

Paul and Margaret Hardy,  
15 Kentings, Comberton, CAMBRIDGE CB23 7DT  
Email paul @ paulhardy.net; Margaret @ paulhardy.net,  
Web: <http://www.pghardy.net>, Tel 01223 263232

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Dear

### 2009 - A quiet year

- 2009 has been a good year for work and travels. Paul has done lots of both but Margaret is making a bid for more of each by going to India to do two months' voluntary work in January. It will be a conservation project (plants not animals) in Tamil Nadu, though she hasn't yet received final details of her placement from the Projects Abroad team.
- Paul has had a fair amount of business travels including visits to Austria, Estonia, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, three trips to Germany, and two to California.
- Margaret went with him to Vienna in February and, due to a chance meeting at the airport, agreed to return to teaching full time in the summer term at the Middle School from which she retired, much to the amusement of the staff and bemusement of students who remembered her retirement. She enjoyed teaching History and Geography to Year 7 (hormones and hysteria) and Year 8 (Angst and attitude) but found it tiring. It was however very useful in funding her trip to India.
- We both went to California in March where we met up with many friends. Margaret planted trees as part of a reforestation project in 'her' forest (aka San Bernardino National Forest) and Paul made a CD with 'his' music group at Green Valley Lake. Paul went back in July, again to Redlands but also to the ESRI User Conference in San Diego (13,000 attendees!).
- We have enjoyed walking holidays - in Apulia in southern Italy (a memorable passion play, lots of wild flowers and quaint little stone dwellings called 'trulli'); Montenegro (a beautiful country with a spectacular coastline); and Gran Canaria (a volcanic cone which was vertically challenging - and hard on the knees to 'flatlanders' from Cambridgeshire).
- We ticked off one of Paul's long-anticipated destinations by going to the cities of the Silk Road in Uzbekistan. Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva were stunning and Uzbekistan was an interesting country, though one with ongoing problems from its Soviet and Moghul history.
- Paul continues to work for ESRI Europe, based in Rotterdam, though when not travelling he works from an office in Cambridge or from home. His focus is the national mapping and cadastral agencies - so the Ordnance Survey and Land Registry equivalents across Europe.
- After her teaching term, Margaret has reverted to retirement, though she does 'occasional' (usually one/two days a week) supply teaching in two junior schools which she really enjoys. The rest of her time is spent walking, playing badminton, improving her French, Spanish and Bridge and being 'a lady who lunches'.
- Paul's mother, who is now 96 and increasingly confused, has recently moved into a care home in Ashby de la Zouch near to Paul's brother Michael and his wife. Our foster son, Dom, and his girlfriend Sam, have moved to Haverhill, where they hope employment prospects will be better than in Luton.

For once, we will be home for Christmas, with an outing to Ashby on Boxing Day. Margaret leaves for India on 1 January so it will certainly be a very different new year for us! We hope that 2010 is a happy and successful year for you.

With our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year