

A gloriously sunny day and the frequent proximity to water made the first part go quickly. Lunch on Hayling Island beach, having caught up with Maria and co., left Tony and

Rob in good spirits.

However, the ride got steadily tougher as both temperature and height above sea level rose, and the final stage up Portsdown Hill was a real struggle.

Amazingly, all three of them made the full distance, helped by their mobile support team of Daria, Natalie, Angela and Jim (in the family Galaxy), who offered drinks and encouragement on the last stages. The only injuries were sunburn to one side of Tony's face and one arm, leaving him with a pronounced white stripe and circles round the eyes where his sunglasses had been!!!



July was dominated by a series of barbecues at the houses of Daria's wine students. As their term finishes at the end of May, the students can't face a whole summer wineless, so they organise their own events, to which even Tony gets invited. Fortunately, the summer was that good that all the events went well. Daria's Italian students were not left out, with Daria hosting an Italian evening for about 25-30 people in our garden, on a particularly balmy evening.

August, of course, meant Italy - our usual 3week break with friends and relatives. This year, because of the Solar Eclipse, we stayed a few extra days in Switzerland. Daria was at college and shared lodgings in Salisbury with Simone (and others). Simone and her family now live close to our route to Italy, enabling us to see them on the way to and on the way back from Italy.

Our view of the eclipse was quite good, with the process taking place over lunch, dramatically finishing with a thunderstorm just at the peak of the eclipse.

Italy was relatively uneventful for a change. Previous years have seen us experience punctures and near accidents on the journey (we travel through the night, so these are a

considerable disruption when they do occur). Even our stays have been full of incident with purse snatching (2 years ago), C)aria's Mum having a mild stroke in Italy last year and our house in England being burgled while we were over there. despite all this, it is always a great experience to go there and savour the culture, food, wine - and, of course, the heat and sun.

September saw the start of new terms for most of us. Maria has begun her final year at Secondary school. We are now in the process of helping her to select which 6th Form College she should start at next September. She also started on a Lifeguard course, which she has just passed, allowing her to work at a local swimming beths after Christmas, and complementing her swimming coaching work which she has been doing for a number of years now.

During October, Daria took yet another exam on her way to her Maths degree. Robert attended a survival weekend in his quest for yet more Scouting badges, coming back with all his clothes and belongings reeking of fish, which they had had to catch, gut and cook for their breakfast - a smell that lingered around the house for quite some time.

Finishing off the year, Tony was commissioned as a Eucharistic Minister at our local parish Church. Meridian viewers may have been surprised to see a familiar face on their lunchtime news bulletin, commenting on the house price rises in the South East of England. Tony again.

So, the Kenefecks started the year and finished the year in the full (?) glare of the media.

So, what are we doing now, and what do we have in store for this next year?

Tony is still Manager at the Halifax branch in Winchester. A more challenging role than ever, this year has even seen him back as a cashier (but only as a very last resort). Not much time left for hobbies - acting as taxi driver for the kids occupies many evenings. Still playing 5-a-side football each week (or so he says!), and getting more involved in Church duties - a reader as well as a Eucharistic Minister.



Daria - teaches several adult education classes, 2 Italian and 2 wine each week. Also working as a Learning Support Assistant at Maria and Rob's school, as well as occasional work as a Teacher Practice Observer, covering all sorts of subjects, for those wishing to enter the zany world of teaching adults. Takes her work so seriously, they are her hobbies even down to organising a wine tour to Rioja in February!!!



Maria (sorry, Maz) - now $15\frac{1}{2}$, she is well on her way to GCSE exams. Has ambitions to be a doctor. She has this year returned to gymnastics, this time as a coach, and is hoping to go on a course to get a qualification in Coaching early next year. A strong swimmer, she has now qualified as a Lifeguard. She is also a keen musician, playing clarinet in the School Band and Orchestra, attempting Grade 8 this year, a cornerstone of the Church Youth Band. Also is learning piano and is hoping to take Grade 3 next summer. Has taught

herself to play the penny whistle and 3 different kinds of recorder, and has even had a go at teaching herself to play the violin!!!



Rob - now $13\frac{1}{2}$ and midway through Secondary school, having developed a deep voice this year (which we're all still teasing him about), he is growing up fast. He is due to take his SATS next summer. In Scouts, he has made rapid progress up to Patrol Leader, gaining many badges this year, and endearing himself to the people who run the group. Less enthusiastic about Music than Maria, he is nevertheless a competent trumpeter who also plays for the school and Church. His only fault lies in his enthusiastic support of a certain Manchester football team!



Natalie (or Natty as Tony calls her) - at $10\frac{1}{2}$, Natalie is in her last year at Junior school, sitting her SATS next summer as well. she progressed to Guides this year, from which she gets great enjoyment. A flautist with potential (i.e. still at a very early stage), she has yet to make her public debut although she should achieve this ambition this Christmas at her School Christmas production.