

2006 Newsletter

"FROM THE KENEFECK FAMILY"

A Quieter Year

A much quieter year this than 2005, with no major birthdays or anniversaries for a change. A much needed rest year, with significant birthdays for Rob & Natty to come in 2007.

Tony & Maria kicked off the new year with changes in jobs. Tony's was the least dramatic, moving into an even more specialised role at Bank of Scotland, resulting in frequent journeys to either Edinburgh or London. For Maria, an initial lengthy wait for a promised job at Specsavers IT support has really paid

off with a rapid rise up the levels since her start earlier this year.

Tony was then off to Amsterdam to take part in another Futsal tournament. Results went slightly better this year and the team finished runners up. He continues to play this form of 5-a-side every week, building up to another tournament next March, hopefully going one better and winning it.

May saw all of us head for a Chateau in France to attend the wedding of

Tony's cousin, Lolita - the first of two unusual Wedding venues we would attend. The next one was in August where a colleague from Tony's work got married in Essex but part of the post wedding celebrations were held gathered round a tree in the grounds of a stately home where the couple had met at a previous V Festival! Despite the different settings, both weddings were very memorable.

A Fantastic Early Summer

June was very much about two big concerts - Bon Jovi at St Mary's Stadium and Eagles at Twickenham. Fortunately, we all have fairly similar musical tastes, so these were attended by all of us, as had been a Chris Rea concert in April. Another artist seen this year was James Blunt (Rob opted out of this one) while Maria & Rob are off to see Iron Maiden just before Christmas.

We were exceptionally lucky with the weather in July, as we embarked on our second all family narrow boat holiday. By all, this means not just the five of us but Tony's parents and Roman & Gill (Daria's brother and his wife). We all get on really well (essential in such a crowded space) and following our successful but slightly accident prone trip

to the East Midlands two years ago, we visited the Llangollen Canal in North Wales. We had seven glorious days, with no significant mishaps to anyone, on probably the most beautiful stretch

of inland waterway in the UK. Even Roman seemed to enjoy it, despite the canal having two very high aqueducts at Pontcysyllite and Chirk, which did nothing to help his fear of heights.



The summer is always a busy period with frequent wine evenings hosted by various ex or current students of Daria's classes. These continue to run very successfully in Gosport, although they have faded away at the other centre closer to home. Probably just as well with Daria seeming to work an ever growing number of hours at the Wine Cellar, and running the Wine Course and a Maths course in addition each week. The Maths class has also gone from strength to strength, with excellent results being achieved for the students taking GCSE and all passing. These are mostly people who didn't do well in the subject during their school lives but now need it to move on in their work lives. Translation work seems to have dried up after a major project that Daria had to pull out of earlier in the year, which involved the translation of a substantial legal document in Ukrainian running to over 100 pages. Still, neither the Maths or translation work bring the spin off benefits that the wine course brings. Difficult to imagine ex-maths students gathered around chatting over algebra problems! And then there are the trips to foreign climes to do fieldwork - another tour to Tuscany beckons next year.

Daria was able to spare some time away to fly up to Edinburgh in early August to join Tony who had been up there all week working. Unfortunately, this was also the same date that all the airport security checks were dramatically increased so unexpectedly, causing chaos everywhere. She was relatively lucky in flying from Southampton, as this is a much easier task anytime than from one of the London airports, so it only meant a few hours delay (as well as no hand luggage). The rest of the long weekend was unaffected and we were able to enjoy the vibrant buzz of the city in Fringe Festival mode, taking in several street performances as well as shows at some very odd venues. Definitely one to try and think about for next year, when the others have expressed an interest in going as well. Sadly the fantastic weather of the early summer seemed a long time off, and Edinburgh was noticeably cooler than Wales had been.

