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Dear

- 2015 has passed quickly. We started the year in Vietnam which was very different - memorable for the smiles of the people and the number of motorbikes which carried everything - families, beds, large works of art and even live animals.
- We have travelled within Europe - to our twin village in Normandy, to Alsace, Lanzarote and Copenhagen, where we stayed for 5 days without seeing the Little Mermaid, but learnt a lot about Danish history in the excellent National Museum, where it was warm.
- Our big trip of the year was to Russia, where we visited Moscow and St Petersburg, both very interesting and dramatic cities. Russia was not memorable for the smiles of the populace but for its wonderful churches and palaces and for its champagne - a glass of which was cheaper than a cup of tea! We noted that Russians like bling - lots of gold, amber, lapis lazuli etc.!
- We have also seen bits of England including Kings Lynn, which is only 50 miles away but which we had never visited, Stratford on Avon and the Cotswolds - once for the wedding celebrations of a son of old friends and a second time for a weekend walking with our local rambling group in perfect autumn weather.
- We celebrated Paul's birthday by visiting Heidi, with whom Margaret shared a room on her volunteer trip to India. She lives in a converted watermill near Koblenz - rivers Mosel and Rhine and some spectacular castles. Margaret's birthday was more low-key: a local walk with friends, a pub lunch and watching Wimbledon in the afternoon. Dom and Sam gave her theatre tickets to see *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night* which we can highly recommend.
- We've been to London more times this year than before - most recently we've seen the Ai Wei Wei exhibition at the RA followed by *Les Miserables*!
- Paul has been to two concertina events at Kilve in Somerset, which gather together many of the concertina players of England. He has bought a couple of concertinas off the internet which are in need of renovation, which will keep him busy in his 'man shed' workshop.
- He continues to work 4 days a week for U.S. company Esri, now from an office in central Cambridge. He's involved in a big European project (ELF), which has led to some interesting travels. Recently he has had a week in Redlands (CA) where we lived - maybe his last trip there as he plans to retire fully at the end of May. He brought home his walking boots which have lodged, between visits, in a friend's office - a variation on 'hanging up your boots'.
- Margaret continues to walk, play badminton and bridge and to try to improve her linguistic skills. She has concluded that learning new vocabulary at her age is like having jelly thrown at you - a little sticks, but most slides off!
- We are planning to spend Christmas walking in Crete. December is its wettest month but we hope it will be drier and less muddy than the UK!

Enjoy your Christmas wherever you are, and have a happy and successful year in 2016

*Paul & Margaret*