



Christmas 2006 from the Wombat's Treechange Retreat



This year has been focussed on getting settled back in Australia in both Scone and Newcastle. In Scone we have concentrated on the back garden (previously non-existent) and now have a series of trees (orange, mandarin, cherry, nectarine) and climbers (wisteria) to hide the fence. We have even managed to grow from seed some persimmon trees and we will plant them out next year when they are bit more mature. We planted 8 grapevines, including two of a variety bred by Veronica's dad at CSIRO. Unfortunately our passionfruit and blueberries have not thrived but on the other hand the strawberries under the roses out the front have been going gangbusters and the veg garden has provided an endless supply of silver beet plus other veges. Next winter we intend to work on the front garden and turn some of the acres of lawn into native plantings.

Healthwise Garry still has some minor lingering problems with his pericarditis but the drugs mostly keep it under control provided he doesn't get too tired and/or pick up infections. We celebrated when his cardiologist said he has not developed scar tissue on his heart and pericardium, which was one of the more serious possible long-term side effects of his condition.

Garry started his Professorial Fellowship in February and has been enjoying the ability to focus on his research. He has been spending 3-4 days/week in Newcastle and the remainder of time working in Scone (about 2 hours commute by train or car). With broadband, email, and web access to journals through the Uni library this has worked very well. For the first half of the year he rented an apartment in a building just behind Newcastle Beach, which was a

wonderful antidote for England and Leeds. A particular highlight was sitting on the balcony having breakfast and watching the whales offshore playing and gambolling during migration season. In the 2nd half of the year of the year he has housesat a friend's house a few blocks back from the beach (no view unfortunately). In the middle of the year we bought a townhouse on The Hill in the city. For those that know Newcastle it's just near Christchurch Cathedral. It has a shared heated pool and is 3 blocks from the beach, harbour, restaurants and cinemas, so is very convenient to everything except the Uni (see www.arentine.com.au). It has tenants until the end of January at which time Garry will move in. We joke that Garry has a seachange during the week and treechange at the weekend, and somewhere in between he has to get some work done (our non-Australian friends may not get the joke, its too long to explain ... sorry).

Veronica continues to enjoy her job as Registrar of the Local Court in Scone. As foreshadowed in last year's Christmas letter she was elected to the executive of her union branch (the Petty Sessions Officers Association) – not hard when the number of volunteers equals the number of vacancies. One of the major issues this year has been the development of a resource model calculating the productivity of every Local Court in N.S.W. The model produced by head office had numerous flaws and as each successive version was produced Veronica replied with a detailed critique setting out the errors, why their method was wrong, and what steps should be taken to produce a correct model. She has enjoyed the opportunity to use her non-law qualifications.





Garry and Veronica at the end of their Grand Traverse Walk

Speaking of those Monash qualifications, Veronica thoroughly enjoyed the Howitt Hall 40th birthday reunion on the Sunday of the October long weekend. Melbourne turned on an unbelievably sunny day, the present Howitt residents turned on a barbecue on the lawn in front of Howitt, and well over a hundred former residents turned up and enjoyed catching up on each other's news, reminiscing, looking at old photos and Ah-So's (the hall newspaper), and inspecting the building which played such a tall part in our lives. Little has changed although we did notice how much more stuff all the present residents have in their rooms.

This year's holiday was close to home in New Zealand. To celebrate Garry's recovery we did the Grand Traverse hike which is a 6 day hike combining the Greenstone and Routburn Tracks crossing the Southern Alps in each direction. We had clear weather (this part of the country rains 2 days out of 3) and only had one day where we were walking in the clouds, which unfortunately was the day with the most spectacular views. We then spent a couple of days in Christchurch with Veronica's second cousin Rob Green and his wife Kate Dewes (the original reason for our visit) before going to Hanmer Springs for some more gentle day walks in the surrounding



The view from the Routburn Falls Lodge

forests followed by long dips in the thermal pools. One day at Hanmer we had 160km/hr winds and on our hike the next day Garry was professionally entertained by the tree wind throw.

As usual we made several day trips to Tamworth during the Country Music Festival in January but apart from that most of our time has been spent in Scone or Newcastle. Our (mostly Veronica these days) family history research continues with increasing amounts of new UK information available on the web. A highlight in January was a family reunion of Henry Colditz's descendants in Tenterfield to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Henry's arrival in Australia from Germany. Garry's brother Ian and his family, and sister Annette also attended. The reunion photos motivated Garry to put selected family history data on his Telluric Research website (see below).

We have been using Garry's company's website for personal stuff and you can see more photos of NZ (and our other holidays), the houses, and our hobbies and kinks there (www.telluricresearch.com/garry). Our personal email addresses are unchanged (v.antcliff@telluricresearch.com and g.willgoose@telluricresearch.com).

