

The usual greeting we receive from friends is, "Where have you been to this time?" or the variation, "Where are you off to next?" This is especially the case for Geoff, who still has the nerve to complain that we don't travel enough! So, in answer to the first question: Thailand, Laos, Japan, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Singapore, Russia and Hong Kong. And in answer to your second: Brazil (for starters). And on the domestic front Nambour, Moruya, East Gippsland and Melbourne, and next Nornalup (WA), Brisbane and Melbourne.

If you are really keen you can go to our website, www.netspeed.com.au/galves, click on the link to "travels" and see the slide shows, but here's the potted version of our adventures in 2005.

Geoff's editing and publishing skills continue to be in high demand. He put together the daily newspaper at the general assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in March–April. Next February he is off to Porto Alegre, Brazil, as part of the media team at the World Council of Churches general assembly. As well he has put together a history of the Victorian Welsh Choir and publications for friends, CCA, Urban Neighbours of Hope, Churches of Christ and the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism.



Geoff hard at work at the CCA Assembly



Dr Ledger and Auntie Meg

Despite her various degrees, Chris had never dressed up and walked across the stage at a graduation ceremony. Geoff made sure she broke the mould this year. Though her PhD was conferred by mail in December 2004, Chris attended the June 2005 graduation ceremony, as well, and gave the vote of thanks to the visiting speaker on behalf of all graduates. She was cheered on by Geoff, Auntie Meg, sister Helen, cousins David and Clive and good friend, Mandy.

Immediately following this celebration, we continued the party by taking our long annual holidays in Japan, Scandinavia and Hong Kong. We met up with Chris's sister, Alison, and brother-in-law, Graham, in Norway. Geoff complained that God has given Norway an unfair share of the world's beautiful scenery and after the umpteenth hundred waterfall, we are inclined to agree. Our friends, Haakon and Sigrid, were amazing and knowledgeable hosts.

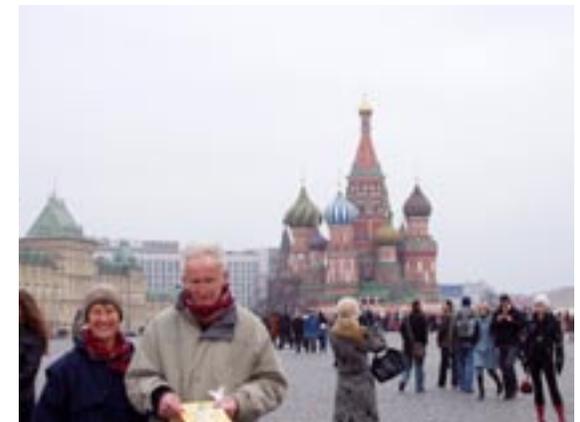
Chris is now following some promising leads to get her thesis published and hopes to carve out some time in the next twelve months or so to give attention to her academic work. While her work at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture is stimulating and challenging, it is largely administrative.



With Alison and Graham in Norway

Having said that, the university did send her to give a paper at an international conference in Moscow in November. So we found ourselves going back to Helsinki and this time east to Saint Petersburg, where we lost ourselves in the corridors of the amazing Hermitage. Just as we will never see waterfalls in quite the same way again, the same now goes for museums and art galleries.

We caught the overnight train to Moscow in a carriage with red carpet and curtains and were served caviar for breakfast.



With Philip in Red Square



Christine in the cold and wet with Peter the Great in Saint Petersburg

The conference was held in another building of endless corridors, the Hotel Svetlana, which doubles as a sanatorium and cures all known diseases and a few unknown ones as well. We were delighted to meet up with our friend Philip Bligh, who was also giving a paper at the same conference.



Geoff in the heat and wet in New Year celebrations in Luang Prabang, Laos

Geoff, with impeccable timing, took advantage of an ambulance to go to hospital in the early hours of Chris's birthday. He came home a week later with two more stents in a coronary artery and the sobering knowledge he had suffered a small heart attack. This did not stop us from going to Russia, however. When home, we make sure we keep up our daily walks up into the nature reserve. These help Chris to disperse the stresses of the work day and to keep off the 20 kg (3 stone in the old money) that she has lost since finishing the PhD.

The year has also been punctuated by weddings and babies in the extended family and these have been great and happy occasions to meet up with the tribe (hence Melbourne and Nambour). Next year promises even more, starting with Brisbane.

Geriatric Jerry (our cat) has now celebrated 16 years of life and takes life slowly and with the aid of steps onto the bed.

So that's about our news, really. We love having visitors, so please come and visit Canberra. If we are not here, use the house anyway!

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and peaceful New Year. We celebrated early with family in Moruya and then went to Nornalup in southwest WA for time in the forests looking for lots of new birds!

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Christmas Greetings and
a Happy New Year from
Chris and Geoff

