

Christmas 2005

**Editor's Note**

A slightly different approach for our annual newsletter this year—I hope you find it of interest. So much seems to have happened this year, it just seemed to merit a different treatment.

We wish all our "readers" a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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# 2005 Newsletter

## A Year of Celebrations

This year has seen many special events for the family.

In April, Maria reached the grand age of 21—yes, we can all hardly believe it too, (that is until I am late back for a meal and realize just how much she is like her mother at that age)! Natalie also passed a major milestone — her 16th birthday. And Daria formally graduated in a ceremony at Portsmouth Guildhall.

June saw Tony & Daria celebrate 25 years of marriage.

Finally, in November, Tony was 50, with another party in Titchfield to celebrate.

Neither Maria nor Natalie had big parties to celebrate, Maria opting instead for a night at Jongleurs followed by a family meal at a restaurant on the Sunday. Unfortunately, the meal clashed with the televised Pompey—Saints match. However, after watching the first 20 minutes of Saint's most humiliating defeat for decades, Tony no longer saw that as a problem.

The meal was superb and just when it looked like the day was not going to be spoilt by a foot-

ball result, events took a more dramatic turn, as Angela (Tony's mother) collapsed on leaving the restaurant. An ambulance was called and she was rushed to hospital in Portsmouth, where there were plenty of medical staff on duty waiting to deal with the football casualties that failed to materialize.

We are pleased to say that after an overnight stay, she was able to return home and is now recovered, although not allowed to drive for another six months.



**Maria & Natalie, with their uncle Roman in the background, relaxing at the family meal.**

## 25 Years together

21st June was our Silver Wedding anniversary. After many discussions, we settled on two parties to try and include as many friends and family as possible.

We held a garden party at home on one of the summer's finest evenings, attended mainly by friends from Fareham & Gosport,

followed by a buffet & dance in Gloucester the following weekend to cater for our friends and relatives from further away.

Both parties gave us enormous pleasure to organize and we were delighted so many were able to attend, giving us two wonderful evenings to remember.

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**The Family (and Rob's then girlfriend Shell) outside the local bar on holiday in Spain**

*“the track from the house to the nearest road was about ½ mile of very scary dirt track, with a drop of several hundred metres always only a tyre’s width away! “*



**The first wine group settle for a tasting at Castello di Brolio on our trip to Italy**

## From Our Foreign Correspondents

Between us, we pretty much covered all corners of the British Isles in the last year but as usual travelled further afield as well. Tony had a couple of visits to Edinburgh for work, Dublin for running and Rob took his grandparents to Snowdonia in Wales. In addition, Maria went to New York with a friend for a long weekend, while Tony & Daria swapped Bristol for Prague as a venue for Christmas shopping.

Rob also went on two trips to France, for Valentine’s Day in Paris with girlfriend Shell (they have since gone their separate ways) and then he took Natalie to assist her in her preparation for her French GCSE. It was

supposed to be a short day trip but, in true Kenefeck fashion, lasted longer as they missed the afternoon ferry back and had to return on the overnight boat.

Our main family holiday was spent in a villa in the Alpujar Valley in the Sierra Nevada mountains, between Granada and Almeria in Spain. The villa was very secluded, designed in a traditional style using logs and bamboo canes to support ceilings and upper floors. The swimming pool in the grounds meant we didn’t need to venture out too much, which was just as well as the track from the house to the nearest road was about ½ mile of very scary dirt track, with a drop

of several hundred metres always only a tyre’s width away! The “main” roads themselves were not much better, with the nearest big shop being a hypermarket some 40 mins drive away. Still, Granada was well worth a visit and Almeria was interesting, if not a little threatening at night. The weather was superb, landing in early evening in Granada with the temperature nearly 40° was an experience (compared with the -4° in Prague for the recent trip).

Tony & Daria had also started the year in freezing cold Tuscany, researching the area for the wine tour organised for October, described below.

## The Italian Job

Early October saw 16 wine enthusiasts gather at Bournemouth Airport, all slightly flustered as an accident on the motorway caused all to divert off in different directions through the New Forest to try to find a way through the chaos to catch the plane.

Fortunately, this was probably the worst problem we faced. Our research trip in freezing January identified the charming town of Castellina in Chianti as a perfect base, with the Palazzo Squarcialupi an interesting hotel. Both town and hotel were indeed perfect and a good base to explore Florence, Sienna and

San Gimignano. We also found the hotel owners ran the main winery in Castellina and we had an unplanned bonus of not only a tour of the winery but also the history of the building we were staying in. We also got enormous satisfaction from a visit to the Isole e Olena winery, as they are one of the top ten small producers in the world. and we made contact with them directly after reading of them in an Oz Clarke wine book. They were very welcoming, despite being in the middle of harvest and the wines were superb.

Daria’s contacts via the wine shop got us visits to two other

top wineries, Brolio (Chianti) and Barbi (Montalcino).

The first group flew home after five days, on the same plane that group two arrived on. We repeated the same tours, but with one day less and somehow everything was slightly different second time round. We were truly sad to say goodbye to the wonderful staff at the hotel and our friendly coach driver, not to mention the beautiful Tuscan countryside (and in Daria’s case a certain Italian restaurant owner).

Both groups seemed to thoroughly enjoy it, making all the hard work worth while.

## Daria Finally Gets There

Although Daria actually finished her studies two years ago, the actual graduation ceremony had to be postponed until this year,

as it was impossible to get enough spaces for all the family at the Portsmouth venue.

So in mid April, we all invaded Portsmouth for the afternoon.

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The ceremony took some time as there were so many people receiving their degrees.

It was also very moving, many proud children watching their hardworking parents line up in an orderly manner to go on

stage. There were people of all ages of adulthood, with several making slow progress on walking sticks to receive second degrees!

