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DRINKS HELPED ME SLEEP

Bizarre garage tale

It should have been the event of the year, but instead partygirl Alison Mell's Halloween plans went badly astray. Alison told reporters that she'd left her overnight bag containing house keys at a friend's house before heading off for some serious partying around the nightspots of Newcastle. Separated from her friends Alison ended up on the 2am train back to Durham still in fancy dress. Bewildered parent David Mell (98) opened the door at 7am to find the cold and dishevelled teen had been unable to rouse anyone when she arrived home. Alison had been able to get into the garage and had used an old sofa and some dustsheets as a makeshift bed. Commenting on her experience afterwards, Alison said "It was a bit cold but the drinks earlier in the evening helped me get off to sleep."



Alison waiting for the limo to the school leavers' ball, Summer 2007

NO MORE COAL FOR JOHN

Janice's Dad, John, lit his last coal fire in March when the sale of Marshside Road was completed. In true last minute form, David had just about got the last piece of paper on the lounge wall in the new place in Durham when the furniture van arrived. The flat he has moved into is just 5 minutes down the road and well placed for shops and other amenities. The new place has gas heating and no chimney, so John has definitely lit his last coal fire and swept out his last grate. After over 50 years in his Victorian-semi in Southport, John has adjusted well to his new surroundings in Durham, though he did spend the first few weeks in his ground floor flat looking for the stairs

and his trusty string bag still brings out a few comments at the local shops. In many ways, John is proving to be the ideal tenant, keeping the garden tidy and allowing Janice to use his washing machine when hers went on the blink.



Rachael (left) and Alison in unaccustomed pose (not!)

MORE ACHIEVEMENTS AND SUCCESSES

The family added its fourth driver when Alison passed her driving test at the beginning of the year. At long last, the parents can now ask the children for that lift into town and, whilst the days of Mum and Dad taxis are not quite over, putting the boot onto the other foot now and then is proving to be an agreeable experience.

Alison also completed the family's 6 year stint of public examinations which started back in 2002 with Rachael's GCSEs. The necessary grades to get Alison into her chosen course of Social Anthropology at Manchester University were well and truly achieved, and once the matter of the current gap year is out of the way, she will be resuming her studies in Autumn 2008.

Rachael comfortably achieved a 2(i) in her second year exams and is now in her third year (of 4) at Cambridge. She is specialising in production engineering and has applied to join the RAF when she completes her course.

ARTHUR MELL 1931-2007

David's Dad, Arthur, died suddenly on 15 August after collapsing outside his home in Ainsdale, Southport whilst returning from the shops. He demonstrated his true Yorkshire colours right to the end: when brothers Stephen and David were clearing out his flat they really did find money stuffed under the mattress.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Rachael started the New Year with a trip to Pisa (of leaning tower fame), this being the University Water Polo's annual training camp and drinking festival. This was followed with a week's dogsledding at Easter with the air squadron somewhere very north inside the Arctic circle in Sweden. Summer was spent in various places including: a competitive walking event in

Nijmegen (Netherlands) which involved 4 days walking at 25 miles a day; time at RAF Lossiemouth and other assorted bases in England; and, a week in Bavaria adventure training, again with the university air squadron. Presently, she's in a panic over arrangements for the next training/drinking event this coming New Year in Berlin. The arrangements should have been made by the University men's team but being mere boys they were struggling and have just pulled out. As women's captain it has fallen to Rachael to step into the breach.



Victor Ludorum Rachael with the Varsity Cup, February after drubbing Oxford convincingly.

Not to be outdone in the how big is my carbon footprint stakes, Alison went away to Greece at Easter with the Shortwalkers water polo team and, thanks to a cockup on the flight booking front by your scribe, had to stay an extra day. The Greeks were very friendly and got her back to the airport on time. She also went on a trip with around 20 school friends to Cyprus after her A Levels and has managed to fit in a few girls only trips with her mates to places like the Lakes and Alton Towers. Alas (or at last, depending on your perspective) Alison's Summer of Partying with her mates came to an end sometime in mid-November when she became gainfully employed at a local newsagents and convenience store. The sound of Alison sneaking out of the house at 5am to sort out the papers is now replacing the sneaking in at the same time after a night on the toon. Alison is currently waiting to hear about some gap-year activity in South America that she's applied for.

Janice and David's plans for a quiet holiday in the sun once the annual period of sorting out the student properties was over didn't quite materialise. The prospect of a free holiday clearly outweighed any possible embarrassment of being old enough to vote and still going on holiday with your Mum and Dad. The whole family spent an enjoyable fortnight on the island of Fuerteventura in September.

PROPERTY EMPIRE

The empire continues to flourish and has not quite yet fallen victim to the global credit crunch. Tenants have been generally good, except for the one whose neighbours complained about his bedroom gymnastics. Laminate floor, metal bedframe, upstairs flat: not a good combination. A bad lot, he left prematurely owing us money.

AND FINALLY...

All of us here at Mello! wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and we sincerely hope that you have a very happy New Year.



In a lava tube on Fuerteventura

