



1 Avoca Cres
Pascoe Vale
Victoria, 3044
Australia
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Hello Everyone

Another year has flown by and as usual, we are writing our Christmas letter in the shadow of Christmas day. Thankfully the hectic rush is finally starting to slow and we now sit back, contemplate the year, think of our many friends and family and prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, the true reason for this Christmas holiday period. Yes, another big year for us all so let's get into it without further ado!

Lois continues her work at Broadmeadows Community Legal Centre as a community lawyer (she has been there for over 3 years now!). Her work on Bushfire Legal Help came to a close in July. This means she now works only four days a week. Bliss! She also keeps up her ongoing long term commitments as President of St. Linus' Kindergarten, member of the Anglican Early Childhood Council and church warden/treasurer for St Linus' Anglican Church. It is indeed a busy life style but one which she has maintained for many years now and on which she thrives.

Tim continues to enjoy his retirement (has it really been 2 years now!) and has no difficulty filling his week with a varied mixture that includes some athletics coaching and officiating, some training for himself, lots of walking administration work for the various athletics/walking groups with which he is involved, a bit of gardening, lots of reading and a number of trips, albeit mostly walking related, much to Lois's disappointment. The first lap of housepainting has now been completed. When we moved to our current house, Tim was going to paint regularly and work his way around the weatherboards over a period of 5 years. Some 20+ years later, lap one has finally been completed. Alas, lap two now beckons!

Tim has also been busy this year as part of genealogical group working to publish a comprehensive history of the Carrucan family. Tim is a great grandson of Patrick Carrucan who migrated to Australia from County Clare, Ireland, in 1856. Patrick was one of three siblings who opted for a new life in Australia in the 1850's and settled in Eltham, some 15km north of Melbourne. The extended Carrucan family worldwide has now grown to over 5000 and the family history group is very active. Tim has setup a website and an online historical family photo gallery and is very heavily involved in the final throes of book completion. Overall, his website count is now up to seven and more possibilities keep popping up for actioning!

David finally decided that, after many years of managing pubs in Melbourne, it was time for a change, so earlier this year he successfully applied for a position with Fosters, in their wine and beer department. He now enjoys regular working hours after long stints of evening and weekend work. He continues to work towards his Accountancy degree and is about 3/4's of the way through. He and some mates are now renting a house two doors down from us in our street. It is great to have him living in such close proximity, along with his boxer dog, Clubber, who visits us for the odd 'sleepover', especially if she has to be banished due to plans for a bbq at No. 5 Avoca!

Chris has now been at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra on a sporting scholarship for 3½ years and continues to thrive. For him, 2010 has been a big year on many fronts. The highlight was of course his wedding to Rachel in March in Queenscliff, a small coastal town about 90 minutes drive from Melbourne. Rachel's parents live there and it was a logical choice of venue for Chris and Rachel. Our friend Rosemary came out from England for the big occasion and made wedding cup cakes as her important contribution. It was a huge affair and a wonderfully joy filled occasion. But the life of an athlete rolls on and the new couple had to postpone their honeymoon while Chris travelled to Albuquerque in New Mexico for a stint of altitude training in April and then to Chihuahua in Mexico where he contested the 50km walk in the 2011 World Race Walking Cup in May. He coped well with the altitude and heat and came in 15th, his best ever in a world championship. Rachel then joined him in Mexico and they started their honeymoon through Central America. All very exciting stuff! Back home, they moved out of their shared accommodation into their own rented house in Canberra, coinciding with Chris taking on a new role at the AIS which saw him being funded partly as a walks coach and partly as an athlete. He was also in the Australian Commonwealth Games team (his second CG) to contest the 20km racewalk in October so a steady training block in July/August was followed by a quick trip to China in Sept to race, then a stint at Cairns in the heat and eventually to Delhi for the Games. Alas, it was not a good race for Chris – it had perhaps been such a big year that the tank was empty by that stage. But he did race honestly and did finish the event, albeit further back and slower than he had hoped. Back in Canberra now, he has started planning for 2011 when the next World Champs are to be held in South Korea.

