

Our 2011 news

2011 has brought some huge changes to our lives. Earlier in 2010, we had had news the Australian immigration system was changing again, and that we would be pushed down the priority list to what we re-defined as 'immigration purgatory'. They might get round to looking at our application – eventually. And even then, we didn't stand a strong chance of being accepted. We decided that it was worth looking for a way round this, and eventually we decided to look at applying for state sponsorship. We waited impatiently for state sponsorship lists to come out, and eventually, they were all available. At the start of 2011, we were looking through the lists, and we finally found that Cat's job title was listed on the ACT (Canberra: Australian Capital Territory) list. So, we applied for state sponsorship. And then we held our breath, and waited – again. Finally, in early June, we heard: we had been successful! This meant that our visas would be approved, and it should be within months. In early September, we received notification that our permanent residency visas had been granted, and we now have the right to live and work in Australia. One-way flights were subsequently booked, and we leave the UK on February 11th, 2012. Cat is just starting to realise that it's a lot closer than she thinks it is!



So, the Australia saga spread right across our 2011, and took up a lot of our time and energy at intervals through the year, but there were some other events interspersed into the middle:



At the start January, Cat's mum was professed as a 'Sister-under-Promise', in a lovely, happy service at Tymawr Convent. There was some concern that the snow would cause problems, but thankfully it held off and everyone was able to be there and enjoy the day, including Cat's godmother Jan and Mair's godmother Helen who hadn't seen each other in 5 years and talked non-stop all the way there and back in the back of Cat's car!

In March, we had a lovely week in Cat's Dad's little cottage on the West Wales coast, south of Aberystwyth. A week of castles, waterfalls, hills, and the coast path, and lots of relaxing – we both badly needed a break, and made the most of what was a mostly dry week!



In July, we celebrated our 5th wedding anniversary, with a happy picnic in beautiful sunshine at Blaise Castle, followed by drinks at the local cricket club (of which Pete is a member) in the evening. It was a really happy day with friends and family, a fitting celebration of our time together.

After the TIPD programme finished in March, Cat was made redundant in the summer – not entirely unexpectedly. Finishing work at the end of July, Cat spent August's gardening leave jobhunting, dancing, and catching up with as many friends as possible, before heading to Taize (via Bournemouth) with some old friends at the end of the month. Having been offered a new job just before she went on holiday, she had a lovely relaxing time and came back ready to start the new job with the start of September, managing a small office for a water company (and I can assure you, they need managing!). She will be sad to say goodbye to them, despite only being there for a short time, and is hoping that in the not too distant future she will be back in touch with them, as they hope to work in Australia later next year.





Over the summer, Pete decided to get fit(ter). After Cat's car died earlier in the year, he'd started cycling to work, and found that it had really helped the back and knee issues that had affected his running. He started with a 56 mile ride from Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare, and never looked back. Through the summer he then cycled 65 miles round the Mendips, about 250 miles over 5 days from Bristol to his parents' house in Yorkshire (while Cat was in Taizé), and then London to Brighton with work colleagues in September, and he rounded the year off with Cardiff half-marathon in October, and another 65 mile cycle round the Isle of Wight in December! He's already signed up for Canberra half-marathon next April, and looking forward to exploring the many miles of cycle paths that the ACT has. He's also managed to lose 3 stone, which is absolutely brilliant.



Alongside the various 'events', of course, life has been as busy as ever, with Cat both teaching and dancing all through the year, her first ever show pieces on stage at the university dance society's March show, and a dance exam just last week. Pete has been playing 5-a-side with work all year, and played regular cricket for the local club through the summer, as well as attending the Superbowl Superbash at the O2 in February, a Manchester United match in November, and a variety of small-town football matches (Westbury United, Bradley Stoke, Almondsbury Town...) in between! Cat also was asked to be a member of the PCC at church this year (and has never been so startled!), which has been enlightening, to say the least, and has thoroughly enjoyed the house group she's part of.



There have been weekends away and days out across the country, and even as far as northern France, with friends – the regular haunts: Lincoln, London, Bournemouth and Yorkshire, but also Exmoor, north Devon and Herefordshire, among others. There have been theatre trips – to the ballet in London, to musicals in Bristol, to a play in Nottingham, and to see friends performing for local amateur operatics companies. And more recently there have been a number of visits to Bradford-on-Avon, to see Mair, flat-sitting for a friend moving to the UK in January (from Canberra, as it happens) – Cat has been thoroughly enjoying having Mair close enough to pop over for dinner for the last couple of months!



So, in a flurry of paperwork and family Christmasses, 2011 is drawing to a close, and we are looking to 2012 and wondering what it will bring – a new country, a new city, new jobs, new everything (except the furniture we're taking with us!) - and we hope that one day we might see you out there!

- Cat & Pete