



Mr George gives Henry the freedom of the road

Wheels of Destiny

At 5pm on his 17th birthday, Henry was off and motoring with his first driving lesson. He's passed his theory test and soon he'll have the freedom of the open road, the joy of the traffic jam, and the delights of insurance premiums... if he can just figure out which pedal turns the lights on. A terrifying prospect indeed.



High flyer in Turkish parasailing tutorial

Students eh?

They call it social networking, but it's just partying really. Alice vacationed with pals in Turkey in July, found the snow with the Cambridge University ski club pre-Christmas, and hit a few clubs in between.



Britain's academic elite



Alice and friends on their best behaviour

Alice Gets the Lab Bug

Alice left her teenage years behind her as she moved into her third and final year of Natural Science ('NatSci' obviously) at Jesus College, Cambridge. She moved out of college accommodation and out into the big bad wide world, living the student experience in a shared house. Much of her term time is taken up with a project at Addenbrooke's Hospital pathology lab. She is trialling personalised treatment regimes for HIV positive patients. Alice is keen to continue after graduation with postgraduate study in virology.



Joyce and aesthete

Dublin Up

After a good sweep of GCSE results, Henry moved on to year 12 at the Perse school, doing Maths, History, English and Psychology for A-level. He got off to a roaring start with his school literary trip to Dublin in October. As if touring libraries and literature museums wasn't enough fun (plus an exciting look at Bono's sunglasses shop) the trip was capped with torrential rain and powercuts. Someone didn't pack their lucky clover, to be sure..!



Bat Girl and her detector. Pipistrelles on 90 kHz

Bat Safari

Strongly recommended: A night punt with a wildlife expert and a special detector that makes audible the social chatter of swooping bats. Fascinating!



Arch friends: the other kind of football at Wembley

Gridiron Grins

Helen and Andrew stayed at the renovated St Pancras Hotel and wallowed in Americana in London in November. We took in the latest indie movies at the Film Festival, and were guests of David Dutton at the NFL American Football game in his season ticket seats at Wembley. Go Buccs! Go Bears! Go Cheerleaders! In fact they were all eclipsed by a real squirrel running 30 yards to the end zone, cheered on by the crowds.



Henry puts on the uniform of servitude

Working For The Man

The chinos, the blue shirt, the blazer. Henry got a new outfit to sample life as a lackey of capitalist hegemony. Just like his oppressed dad.

Phil O'Stine Review ★☆☆☆☆

All's Well That Ends

First time at the Globe for Phil O'Stine. Went to see this long tedious play about some dude disrespecting his ho, and she like tricks him into marrying her anyway. Culture eh?



This Wooden O Dear: A long night on hard benches

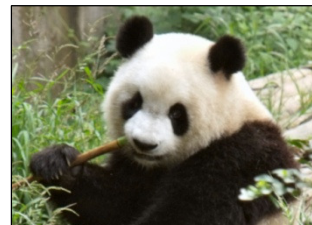


Gang of Four in the Forbidden Palace

In the Heart of the Dragon

Family take the Silk Road round the Middle Kingdom

After Henry's work experience at *China Dialogue* – an online magazine about China and the environment – we headed off to do some reportage on location, and add a few tourist yuan to the burgeoning Chinese economy. Part of our trip involved a visit to the China Central Television studios: a vast broadcasting enterprise with 1,700 journalists and 42 channels.



Bi-Bi: The endangered *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*

The itinerary hit ancient treasures of the Ming and Qing Dynasties from Beijing to Xian and the ancient Silk Road. The ecological reserves of Chengdu contain the Panda Breeding Research Centre, which has raised 300, about 10% of the world's endangered panda population.

Shangri-La

In the foothills of the Tibetan mountains we found our Shangri-La in Lijiang, with Longevity Restaurants and delicious (!?) Yak butter milk shakes. The rest of the local cuisines of China were a lot tastier, even the Szechuan spices that reduce the unwary foreigner to tears.

More photos from our China trip:
<http://www.dittoncorner.com>

The Chinese economic boom is visible everywhere, from new skyscrapers to prosperous shoppers with high fashion ware and cell phones: all rather upbeat after the austerity and EuroZone melt-down we left behind. The cash registers in the city high streets ring out the vibrancy of the Chinese economy, and celebrate the arrival of the Ker-Ching Dynasty.