The emotion in the hall got even greater as a son came up to receive a posthumous award for his father, who had sadly died after completing his studies but before the results were through. And, of

course, we reserved our loudest cheers and applause for the moment Daria stepped on to the stage. It had been many years of hard work and ups & downs, the original teaching goal now sidelined but this afternoon was certainly a good reward for all that effort. Congratulations Daria.

## Employment News

There have been relatively few changes on the job front this year.

Tony continues to enjoy life in Bank of Scotland Corporate, and was rewarded with promotion in September, although that basically meant continuing to do the same job but with a more impressive title.

Daria juggles the same half dozen jobs. Her Wine Shop duties now involve deliveries across the South West of England, until her boss is restored to a points free licence! In addition, she continues to teach Maths GCSE and two wine classes in the evenings,

translation work on an ad hoc basis and spent much of the summer moderating other adult tutors courses around the area. This produced some amusement as one of the tutors had taught her Spanish at college years before.

Maria was on a year's contract with the National Statistics Office, but government spending plans meant this was not renewed in October. She now has a temping role for some weeks while she tries to find a computer support role locally. She continues to work on a Psychology degree in her spare time. She did briefly work at a B&Q Call

Centre on a part time basis during the summer but found she was getting too tired combining everything! However it did pay for her New York trip.

Rob continues with his Computer Science studies at Portsmouth Uni. He also works part time for the B&Q Call Centre and spent the summer temping at Coopervision.

Natalie has now moved on to Fareham College to take A Levels in Media Studies, Film Studies & Psychology. She has yet to acquire a part time job, despite encouragement from the rest of the family.

## Free Flight Fails To Take Off

One story we had hoped to bring you was of Tony's first pilot flight in a private plane.

As a reward for being one of the best performers in his Bank of Scotland job, Tony received a Red Letter Day prize last Christmas. After careful consideration, he decided to take a flying lesson from Bournemouth Airport, with Daria as a passenger.

The chosen day arrived, shortly

after our return from our Spanish holiday. Sadly, the sunny weather that had greeted us on our return disappeared the day of the flight and our mid morning flight was cancelled due to low cloud.

A date about two weeks later was chosen. Unfortunately the only clouds around that day were the black ones surrounding the company, as we woke to hear the

news that Red Letter had gone into receivership.

Many phonecalls later revealed that the voucher was now worthless. The company was taken over by another entrepreneur from the Dragons Den, but they wouldn't honour previous vouchers. Fortunately, the Bank replaced the voucher with hotel vouchers—but the flight would probably have been more interesting!



**Daria receives her Bachelor of Science Honours degree at Portsmouth Guildhall.**

*“... we reserved our loudest cheers and applause for the moment Daria stepped on to the stage.”*



**Ukrainian Dancing at the Gloucester version of the 25th Wedding Anniversary**

## Stars in Stripes go close in Amsterdam



**HBOS Southampton—appropriately decked out in red & white stripes**

Early March saw Tony & friends from his regular Tuesday 5-a-side sessions take their first venture into Europe. OK—so it was an HBOS tournament, played against other English teams in a sports hall in Amsterdam.

The rules were very foreign as well—using the internationally recognized Futsal rules instead of the traditional English version.

Although the team finished bottom of the group, the table was one of the most closely

fought in the competition. The final game could have seen a 1-1 draw sufficient to leave “Saints” in second place. Unfortunately, a goal against the run of play resulting in a 1-0 defeat meant that goal difference left them bottom.

The trip went further downhill as the televised Saints v Man Utd, watched in the Sports Bar in the centre of town, resulted in more embarrassment as the lads watched on, surrounded by several stag parties from the Manchester area. A resounding defeat ended hopes of any cheer for the Saints fans among the team—the bitterly cold weather outside

meant much of the rest of the night was spent hopping from hostelry to hostelry, although we did manage to take in some of the local tourist sites as well!



**The build up to the only “Saints” goal – Tony (2, second from right) was involved at an earlier stage.**

## Tony beats Ronan in Dublin

Flushed with success from last years Great South Run, Tony joined others from work (and a guest comeback by Dean) to run in the Great Irish Run in April. Warming up with a brief appearance in the Reading Half Marathon ( the last 4 miles, ending in the Madejski Stadium, for a team relay event with other members from his SDS work team), the Saturday morning event was perfectly timed, beginning in cool damp conditions but finishing with the sun just coming out. Tony’s main regret was that a late surge by Dean unknowingly took him clear of Tony just before he would have caught him in the finishing straight. But he did have the consolation of beating

Ronan Keating, finishing the 10k run around Phoenix Park in 54 minutes. Ronan was running in support of his late mother’s cancer charity and obviously had to keep stopping for autographs on the way round—something that both Tony & Dean easily avoided. And of course as it had all happened on Saturday morning, it left plenty of time to explore Dublin’s nightlife before their return!



## Rob Still Seeking First Victory

Rob is the other sports person in the family, although his reasons for choosing some sports may not always be fitness based.

Both Rob & Tony have been playing squash against each other for over a year now. Despite his best attempts, Rob is still waiting for that elusive first victory, although it seems to be getting more likely each time.

He has also used his University contacts to try his hand at rockclimbing, surfing and skiing.

Always a keen scout, the rock climbing was the first option he followed but un-

fortunately a change in work patterns has forced him to drop this.

So this year he has joined the Surfing Club. At first glance he doesn’t look the typical surfer (so slim we think we could make him a wet suit from a couple of old inner tubes) but he is looking forward to trips to Cornwall next year. In the meantime, it appears the winter months are more about planning next years events in the comfort of the pub.

And he is shortly to try his hand at skiing with a trip to Val D’Isère before Christmas.