

# Happy Holidays From the Kaubells

Holly Bell and Matt Kaufmann

December 2009



2009 seems to have divided itself up neatly into three parts:

**Pre-summer:**

*Busy busy busy*

**Summer:**

*England!*

**Post-summer:**

*Life falling into place*

(colleagues and a conference) and worked on his own NSF proposal, which was accepted and is paying part of his salary now. Preparing proposals is also not fun.

## But then came the summer!

We spent three months in Cambridge, England, thanks to Prof. Mike Gordon at the University of Cambridge, who helped us with arrangements, including an office for Matt. We rented a lovely little book-filled flat (apartment) near the Cam river, just a 15-minute walk from the city center. We both had some work to do, but spent a lot of time walking, reading for pleasure, eating in pubs, and just generally enjoying a quiet life, away from the record-breaking heat of Texas. Some of our favorite things were cream tea (with scones and clotted cream), pasties (basically Cornish turnovers), hard cider, and desserts like sticky toffee pudding and gooseberry fool (hmmm, most favorites were ingested).



Sticky Toffee Pudding:  
Our New Religion

## The year began

With Holly finishing up a bunch of projects for her long-time mentor and colleague, who left the University of Texas (UT) in December, 2008. Not much fun. Matt, along with siblings Candice and Richard, finally sold the house left by his mom and step-dad -- which was a big hassle, a big relief, and a big disappointment (due to the crash in housing prices). Matt served on a National Science Foundation (NSF) panel in April and really hated it -- formerly, that kind of hatred was reserved for reviewing papers, but it turns out that reviewing proposals is even worse! But he got to see sibs Brian and Mary in the D.C. area. In May Matt visited Boston



We also enjoyed living without a car, English modesty and humor (oops, that's "humour") and words like "muddled" and "dodgy."

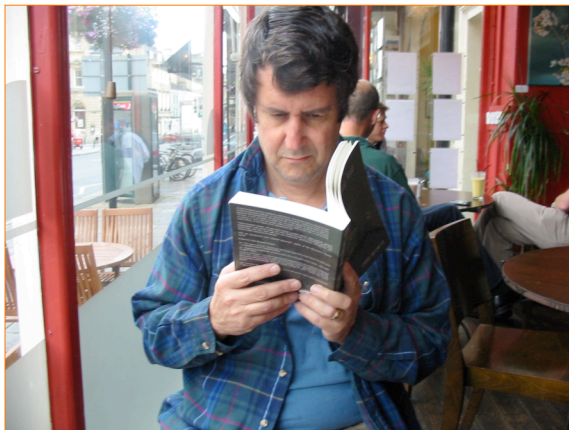
Matt did some work remotely and collaborated with Mike at Cambridge. Holly worked on several articles and a book on Hurricane Katrina, and made some new colleagues at the School of Social Work at Anglia Ruskin University. We took train trips to Bath, Ludlow, and Edinburgh. We also took advantage of the cultural life in Cambridge: the high point was a concert by the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. Imagine 8 VERY white people playing the

theme song of the movie "Shaft" on ukuleles -- **inspired silliness**.

### Returning home . . .

Holly taught her usual research course, and continues to work on the Katrina research. A particularly nasty example of academic politics this fall provided yet **another opportunity for Holly's spiritual growth**. Teaching a particularly good class of doctoral students and supervising an amazingly productive and hilarious group of Master's students reminded her of what she loves most about academic life -- doing research and mentoring students -- so it appears she will not be returning to her modeling career this year (smile).

Matt is officially part-time: 3 days a week at UT, largely worked remotely (at home), with about a day a week of consulting, all of which are related to his long-term pet project, the ACL2 theorem proving system. He's co-chairing a conference in Edinburgh, Scotland mid-July next year, so it's back to the UK for us next summer, though we don't yet know how long we'll stay there. We've continued our rediscovered passion of **reading for pleasure**. Holly just realized that one of the University libraries, which she associates with anxious last-minute lit reviews, actually has books that people read for FUN!?! Also videos and music CDs. Who knew?



**Matt Enjoying Our New Favorite Pastime**

### New Year's Resolutions

Matt's New Year's Resolution is to **care less**: to avoid his tendency to over-think things and over-respond to issues. Someone

once wrote in his high school yearbook that Matt's problem is that he cares too much -- time to fix that! (Hmmm, except since becoming thus inspired, he learned that the author of that comment has recently been convicted of federal tax fraud!) Holly's New Year's Resolution is to accept herself as she is and not focus on changing anything more serious than a printer cartridge.



**Holly in Georgian Heaven at Jane Austen Museum in Bath**



**Holly Grasps a Basic Truth About Herself**

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**We wish you the very best that 2010 can bring!**

**--Holly & Matt**

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