The weather had not got much better by the following weekend when we all set off early for Cheltenham racecourse to join Maria who had volunteered to do a 10km walk in aid of MS. After a damp and overcast start, the sun did come out as we all scrambled up the Cotswold hill overlooking the course, so that we were able to have our free picnic lunch enjoying the fabulous views. We eagerly looked forward to the end of the month; we were all due to fly off to the much sunnier climes of Puglia. We had a villa booked just inland of Ostuni on the Puglian coast, about halfway up the heel of Italy.

Return to Italy

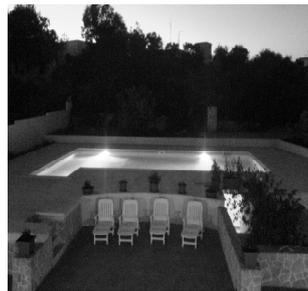
Tony had spent ages trawling the internet to try and find a suitable house to rent for our annual holiday. Last year we had tried Spain and although house and pool were good, Spain lacked the atmosphere of Italy. So an unanimous decision was made to return to Italy but what region? Daria & Tony had just done several visits to Tuscany, and Umbria/Marche had been done a few years ago. A house in Sicily was one suggestion, vetoed by Tony on the grounds that he didn't see the benefits of two weeks on the side of an active volcano, the potential of sulphur gas vapours outweighing the "firework" display every night.

When we arrived we had two surprises - the house was much better than we had expected but the weather was much cooler

Puglia represented a good compromise - somewhere new, further south than usual (so hotter) with trulli houses and good wine everywhere. The only concern was that the house we had chosen was only due to get a pool in-

stalled in April - and we know how reliable Italian tradesmen can be!

The house was fantastic, beautifully decorated in Venetian stucco, with a much bigger and grander swimming pool than we had expected. However,



the weather was a disappointment for much of the first week, with overcast skies and rain. Although we were still able to use the pool and eat outside much of the time, it wasn't quite the return to heat wave conditions that we had expected.

The English owner of the house had also had to fly out unexpectedly, as a problem with the pool's filters meant a great deal of manual intervention was needed to rescue the thousands of litres of water in the pool. This didn't cause us too much of a problem and

she made us very welcome with a buffet meal on arrival and helpful guidance on the area. We returned the favour by enlightening her to several aspects of Italian behaviour and also correctly harvesting her large cacti of their fighi d'india, once we had spotted the relevant tool in the local market.

We were also lucky in arriving in Ostuni just as their main Festa was on, so we were able to enjoy that on our first night. Other highlights were seeing the trulli town of Alberobello, cooking pizza in the indoor pizza oven at the house (after Tony & Rob had scoured the local beaches for driftwood to give an even more authentic taste to the pizza bases) and witnessing a wedding photoshoot take place around us while lying on the beach.

Despite the poorer than hoped for weather, we still had a great time and would highly recommend the house to anyone looking to holiday in that area. The pool and surrounding patio were fantastic, added to a beautiful house and only a few miles from the lovely white town of Ostuni.

Back Home

Returning to England, Rob immediately headed off to continue lodging with Bernie, Tony's brother, who lives in Huntingdon. The Uni course that Rob is on has reached the industry experience part, before Rob returns for his final year in Autumn 2007. He was delighted to get an opportunity to work for IBM based in Stevenage. He has now moved on to share a house in Stevenage (his uncle's house was just too far away compared to this house, and means that Rob can now wake up at 8.52am to get to work for 9.00 - not bad for someone whose start time is 8.30!). It does also mean that he can take full

advantage of the social opportunities that work colleagues create - his first weekend back from holiday saw him showing off his tan by joining them water-skiing.

Both Tony & Rob decided they needed to work on their Italian, so have enrolled at different evening classes to do a GCSE in the language.

