

# Many Milestones

This year has certainly been a year of milestones. James turned 18, Rod turned 50, then he and Su celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary in August, Kat turned 16, and Su was supposed to finish her Diploma – but didn't.

## James

James celebrated his 18th birthday in January by moving back home after sharing with friends for 6 months. Needless to say he moved home with considerably more than when he left. Su lost her workroom when he returned as we put his desk in there so he would not wake us when he goes to bed (He's a night-owl). Funnily enough, his "work" has spread out from his desk rather like the ripples on a pond, so it is a bit of a challenge to negotiate a path to Su's desk. To find her worktable these days you need a map and a compass. She is now working in the dining room – far



from satisfactory, but that's life! James has finally discovered that it is OK to do some work – end of third semester at Uni isn't too bad, I think, and has felt pretty pleased with his fourth semester results (we are, too). He was a bit too slow to organise a paid research position over the summer break, but has some projects he has negotiated with the university, and of course the equipment to go with them now resides in my workroom ... James has "discovered" cooking and with Santa's (and Brianna's – pictured above) help is busily equipping



himself for the next time he moves out. Thanks to the wonderful Watkins, James and his Dad spent a weekend on what turned out to be just about the only skiable snow of the season – but lots of fun as you can see!

## Kat(ja)

Kat is now 16 and don't we know it! All over the place emotionally and academically. But she knows what she wants – to study either fashion design or psychology – and practises both on a daily basis. The gothic phase of her development seems to be waning, and she has now "discovered" colour, particularly red, which looks fabulous against her white skin and (dyed) black hair. → She has proved to be a talented leader of adolescents, and has been selected to train as a leader with the Reach Foundation, where she will work with adolescents helping them with important issues such as self-

esteem and goal-setting. She has demonstrated a great talent for fashion advice and is now much in demand by members of the family as they add to their respective wardrobes. She also loves sewing, so we'll hopefully have some bonding sessions over the sewing machine in January.



## Rod

We celebrated Rod's birthday with a cocktail party in May. It was wonderful to have so many friends together at one time. (→ Rod & Les)



Rod's consulting work has been extraordinarily busy (He hasn't yet learnt to say "no"!)

and he has been working many nights and weekends of late. He has found time to continue his Renaissance Dancing ← and occasionally work a little on his photography. He bought a printer to print photos, and now some of his wonderful A3-sized creations adorn our walls and have made special gifts for others. The family photos continue to hide in boxes - but we are going to "do" them in January while both the children are away. He is also cycling seriously several times a week, Su's brother cycles with him when he's home, and a few other assorted 50-ish friends have recently joined him, which Su thinks is great. All have been pleased to patronise nephew Robin's bike shop and buy wonderful carbon road bikes this year; very spiffy as you can see! →



## Su

Su has had a mixed year, troubles with allergies and joints saw her pull out of several subjects at College, so she was unable to finish her Diploma - but the up-side is that she is changing

colleges next year to finish elsewhere in a more exciting environment, doing what she wants to do. A three week ceramics tour in Italy (much spent in Orvieto →) in September has reinforced her love of maiolica, so that will be her focus for 2007. In the meantime she is trying to keep the garden together so there will be something for visitors to see when it is open through the Open Garden Scheme in February. All the money raised is going to research into Muscular Dystrophy. We are all worried that the water restrictions will become so severe that we will not be able to water the garden at all before then. As of January, we will only be able to water for 8 hours per week on specified days with a hose. The next step is no watering at all. Keeping a large garden alive with bath water and the water from the washing machine isn't really feasible, especially when your joints don't allow you to carry anything. It has been hot here, but also very cold. We have moved from 15°C days to 42°C days and back to 20°C - not very good for either the garden or for people's health. We had just 14°C on Christmas Day - the coldest one on record! Our biggest problem is lack of water. It just doesn't rain any more (as predicted by the climate change gurus) and promises to get drier and hotter yet. The bushfires have been a major problem as they destroy precious native forests and catchment areas for the reservoirs and use up farmers' scarce water supplies. The smoke has been unpleasant - Melbourne, and much of Victoria (the same area as Great Britain) was shrouded in smoke for nearly 2 weeks, even though the nearest fires were 100 km away.



We hope 2006 bought you as many wonderful things as it did us! And we wish you all the best for 2007. Don't forget you we are easy to find online; mail: lairds@bigpond.net.au msn IM: thelairdfamily@hotmail.com (we are also on ICQ and AIM just ask) and Skype: thelairdfamily - all the latter do voice and video!

Lots of photos at the gallery at <http://users.bigpond.net.au/lairds/>  
login: Familyfriend · pw: loony