



Meet the movers

NAME

The Colbert Family are Matthew (41), Helen (42), Lewis (13) and Holly (9)

OCCUPATIONS

Matthew was a financial director of a toy company in the UK and is now a financial controller for a toy company in Australia. Helen is a housewife.

MOVED FROM

Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire

MOVED TO

Berwick, Melbourne

FURTHER INFORMATION

Overseas Emigration: www.overseas-emigration.co.uk;
Moving to Melbourne: www.moving-to-melbourne.co.uk



“The jigsaw came together!”

The Colbert family haven't looked back since taking the opportunity to move to Melbourne, writes **Liane Voisey**

Matthew and Helen Colbert from Cambridgeshire had often dreamed about moving to Australia with their two children, Lewis, 13, and Holly, 9.

“We wanted to experience different things and we didn't want to find ourselves 10 years on wishing that we had tried it,” says Matthew, 41. So after much consideration he and his wife Helen, 42, decided to apply for residency to Australia.

Luckily, Matthew's skills were in demand which helped greatly with their application. He had been working as financial director of a toy company.

GETTING THERE

The couple enlisted the help of the migration agents at Overseas Emigration to assist with obtaining their visas. “They were brilliant,” says Matthew. “They explained each process of the application and kept us up-to-date on what was happening at each stage; telling us

when we needed to be doing things and in what order – they made the whole process very straight forward.” From the initial visa application, the process took about 15 months, and in July 2008, the family were awarded permanent residency on section 136 of the Skilled Independent Visa.

The worst part of the residency application process was all the form filling, says Matthew, but everything else went smoothly.

Matthew estimates that they paid around £3,000 in fees for the emigration and £2,500 in shipping costs. “Our removals company, Anglo Pacific, were very helpful and informative, and our belongings arrived safely and without any breakages,” he says.

The couple also made arrangements for Daisy the cat to be shipped over to Melbourne through Airpets.

As the family had not visited Australia before they researched all that they could on the internet and would buy *Australia and New* >>

Above Lewis and Holly love heading to the beach



really gets you through; we probably speak more now than we ever did before!”

SETTLING IN

The family arrived in Melbourne on 8 September 2009 feeling a mixture of both nerves and excitement, not to mention tiredness, but it helped that Kate, their relocation advisor from Moving to Melbourne, was there to meet them, says Matthew.

“Kate was great. She waited with us while we collected our hire car and then she helped us with all our luggage, driving us to our furnished rental home in Heathmont where we would be staying for three weeks and helping us to prioritise what we would need to get done.”

During the first week of arrival, the family visited some schools to see for themselves what they had researched on the internet.

“We found everyone to be incredibly helpful and friendly and they seemed happy to make us and the children feel welcome,” says Matthew. School visits over, and after reading through all the literature, the couple made their choice of school for the kids – fortunately it was the right one!

“The children both love their new school and from day one they both made lots of new friends and settled in brilliantly,” says Matthew.

After a couple of weeks, the couple also managed to purchase a car, something else the couple wanted to do as quickly as possible as the hire car, although great as a stop gap, would prove expensive if

they had kept it for too long.

The family also made time to visit their cat at the quarantine centre at least twice a week, says Matthew. “I think she was spooked by the flight and seemed a little disorientated when we first saw her, but she soon perked up, and she is now as chilled out as ever, just like the rest of us!”

After three weeks in Heathmont, the family moved to a new rental property in Pakenham, before

“Everyone has made me, and my family, feel so welcome!”

moving again to a brand new unfurnished rental property in Berwick. “We really liked Berwick as it had all the essentials close by, with plenty of good schools to choose from and plenty of new housing estates,” says Matthew.

Fortunately, by the time they moved to Berwick, the family’s shipping container had arrived and at last they had all of their own things around them again. Their single-storey rental home came with three double bedrooms, and an alfresco area, with a garden and a double garage. The family pay A\$1,800 (£1,033) a month in rent.

The final piece of the jigsaw came together in January when Matthew was offered a financial controller position with a toy company, which was perfect for him. “I had been searching daily on the internet, keeping track of all

of the relevant positions for my experience and attending interviews, but with Christmas looming the job market started to slow down. We were sat having a coffee on Christmas Eve afternoon when my phone rang and I was told about a role within a toy company. The position was uncannily like the one I had in the UK, so I was keen to hear more and went for an interview.

“In the first week of January I was offered the position and we were all overjoyed. We could not have asked for a better start to 2010. My new job is great, and my work colleagues could not be nicer. Everyone has made me, and my family, feel so welcome!”

With the funds from their UK house sale, Helen and Matthew purchased a block of land in Pakenham in May, 10 minutes away from Berwick, with a view to building their own house. “We hope to move in November, so there is lots to look forward to over the coming months.”

The land cost around A\$180,000 (£103,349) and the house around A\$315,000 (£180,873). The large two-storey property will boast four bedrooms and a large open plan family area. The family hope to have a swimming pool built in too.