Paul had another year of high intensity activity, continuing his work as a ministerial adviser to Richard Wynne, the Minister for Housing and Indigenous Affairs in the Victorian State Government (Labor Party). With a Federal election held early in the year and with a State election held late in the year, Paul was frantically busy throughout the year (as all assets are brought into the fray when elections loom!) and it is perhaps fair to say that this year for him has been one that he would not want to emulate on an ongoing basis! To top it off, he moved house during the year from Kensington to Richmond, still inner city but now in the Richmond electorate where he works. Alas, it was a case of one success out of two – Federally, Labor was re-elected by the barest of margins while on the State level, Labor lost by a narrow margin. For Paul that loss was very significant as it meant that his position on Richard's ministerial staff disappeared. He is now enjoying a good long break while he reassesses his next move and decides what to do next. As things were so busy this year, he had to drop his studies towards a Graduate Diploma in Economics, and he now plans to dust off the text books once again.

Matt completed his Bachelor of Music from Victoria University last year and decided to postpone further studies and have a year in the workforce and work on his own musical career. He has held a few jobs over the year including stints as a barman and a job as a call centre operator for Citylink, a Melbourne tollway operator. Currently he is working for a national company which works in the housing industry where he is in their warehouse taking calls, coordinating tradesmen's activities, etc. He likes it and finds it a friendly and supportive company so fingers crossed. He continues to thrive as a musician, playing principally in a band called *Oh Deanna* in various gigs around the suburban traps. How can you describe this band – to quote from one of their recent performances: “*Oh, Deanna represent a dreamy shift in modern local music; a combination of 'rock' and 'pop', with a taste of gypsy folk and sixties classic alternative and a pinch of old jazz.*” Yes, they are certainly distinctive! Matt also played jazz as part of a twosome at the Melbourne Fringe Festival earlier this year and he continues to explore different avenues for his music.

Lois's mum, Win, is now 96 years of age and still in the care of the nursing home. She has an incredibly strong constitution which keeps her going, despite dementia and Parkinson's disease.

We alluded to Chris's walking above so a quick addition to our narrative on that front. He has had another great year overall, recording personal best times over 10km (38:59 – try running that fast!) and 30km (2:09:29) and racing and training in a variety of exotic places – China, Mexico, America and India. He also won his first ever Australian 20km championship in August in Brisbane and won his usual Victorian 5000m track walk title (his sixth by memory). How much longer will he continue on – well, certainly until the 2012 Olympics where he hopes to compete in the 50km, but there are plenty of bridges to be crossed and plenty of races to be contested before then. After that, it's up to him. Certainly, walkers can keep improving well into their thirties so it is just a case of ongoing motivation and support. Talking of the 2012 Olympics, the walks will be held along the Strand, right outside Buckingham Palace – wow! Not to be missed.

It seems that our various holidays and trips have been in some way related to either Chris or the sport of racewalking. First Tim spent 3 weeks in Canberra in January helping run the yearly racewalking camp and seeing lots of Chris in his training. Then in February, we travelled to Hobart where the Commonwealth Games trials were being held. Then at Easter, Tim was off to another racewalking camp, this time at Falls Creek, one of our Victorian alpine villages. In June, we travelled to Canberra for the annual Racewalking Australia carnival and saw Chris race very strongly over 20 miles and take second place to Jared Tallent, our top walker and a dual Olympic medallist. In late August, we travelled to Brisbane where Chris won the Australian 20km championship. Then 5 weeks later, we embarked for a 2 week trip that took in Kuala Lumpur (3 days), Delhi (7 days) and Singapore (3 days). The Delhi leg was for the Commonwealth Games where Chris competed in the 20km racewalk and the other two legs were pure holiday. In Singapore, we caught up with Dave Lawrence and his wife Sacha – we had not seen Dave since England in 1983 so it was a long overdue catchup and a most enjoyable stay with them at their place. India was certainly an eye opening experience, especially since we stayed in a small hotel in the old section of Delhi, surrounded by hustle and bustle, dust and chaos and literally millions of people going about their daily business.

So it has been our usual big year. Will we ever get to slow down and 'smell the roses'?

If you want to see our most recent photos and you have internet access, point your web browser at link <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~terickso/2010.shtml>

To all our friends, local and remote, we wish you a Christmas filled with peace and joy and hope that 2011 will be a year where the world moves closer together in unity, tolerance and mutual love and acceptance.

Kind regards

Tim and Lois

