



We haven't given up on flower photos for Christmas cards but this year called for an appropriate image. 2012 was the Year of the Extension. Since May, our environment has been dominated by the building works at the back of our house. Our land has been an official building site, controlled by our builder. Until August we had limited access to our kitchen, but for the last few months our kitchen has been a few metres of our spare bedroom/craft room, into which are packed 20 boxes of gear from the kitchen/living area.

Jim's office contains our dining table, with tea and coffee making and our Panini press. We know 101 meals to make with a Panini press and wonder if we need a kitchen. We also know a lot more places for easy meals, especially those that serve meals in the late afternoon, when we can combine late lunch with early dinner.

We have met some terrific tradespeople and been through highs and lows of anticipation, frustration, fear and a good share of wishing we had never started. Remembering her mother's "Don't wish your life away", Jillian has tried to enjoy and make the most of each day, focused on what can, rather than can't, be done.

Are we mad, extending at our age? Quite possibly. We will have a very pleasant guest room and a lovely kitchen-living area, letting in the light and garden, double-glazed to help in noise and heat reduction. This will allow Jim's study to be single purpose and our previous spare room to be for sewing/ craft.

Jim and Jillian's Christmas Card December 2012

It will be finished on 18 December – a little late for this card. As we write, painters and tilers are at work and the jarrah floor is being laid in 41 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, we have done a little bit of consultancy work, mainly in the area of digital education. Our Youth Justice work in Victoria bore fruit, with substantial improvements to the education provision to young people in prison and the appointment of a dynamic and experienced education director. We may do more work in Victoria next year and in Adelaide's Northern Region. We continue our education blog at www.jdellit.com.au on an irregular basis.

Jim is a member of the SA Health Performance Council and engaged in debates and policy dilemmas around public health provision.

Our own health has largely held up. There have been a few issues but none that have dominated our lives. Our holiday this year was a 2 day trip to Burra with our grandchildren Brigid and Fionn - terrific travelling companions.

Jillian's Dad at 93 continues in reasonable health in Sir Joseph Banks Aged Care. He was pretty free of chest and flu infections this year. He spends a lot of time sleeping and sometimes tunes out of conversations, but he keeps up with the politics of the day, knows what the family is doing and asks after individuals. He seems content in himself and free of the anger that has been present at times in his life. Her brother continues to support, visit and provide his whisky on at least a weekly basis.

Jillian completed a book about her maternal grandfather's family, publishing it as a free ebook, at <http://store-au.blurb.com/ebooks/300905-a-courage-of-adielus> . She has begun a similar book on her maternal grandmother's family. Her embroidery and embroidery blog (<http://jillian-alwaysstitching.blogspot.com>) continue to bring her huge pleasure.

With our friends Ken and Barb Cock back in town, we are back in the swing of performances and have a busy program for next year's Festival of Arts.

We are blessed by these and many other friends. Our daughters, their partners and our four grandchildren bring us great joy and satisfaction. We have so much to be thankful for in 2012.

Jillian and Jim