

## Christmas 2009

It's been an adventure-filled year for Helen and me ... exciting enough that I have agreed to write an actual (mass mailing) Christmas letter. This is both my first Christmas letter, and our first Christmas together ... so if you're wondering why it has taken so long for Helen's Christmas card to arrive, I'm to blame.

Helen is still working for Carr-Gomm, and spends the weekends I'm not dragging her all over the Scotland countryside, home in Edinburgh, babysitting her one year-old nephew, Harvey. Helen still loves her work supporting people with disabilities, although it's no secret that she is currently 'soul-searching' as she tries to figure out where to take her career next.



After her 2008 trip to visit her dad on-the-job in Cambodia, Helen has developed the travel bug, with a regular conversation topic of "where we'll go next." For now, we've been quite happy limiting our adventures to exploring our 'own back yard', starting with the *Isle of Skye* and Helen's first hesitant camping experience in April, to our most recent 3-day (end of October) canoeing trip in *Glenn Affric*, where despite paddling head-on into the wind and rain, Helen couldn't

hide a perma-grin behind the water dripping from the front of her hood. It helps that I've learned the secret to her wilderness disposition is keeping her well fed, and fortunately, I've yet to find camping food that she doesn't love.

For me, 2009 marks the start of my third year in Scotland, my second year working for Proper Games, and a year of numerous 'firsts'. In April, we released our *first* game 'FLOCK!' for the PlayStation3, Xbox360, and PC, which went on to win our *first* Scotland BAFTA for *Game of the Year*. (Just this week we have completed our second game to be released in April 2010, 'Fight Fight: Double Impact'.) In June, my parents flew over to be here for my University of Abertay graduation where I received an MSc with Distinction in Computer Games Technology, wearing my *first* kilt. And on the family front, my sister Jill and her husband Rich have provided me with my *first* niece, Haley ... and so I now walk around the office in true 'Michael Scott' style with the 'Worlds Greatest Uncle' coffee mug I purchased for myself.



Helen and I know how fortunate we are to have jobs we love and to be able to go on our low-budget adventures in a country so full of history and natural beauty. From our nights of camping in Loch Ness and Sandwood Bay with Marc and Cheryl to the days strolling the streets of Edinburgh and visiting Helen's family, to the mornings in our PJs, chatting with Kari and Thomas in Alaska over the webcam, 2009 has provided unexpected opportunities to be with friends and family, even though we are so far apart.

It is our hope that your year was as wonderful as ours, and we wish you a very merry Christmas and happy Hogmanay.

John and Helen  
Dundee, Scotland