



Our highlights of 2014? Oh my dears, there are so many. Where should we start? Well, in January Cat was heavily pregnant and people were asking why she was still working... "they pay for the air-conditioning" – as the temperatures headed for the mid 40's! I drove a friend home from work one evening late in the month, discussing when the baby was going to show up. "I've told her she has to wait till February!" (my baby shower was planned for February 1st). Well, she did, but only till 5.28am. Thankfully although the labour was not fun, the birth itself had no complications and they let us out just 7 hours later – so my baby shower was rapidly moved to our house and joined by the guest of honour, our little baby girl Chloe.

She has really been the focus of much of the rest of our year, the minutae of a baby growing day by day, learning about her fingers, finding her toes, learning to crawl and explore and stand. Trying food for the first time, an ever more expressive face, and ever increasing vocabulary of sounds and syllables. My first video of her sound is at 6 weeks old where she quite clearly parroted 'Hi!'. She hasn't stopped chatterboxing since (and in-fact, when she's quiet, we start to wonder what's happened!).

In and around this new person that has taken up so much of our time and energy and love this year, however, we've found time for a few other things. Cat's mum came to visit for a couple of weeks, spending hours in the middle of the night burping the baby so we could get some sleep; Pete has changed jobs twice – well, he's about to start the second new one – having been told that his company would be wrapped up by the end of the year as a part of the new federal budget. He did however manage to squeeze in a week in Paris training with the first of those new jobs which whilst mostly work did give him a chance to wander round an old haunt or two from Cat's year there many moons ago!

Our travel has been a bit more limited, particularly with Cat working Saturdays since July, but we've managed a trip or three still – not just to our favourite spots on the South Coast but also up to the Central Coast for Easter (Chloe's first sea-paddles in the beautiful rockpools there), and down to the Snowy Mountains for a couple of days of snow-sports in the winter.

In international travel news, first there was a family-and-friends filled 4 week trip back to England in June before Cat went back to work, catching up with everyone we could possibly squeeze in – I think the count ended up at around 150! It was really lovely to see everyone (though we still hope you'll all come and visit us here sometime too!). A couple of months after that we headed across the other ocean to the USA, ostensibly for the wedding of a beautiful couple in Buffalo, but since we were going all that way we thought we'd better drop in on a couple of other people as well, so we managed to see San Francisco, rural Washington State, Niagara Falls, NYC and Cat popped into Philly for the day as well. It was lovely to see our friends again, and a couple of new places on top of that.

October, after that, really was the month of crazy. We arrived home with a very unsettled baby, Cat upped her hours at work to 4 days a week, Chloe started daycare, and Pete started his new job with that week in Paris, all at once! And 24 hours after Pete got back, Cat headed to New Zealand for a week with a bunch of other travel agents, courtesy of Tourism New Zealand. An action-packed week it was, non-stop for 6 days with visits including Hobbiton, the glowworm caves, two hot spring spas, a range of adventure activities, and a Maori evening (among others) – and a *lot* of good food! Pete, however, was extremely pleased to see Cat on her return, a week with an unsettled Chloe with a new job was a stressful combination!!

Since then things have settled somewhat, Chloe got used to being back here and going to daycare and is sleeping much better again (except when she's teething), Cat is starting to get her work-life balance back to

something sensible, and Pete is really looking forward to the job he is due to start next week at Marist Catholic College where he is joining the IT team. As a result, we had a quiet but pleasant Christmas, a morning with just the 3 of us, lunch barbecued by the lake and a friend joining us for dinner in the evening, and now we turn our faces with huge positivity and hope to the coming year, which will see 3 sets of visitors in the next 4 weeks, followed closely by Chloe's 1st birthday, followed even more closely by 1st birthdays for many of Chloe's little friends, and in the middle of the year another return to the UK for Pete to a family wedding.

A final shout-out here has to go to the incredible new family friends we have made through Chloe; alongside our already strong and super-supportive network we have added some amazingly good friends who have helped us out endlessly, been there through thick and thin and really filled what could have been a huge gap with our family overseas as our little family grew and learned how to be a proper family unit! And throughout the year, we have really enjoyed seeing Chloe with her little friends as we coffee'd and cake'd and swam and walked our way through the days, growing and interacting more and more. We are really looking forward to those friendships (both mums and bubs) continuing to grow through the next years!

In summary, 2014 was a pretty incredible rollercoaster ride, and we are now super-excited to see what 2015 will bring!



In the attached photos, we present to you the many faces and ever more static hair of Chloe, with minor appearances by Bournemouth beach, Canberra autumn trees, Grandma Lizzie, the Buffalo wedding, Niagara Falls, Pete after his half marathon, in Paris, and in York, and Cat in Hobbiton, New Zealand.