

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

December 2012

Dear

- 2012 has been a varied year. Paul has done plenty of work and travels; Margaret has travelled a bit less and worked a lot less! However, Paul's mother died which was the end of an era.
- We finished last year with a Ramblers trip to Cape Verde over Christmas, where we walked on 3 of the 10 islands (off the bulge of Africa): Santiago, São Vicente (home of the singer Cesária Évora) and Santo Antão, where we saw what must have been the smallest soccer pitch in the world. The Cape Verdians are football mad, but the island has very little flat land.
- Paul continues to work for the US company Esri while based in Cambridge. His business trips have included Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Ireland, France, the USA and nearly Saudi Arabia (recently postponed), unfortunately in bursts rather than spread through the year.
- The highlight of our travel together was Jordan, including the rose red city of Petra which, despite 'hype', exceeded expectations. It was unseasonably cold for March - only 4°C in Amman and 24°C back at home. We visited spectacular Roman remains at Jerash, saw the sun rise over the desert while camping in Wadi Rum, and Paul swam in the Dead Sea (in the rain!)
- In June we went to a family gathering and christening of our great niece in Udine in northern Italy and seized the opportunity to revisit Slovenia for a spot of walking near Lake Bohinj.
- Margaret celebrated a semi-significant birthday walking part of the Camino de Santiago between Leon and Santiago de Compostela with a friend. (Paul was working at the time).
- Other travels included a week in northwest Portugal (pleasant walking, good food, but unpronounceable language), five days in Budapest and a weekend in our twin village in France.
- Paul plays concertina in local folk music sessions and enjoyed a residential concertina weekend in Somerset. He bought a 100 year old wreck off the Internet and has successfully rebuilt it.
- Margaret enjoys the varied life of a retiree, walking, playing badminton and bridge, improving her Spanish and French, and going to the theatre, museums and art galleries. She is still occasionally taken out, dusted down and put in front of an interactive whiteboard to teach.
- She has donned overall and headscarf for Wimpole at War and is going back to her role as housemaid for Victorian Christmas, Wimpole no longer offers hands-on education on a regular basis, but she has high hopes of Anglesey Abbey, another National Trust property nearby.
- Paul's mother died in February, aged 98, after a short illness - a mercy as she had slipped into dementia. Many people came to her funeral to celebrate her life and career as a teacher. Memorably, it was officiated by a vicar who is also a professional Cliff Richard look-alike!
- Our foster son, Dom, and his girlfriend Sam have moved to Bedford, where Dom is working as a lorry driver.
- We expect to be in Barbados for Christmas, on a Ramblers holiday. This is quite a departure from our usual obscure/undeveloped destinations. We hope it's a temporary aberration not a sign of advancing age!

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, and a happy and successful year in 2013,