



## McLoughlins' Missive December 2011

### Our contacts

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**2011** has been something of a roller-coaster year for us, full of highs and lows.

In March we celebrated Hazel's dad's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, with all the family, in Scotland. Then in July, the family gathered again, to give him his final send-off – he had slipped away peacefully while watching TV in his flat. Just after the funeral, John cheered us up by announcing his engagement to Vicky. His Grandad would have been very pleased. He'd been saying for a while that "It was time the boy settled down!"

At the end of August, the day before her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, Mike's mum passed away and he went back for the funeral, which was well attended as Audrey had been very active in the Methodist church in Brighthouse. She'd been unwell for some time, so it wasn't entirely unexpected, but very sad all the same, and quite the end of an era for us.

Fortunately there have been plenty of good things in 2011. Hazel completed her English-teaching studies and obtained a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). She's had a couple of opportunities to do some teaching for the Adult Migrant English Programme, while the regular teacher was away. No permanent position available at the moment, but she hopes to do some tutoring for professionals from overseas who need an English qualification in order to practise their profession here. She has started playing badminton again after a 12-year gap (*feet like lead and eyes not seeing the shuttle too well, but hopefully things will get better! – H*)



John & Vicky—and the ring

She's joined a book-group and a writing group and leads an English-conversation session at the library in Devonport once a week, so is getting more into the local scene.

Mike has continued working for Westpac Bank, and the frustrations are mostly outweighed by his enjoyment in meeting the locals and resolving some of their financial problems. He's also continued his support of one of the local Rotary groups, of which he's been Treasurer for a couple of years now. At the end of October he took a colleague and our good friend, Graham, with him for a long weekend at Ruth and Neil's in Auckland, to watch some of the rugby World Cup. They saw the England v Scotland match – and each followed his own allegiance! Judging by the video that was taken, a very good time was had by all!

On the farm, the olive season was not good this year. A cold, wet and windy summer resulted in a poor harvest, but we still managed to get a bronze medal at the National Olive Oil Awards. We've just had a decent spring, with a good balance of sun and rain, and a warm summer is forecast, so hopefully the olives will do better next year.

Quinn the Husky turned 13 this year and has slowed down considerably, but is still fast enough to catch a possum (the less said about that, the better!). We still have the two goats, busily munching their way through the season's new bramble growth. Three young cows have been a new addition to the McLoughlin menagerie. One of them is a fund-raiser for a local basketball team, one is destined for the freezer and the third will hopefully put some money back in the bank eventually.

We've lots to look forward to in 2012. John and Vicky get married on August 30<sup>th</sup> at Aughton in Lancashire, the week after our niece, Hannah's, wedding, so we have a double celebration to go back for!

Before that, we're looking forward to a family get-together at Easter. John and Vicky are coming to Australia for some friends' wedding, and we're meeting up with them in Sydney for a few days afterwards. Ruth and Neil are joining us too, so it will be lovely to be all together there. Then John and Vicky are coming back to Tasmania for a few days before they return to the UK.

Back to the present, and we're spending Christmas with Ruth and Neil in Auckland again. They moved into their own place at the beginning of the year, and we're looking forward to our first Christmas there with them.

It just remains to wish you all the very best for the festive season and the coming New Year. Ideally, the world's woes will all be resolved and we'll live happily ever after!! We can only hope.

Much Love to all,  
Hazel and Mike



**Merry Christmas!**