Sad News for Daria

For Daria, the period after our return was a strange mixture. Off to Spain with work to research new wines over a weekend, she was not in a position to respond when news of the death of her

much loved Italian based aunt, Zia Lucia, came through on the Saturday morning. We have always anticipated this day, with the understanding that Daria would drop everything and get out to Italy immediately (funerals happen very quickly in Italy, on this occasion Sunday afternoon). Unfortunately, when you have gone to Spain as part of a group, it is not easy to get re-routed to Rome or Naples. So for now this has closed a door to that part of Italy that has been so familiar to us - fortunately there are plenty of other parts to explore.

Running in the Rain

For Tony, the return to the UK meant getting down to some serious training in preparation for the Great South Run. He last did this two years ago (last year a wine tour took precedence) and although regular visits to the gym and football help, he felt he needed to work harder to shed the summer pounds. This time at least he was aware that it was 10 miles and not 10 km he was running.

So on Oct 22nd he lined up with many thousands of other runners on Southsea sea front. The previous weekend he had done a 10k training run over part of the route, in glorious autumn sunshine. The day of the race started overcast, with drizzle starting just as he began. A much improved time of 1hr 31mins (10 mins faster than previously) was a positive, as was the £500 sponsor money collected (doubled by HBOS to £1000) for National Children's Homes.

Finishing just as the really heavy rain began would have been another, had Daria not missed him as she waited

by the 200 metres to go marker. This left him to wander around for some 20 minutes in a muddy field (Southsea Common in less damp times) wearing only a skimpy running outfit while gale force winds did their best to rip the free

his parents (daughters don't do early (pre midday) rising on Sunday, just to watch their father). We managed to locate them by the car, where they had sensibly retreated after an early glimpse of Tony, having passed the



aluminium space blanket provided to finishers from his shoulders!

Somewhere along the course were Tony's only other supporters that day ,

time talking to a very nice chap who had also been running, who it later turned out was one of the first two British runners to finish!

Where did the Autumn go?

And so we reach the end of another year. Tony & Daria go off to Milan for some shopping and for Tony to practise his Italian. Milan turns out to be as wet as England for the first few days and the main shops are all clothes designers (yes, we knew it was the fashion centre of Italy/Europe but thought there may be some other types of shops). Even the Ferrari store prices for their branded items are in the same price range as the cars it seems! But an enjoyable weekend - and all the boys' presents sorted.

Maria gets promotion in her job, so that she is earning almost half as much

again as she started the year on. Rob rushes home, dumps all his bags with presents and clothes for the Christmas period, before rushing off to France for another ski holiday and to practise his Italian (!? - just remember to use sun cream on the nose this time, Rob). Natalie manages to squeeze a few lessons in at college in between her busy TV schedule - at least 2 out of 3 teachers say she is on track with her A-Level studies. And Christmas has once again arrived with stunning speed, leaving the usual panic in the house to finish those DIY jobs and get things ready for the Christmas break. Where does the time

go to?

Best wishes and seasons greetings to all from the Kenefecks.

Next year promises to be another busy year. Rob and Natalie have significant birthdays, Natalie reaching 18 in April and Rob 21 a month later. As yet there are no plans that we know of for parties but need to think about that after Christmas.

Maria should complete her Psychology degree after Christmas and graduate this year. Again no plans for this at present. Natalie should also finish college after her A levels and enter the world of employment - we hope! Rob will be back at Portsmouth Uni next autumn, to bring his new work based experience into action in achieving his degree. His year is bound to be full of activity - we only hope we will get to see him from time to time and not just so he can drop more excess items off (although to be fair we do tend to build up stuff for the "dump" so that we can use his versatile Honda car to take it in - but wasn't most of it his previously anyway?).

Tony & Daria are planning to organise another wine tour to Tuscany for 2007, with a return to Spain in early 2008 another possibility. Neither are expecting any further changes on the employment front for a while.

Tony will be going to Amsterdam for football again - third time lucky? Will probably carry on doing various runs but may not do them sponsored - possibly building towards a marathon in 2008? Gosh - is that next year's newsletter done already? Probably not - there are bound to be many changes before then!!