

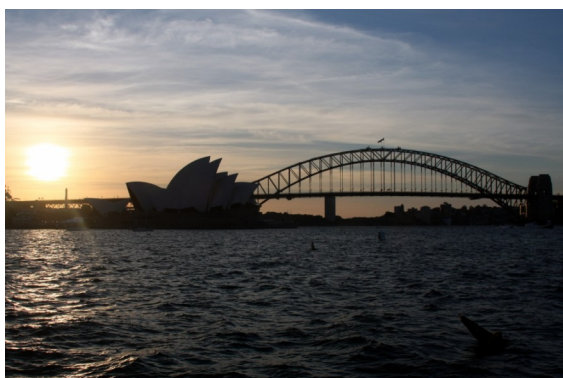


McLoughlins' Missive December 2012

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This has been a truly wonderful year for us. Easter found us in Sydney - with both our children, an unusual occurrence now that we're scattered so widely across the globe. John and Vicky were over for some friends' wedding, so Ruth and Neil, Mike and I took the opportunity to join them. We did the tourist thing together - ate good food, saw the sights, watched the sun



set over Sydney Harbour Bridge and just enjoyed our time together. It was made super special when Ruth told us she was pregnant - our first grandchild would be born in November!

Other good things were to happen before then, though. John and Vicky came back with us from Sydney and spent a week in Tassie - Vicky's first visit and a lovely chance for us to get to know her better. John showed her the local sights and



we all spent their last weekend together in Hobart. We visited Tassie's latest big tourist attraction - MONA, the Museum of Old and New Art (www.mona.net.au), a truly remarkable place, built into a solid cliff! We also managed the walk to the Wineglass Bay lookout - on a glorious day when the view was amazing.

When John and Vicky left we knew it wouldn't be long before we saw them again - for their wedding in August. We were back in the UK for two weeks - and two weddings, our niece, Hannah's being the first, and the first big family get-together. A lovely day, despite the rain, and we wish Hannah and Andrew every happiness. John and Vicky were luckier with the weather on their big day, the following week - just a light sprinkle of rain as they left the lovely old church in Formby, Vicky's hometown (near Liverpool). Then the sun came out and the weather for the





reception was glorious. It was so nice to get to know Vicky's family, just a pity we can't see more of them.

Back home again we settled down to await the birth of our grandchild. The wait was shorter than expected as Emma Jayne arrived exactly a month early, on October 12th. She was a healthy weight for a prem baby, though, and has made excellent progress. They're coming to us for Christmas so we're excitedly waiting for our first cuddle! Christmas shopping is much more fun this year!



On the home front, 2012 was an excellent year for our olives. We had a record crop, so a record amount of oil - which won two silver medals at the Hobart Fine Food Awards in August. The challenge now is to sell it all! We've managed to get onto the supplier list for the local Independent Grocers' Association and have had a few orders from other parts of Tassie - including Flinders Island. We're still trying to find a way of getting it onto the mainland as we reckon it would go down well there.

Quinn the husky is still soldiering on, though his

back legs are very wobbly now and the wallabies invade the garden with impunity! He was 14 this year, so is allowed to be a bit dodderly. The goats are still munching their way through the thistle and bramble which is growing in abundance just now.

Work-wise, Mike is still with Westpac in Devonport and Hazel has just completed a 4-week stint of relief teaching for Migrant Education, while the regular teacher went on a cruise to Antarctica. The students all passed their assessments, so Hazel is pleased – and relieved – about that.



Still no buyer for the property. Perhaps 2013 will be the year. Meanwhile, summer has arrived and the place is looking glorious. We've had sun and rain through spring and everything is blooming with extra vigour.

We're looking forward to having a little one around for Christmas (even though she is too young to know much about it), and we wish you all the very best for the season, with a happy and rewarding New Year to follow.

With much love,
Mike and Hazel