

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

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Dear all,

- 2016 has been an eventful year, with both planned events and unexpected happenings.
- As expected, after a few years of four days a week, Paul retired fully at the end of May. He's done one week of consultancy since, and some mapping to explain alternatives for a village 20mph scheme, but is content with this life transition and has no time to be bored.
- He has joined U3A and Educating Senioritas, doing new academic pursuits like classes in Philosophy, talks at art exhibitions, Bridge tuition, and guided visits to Cambridge highlights.
- Paul's man-shed has proved its worth, where he has spent time restoring and fettling old concertinas, and setting up Raspberry Pi throwaway computers. This latter is to learn about their hardware and software capabilities, and also to do some historic computer simulation for software archaeology - resurrecting mapping software from the 1970s and 80s.
- Paul's retirement present to himself was a very memorable trip to Yellowstone National Park and its neighbours of Glacier and the Grand Tetons National Parks. Glacier NP in particular was spectacular - go soon, as the last glaciers are predicted to be gone by 2030. Margaret, meanwhile, spent a long weekend in Berlin and looked after the garden.
- We have had a few medical setbacks this year. Paul twisted an ankle badly in May which took a long time to heal. While he was in the US, Margaret had to make a foray to A&E with Atrial Fibrillation (heart beating at triple normal rate). She had her heart stopped and rebooted and is now on medication, which has dampened her enthusiasm for long-distance travel.
- We started the year rambling in Crete, and have also rambled near Olympiada in Greece (birthplace of Aristotle, and a lovely area), and walked parts of the Portuguese Camino between Oporto and Santiago in Spain.
- In October we went to the Spanish Pyrenees on a 'Fiestas and Fungi' walking week, staying in a remote hamlet with memorable views of ethereal misty vistas. We enjoyed a mushroom and cider festival with Joaldunak traditional dancers dressed in skirts, conical hats and sheepskins, with big cowbells on their backs!
- We spent two weekends in our twin village in Normandy. On one there was an unusual walk round the area in which Madame Bovary was set, with readings from the novel en-route.
- We have also, unusually for us, explored parts of England including Northumberland (Beamish and Alnmouth), Sussex (we like Arundel), and Kent (staying at Leeds Castle) as well as revisiting Derbyshire for a family wedding celebration.
- We are planning to spend Christmas walking in Madeira, which will be vertically challenging. It will be interesting to see how it has recovered from the wildfires earlier this year.

Enjoy your Christmas wherever you are, and have a happy and successful year in 2017.

Paul & Margaret