

# **CRETE RE-VISITED 2012**

## **ANDREW AND BRIAN RETURN AT LAST!**

Well after 4 years we finally made the decision to have a holiday back on our wonderful dream Island.

Was it all that we had hoped for?

**OH YES!**

Flying Easy Jet from Gatwick (and they were brilliant) we were met at Chania by Natasha. Familiar roads and corners. Terrible Greek driving, Traffic Lights that are phased wrongly. Confusion at Souda. Yes we were back. Nothing had changed, apart, that is, from the number of shops that were boarded up. Now that was a shock! We had heard and seen the problems Greece was going through but reality is another thing. Chania, as we found out later in the week, is prosperous and full of life. We both remembered Cretans saying they were “self sufficient:” and Tourism was the icing on the cake” Well it seems to be true, we both really hope it is. Crete is so very different from the rest of Greece and long may it stay so.

Anyway.....

Our first day was spent on our favourite beach in Georgiopoli. Peace and tranquillity and a very enticing sea. The owner recognised us as did the Taverna Manager. It was as though time had stood still. We hired a car at an incredible rate for the whole week and that night went to Almyrida for a meal, again in one of our favourites Eroticrito. Having met up with Clare, a life long friend from our Canal days, we had a really great evening. It was amazing that so many locals came over to speak, many thinking we were both back for good. Sadly this would not be the case. By investing in the crooked Villas Crete, we returned to the UK with very little capital left. Nothing to spare for a further investment. Ah well, such is life.

The following day we went off to Chania. What a great city this is and should be recognised as a Heritage site. We were astounded at how clean everywhere was. It is a transformation. No rubbish, all lamp posts were lit in the evening and the crowds thronged the streets. The only down side was the constant badgering by waiters at the Tavernas around the port. Our stock response.....We'd already eaten!!!!!!

We had one sad task. A visit to Cretan Kennels in Rethymnon to see the grave of our beloved black Lab, Jacob, who had died in his sleep, 10 days before he was due to fly back to the UK. Kimberley and Peter are the most delightful couple, who looked after Jacob and Rupert after Brian had to return to the UK, before their Rabies treatment had finished. It is a simple spot with a lovely olive tree planted. We will always be forever grateful to both Kimberley and Peter. Rupert, the yellow Lab and Georgie the three legged Cretan cat both arrived safely thanks to many people including our dear friends Trevor and Rosemary. So Crete is the resting place for George, Wallace and Grommet, they flew out with us when we first arrived, and Walnut a little rescue dog, and of course Jacob. What better place to end their days than Crete.

Saturday was Brian's birthday and we were joined by many friends at Fortinis in Plaka. What a lovely evening we all had. Our favourite place to eat in Crete. Many in the village came up to say hello as they did previously at Totems.

Andrew had to visit Chania to pick up an item whilst Brian and Claire went out for the evening. It all became surreal

Brian could not help himself re-visiting Souda View. The villa we designed and had built. Surprise surprise the new owners were there and invited them up. Nothing, but nothing has changed. Except that is the colour and the name. Invitations to visit next year were made and that's a date.

We saw Jean in Almyrida and had a great evening with her. She's a game girl and all power to her.

Helens' apartment served us well and we will definitely be staying again and again. Kristos and Helen now run a lovely Taverna high above Georgiopoli called STARLIGHT. We both wish them well, not that they will need it. Food good, atmosphere wonderful and views to die for.

We travelled over to Trevor and Rosemary's at Perama. Nipper, the dog that turned up at our villa as a puppy, now has a new home with them and he went mad when he saw us both. Dogs do have good memories! Again a lovely day and a lovely meal right by the coast at Bali.

Travelling back along the National Road, or as Brian calls it, THE RAPID RUE, the whole vista of this part of Crete, opens up. How often did we take it all for granted.

Our final day was spent back on our favourite beach before departing for the Airport. Thanks to Natasha.

The flight back was ruined by a fellow passenger, behind, with a very loud Northern accent giving advice on everything and anything. She never stopped to take breath for the entire flight!

From the heat of Crete to damp cold Gatwick. Taxi to Brian's cousin in Horley and the drive to East London. A great welcome from Rupert and Georgie and a couple of days to recover before back to work.

Very good news greeted us. Arrangements for the purchase of our new house in Coventry had been completed while we were away and our job transfers confirmed.

So from February next year we will have a new address and telephone number, new jobs and a place of our own, oh and Brian's 6 weekly check up at Bart's went well and 'all clear'

All in all, so far, 2012 has not been too bad for us. In November we go to Coventry to celebrate Fathers 91<sup>st</sup> birthday and as Christmas looms, we start the dreaded packing up, ready for the move.

To everyone who helped make our visit to Crete so wonderful, we thank you. Merry Christmas everyone      Andrew and Brian XX

