

Laird Lunacy 2005

Time has just flown. It gets a bit scary when your fifteen-year-old remarks on how quickly time is going by. But we can account for every minute of it. Here is the year in brief ...



January did not start well for the Laird family.

James headed to East Gippsland to camp with his girlfriend Gina and her family, and Su and Rod and Kat and her friends headed to the beach at Pt Lonsdale for a relax... or so they thought. Su and Rod hacked their way through massive undergrowth and layers of dirt while uttering interesting and highly edited observations. James, having such a good time, missed the bus back, ... the next three scheduled buses were booked out ... so Rod also headed to East Gippsland to pick son up ... a round trip of over 1100 km. Then there was the little matter of James applying for the wrong engineering course ... but we won't go there.

February showed definite signs of improvement: Kat started school, Su started College and James started orienting himself for university life – mainly by learning the correct way to raise a stubbie to his lips and how to flex one's figurative muscles. There was a flurry of activity to prepare ourselves for March ...

March saw the arrival of Jasmin, Kat's exchange partner from Bavaria in Germany. There was much too-ing and fro-ing, with the girls squeezing in a Girls' Weekend in Sydney with Rod's sister Susan in her apartment overlooking Coogee Beach. Jasmin would have quite happily spent the weekend on the balcony drinking in the view, but our intrepid adventurers also braved a Bridge Climb (Best thing I've done in a long while, says Su) and a swim with the jellyfish at Manly. James started Uni – Electrical Engineering (how original?!) and IT, together with Engineering Camp (aka drinking) and sundry other campus activities (aka learning to play pool).

April was spent recovering and catching up with very behind work (must be middle-aged spread). Well, some of us did some work ... while the flexing of figurative muscles by others contributed to some rather interesting family dynamics, resulting in colourful and highly edited comments by other family members ...

May was very busy for some in preparation for June ...

June saw Su take off for the UK for some private study in some of the ceramic centres of Britain. She fell in love with Bristol and took advantage of the factory tours on offer in Stoke-on-Trent (actually six conjoined towns ... but who cares?!). A week in London was crowned by a morning in the ceramics department of the V & A on the one day it was open in nine months ... Meanwhile, back at the ranch, James expended minimum effort at Uni, Kat continued to waft through Year 9 and Rod completed work at a furious rate so that in July ...

July saw the rest of the family take off for Germany. We met in Frankfurt, breakfasted with friends and drove to East Germany, where we had some fabulous family time. The cities are unspoiled, the people open and friendly and the autobahns are empty, so Rod could really put his foot down ... Weimar was beautiful, Leipzig was interesting, Dresden was Dresden, and Meissen was rather unexpectedly a bit grotty, but we loved them all. We drove back to Düsseldorf (as we always seem to do) to see as many friends as possible (apologies to those we didn't see), then down to Nürnberg, Regensburg (where Su had studied in 1978 – she felt like Rippette van Winkel when she went back ... completely disoriented), then Passau and Salzburg, before descending *en masse* on Jasmin's family south of München ... where we enjoyed their wonderful hospitality and all that Bavaria has to offer. The last night, spent in the mediaeval walled town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber was just magic. It was so peaceful. Pity we had to go home ... with everyone lapsing into their old habits again.

August was frantic for the high achievers amongst us – there seemed to be an insurmountable backlog of things to do and some degree of tension between family members... James decided the easiest way to deal with all of that was to move out – with two of his school friends. In what seemed like no time at all, the trio was equipped with almost every conceivable mod-con imaginable - thanks mainly to generous mums clearing out their cupboards. We're not sure of the standard of cuisine on offer, although we *do* know that they are all keen to have dinner here once a week! Happily we are enjoying much better relations as a result of James taking charge of his life. He is having a lot of fun.

September brought new challenges – Rod's mum had a stroke that landed her in hospital. Her rehabilitation continued through **October**, when we all seemed to do a lot of work and study. Mum finally made it home in early November and is now doing well with the help of some carers and Rod's Dad.

November also saw the inevitable round of assessment for Su and James and Kat. Some of us got stressed, the rest of us assiduously studied the insides of our eyelids. Requests for plants for yet another plant stall nearly sent Su up the wall, as she was busy preparing the house at Pt. Lonsdale for sale ...

December isn't yet over, but it looks to be just as busy as every other month. Rod's Renaissance Dance Group have done their Christmas concerts, Su's done the rounds of the student exhibitions and we've all done Speech Night. Pt. Lonsdale has been sold – it now has to be emptied after 50 years of habitation. Su has found some very interesting antique vacuum cleaners and the like stuffed away in high cupboards At the top of Su's Christmas list will no doubt be a very large rubbish skip ..., preferably staffed by an army of muscly elves Very soon it will be January again, with James and Kat going down to East Gippsland again with Gina and her family ... In the meantime, we wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas and look forward to seeing as many of you as we can in the New Year.

P.S. We now have a dedicated guest bedroom and are ready to receive boarders ...

P.P.S As a reminder, our email address is lairs@bigpond.net.au and our web page users.bigpond.net.au/lairs where you can find more news and pictures of the European trip and many creative endeavours