Henry with his back to The Wall



The hatted hordes of the Bumps party guests occupy the grassy banks of Ditton Corner. Were you there? Can you spot yourself?

Bumps A-Daisy

Our June Bumps party to watch the river races was as fun as ever. We had a wonderful day in the company of colleagues and friends, and an occasional bolt of lightning.



Ellen, Annika and Tessa hugged by strange men

Guests amazed us with their chic-est outfits. And Mr. Ulrich wore his pinkest trousers (pants to you, Peter).



Thunderous skies loomed over the rowing action

The crowds got to witness some great rowing drama with bumps right on Ditton Corner, punctuated by the occasional downpour. More water with your Pimms, professor? And once the crowds had gone, it was finally time to fire up the barbie...



Evolutionary mnemonic: Many Very Early Men Ate Juicy Steaks Using No Plates

Save the Date for next year's
Bumps & Carnage Party
Saturday 16 June 2012



Frank and Andrew messing about on the river

Andrew's time as an armchair rowing critic ended when he was challenged to take the oars in Frank and Lauris' elegant skiff. Feather, forward, pull!



Mixed doubles I: Paul and Helen on court



Mixed doubles II: Black tie break at Whittlesford

Racquets and Balls

The never-ending tennis duel between Paul 'n' Helen and Brenda 'n' Andrew has sustained our weekends. With other halves and a bunch of friends, we hit Whittlesford out of court at a charity ball in a marquee on the village green.

Tabitha's Wedding



Andrew's goddaughter Tabitha Barber married Stephen Boydell in April, in full Everton blue. No insult intended by us mistakenly turning up wearing Liverpool red. Helen created her own hat for the occasion, but didn't hold on to it for long....



On this, the day of my Goddaughter's wedding, you offer me da no respect...

Family Formal Hall

Alice treated the family to dinner at formal hall in her College. Manners have improved since her parents' undergraduate days – not a sprout was thrown.



Jesus feeds the five thousand



Helen and team at Sustainable Housing awards

Retrofit Rockets

Helen's work on the *Retrofit for the Future* programme for the Technology Strategy Board progressed: one of the projects won a regional Sustainable Housing award. The team, including Aragon Housing and SDC, was shortlisted for the national awards in the Best Partnership category.



Shrinking violets in Porto

Shrink to Fit

In December, Helen hosted a meeting in Cambridge for participants from 18 countries in the EU project on *Cities Re-growing Smaller*. The project reached half-way last February, with a conference in Amsterdam. A study workshop in Porto followed in May.

Student Life, Libraries and CEX

Cambridge Architectural Research doubled its office size at the start of the year, and has never been busier. Helen's been working on strategic level consultancy: projects include Oxbridge colleges and a national archive centre for Kuwait. We're also conducting a 2-year long building performance review of innovation incubator Creative Exchange.



What seems to be the problem?



The rebranded RMS LifeRisks team (and Peter's rebranded pants)



Re-Branded (twice)

Andrew's life and health insurance risk initiative at RMS underwent a rebranding to reflect its continued commercial progress. The team has expanded, launched a software platform, and carried out a series of innovative analyses for clients.

The rebranding went so well that we did it again a month later, when the trademark attorneys changed their minds about our first choice of name. So we sacked them, and 'RMS LifeRisks' was born. Fingers crossed for longevity.

The new team in outline



Duijiangyan 2008, ruined by the earthquake



Duijiangyan 2011, completely rebuilt

Reconstruction Miracle

On our China trip, Andrew dragged the family back to the area devastated by the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake. In just three years they've finished a \$150 Bn reconstruction programme, of 5m houses and several cities. An astonishing feat of scale and speed.

University Risk Centre

The Centre for Risk Studies at Cambridge University finally began its research programme, after several years of fundraising and community building. Its annual meeting is fast becoming an industry event. The research agenda includes a new approach to systemic shocks.



Research website: <http://www.risk.ibs.cam.ac.uk/>

CLASSIFIED

Andrew had to get security clearance to work on the *Blackett Review Panel for Strategic Shocks*. This looked at government preparedness for risks such as pandemics and terror attacks. He could tell you more but then he'd have to kill you.