“There are many things to do and you are never far from the beach”

LOOKING AHEAD

The Colberts are loving their new life in Melbourne. Even though the temperatures can rise and fall quite dramatically from one day to the next, the weather is good, says Matthew. Winter temperatures average around the 17 degrees mark, he says, so it is quite pleasant and not as cold as in the UK.

As the weather is generally better, the family like that they can plan to go to places. “There is always something to do here,” says Matthew. “We recently went to a

couple of the Twenty20 cricket matches at the MCG stadium for A\$25 (£14) per family which was great fun and a cheap night out.

“Melbourne prides itself on being the sports capital of the world and ticket availability is very good for all major sporting events. The children have already joined the local tennis centre, which has fantastic facilities, and they have become members at the local leisure centre. There are loads of places to visit and many different things to see and do. You are never far away from a beach too.”

The family think the quality of food in Melbourne is excellent, with a wide range on offer, and while they admit that the nightlife is limited to bars and pubs in the suburbs, the city always has plenty to offer. The family look forward to spending weekends together, experiencing new things and spending lots of time with friends.

Matthew says that their best friends are a family that they met in a supermarket when they came to visit on their Easter 2009 reccie, says Matthew. “We got talking about what life in Australia was like for them and how they had found the emigration process, and after about an hour, we exchanged numbers. We stayed in touch when we got back to the UK and continued to email each other. We

regularly spend time together.”

The family haven’t been back to the UK yet, but will probably go back to visit in a couple of years time. In the meantime, they have been enjoying having family come over for holidays.

Matthew’s advice to other Brits wanting to move to Australia is to just do it! “Don’t live with regrets and what ifs – it really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and as much as at times we seriously wondered if we were doing the right thing, we haven’t looked back. We love it!”

Above The family often head into central Melbourne to enjoy shopping and sport events

“Our Melbourne Pros and Cons”

Pros

- ✓ Good weather
- ✓ Better standard of living
- ✓ Children are happier
- ✓ More things to see and do
- ✓ More active ‘outdoors’ lifestyle

Cons

- ✗ Missing family and friends
- ✗ The chocolate just isn’t as good!
- ✗ There are no good curry houses

Zealand magazine every month. They also decided to go out to Australia in Easter 2009 for a reccie before their planned move in September 2009.

Says Matthew: “We spent a week in Melbourne and a week in Adelaide. We preferred Melbourne as there always seemed to be something going on and the surrounding areas had lots to offer.”

When the family came back to the UK they began the process of selling their house. The house sold really quickly, although they had a couple of delays with moving dates, which caused considerable stress, as they had to keep changing the dates with their packers – not daring to ship all their belongings in case the sale fell through.

Leaving family and close friends was extremely sad, and was the hardest thing, says Matthew. “Knowing that you are leaving all those closest to you behind, is really upsetting, but this is where Skype

Clockwise from top left Matthew and kids Holly and Lewis enjoy the sunny outdoors; Helen and the kids strike a pose; Holly and Lewis have settled in well and made lots of friends

Phillip Island is within
easy reach of Berwick

WHY MOVE TO...

Berwick

This wealthy Melbourne suburb retains a 19th century English village feel...

Berwick is a suburb in Melbourne, Victoria. Although it has experienced fairly rapid development in recent years, with its prim gardens and distinctive boulevard, it has something of an 19th-century English village feel. It is well situated, and not far from the CBD and eco-resort of Phillip Island. Berwick is filled with restaurants and cafés, and at night, the streets blossom with a lively atmosphere. Possibly Berwick's most famous resident was Richard Casey, later the Governor-General of Australia. His former home has now been converted to an aged care facility.

WHAT ARE THE LOCAL AMENITIES?

Berwick offers easy access to public transport, making it easy to get into the heart of the city. It has an 1880-built library on the high street. Berwick is home to the elite private school Haileybury College. It also has a number of schools and three colleges. There are several local shopping centres and supermarkets here too. One of Berwick's primary attractions is the Wilson Botanic Park, an oasis of gardens, flora and birdlife with lakes, picnic areas and walking trails.

WHAT'S THE HOUSING LIKE?

The suburb offers diverse living, catering for both first home buyers right through to luxurious, upmarket living. To the north-west and south of the town centre there has been rapid suburban housing developments including the local estates of Timbarra, Brentwood and Berwick Springs. Berwick properties are in high demand and continue to grow. The average house price in Berwick is A\$338,750 (£195,026), which is more expensive than the average regional house price of A\$295,000 (£169,738).

Berwick homes



LUSH GARDENS

A\$420,000 (£242,861)

This immaculate home offers four spacious bedrooms; an inviting lounge with feature fireplace; open plan kitchen; study; family area and two bathrooms. The property boasts immaculate landscaped gardens plus a swimming pool. There is a covered outdoor entertaining area, spacious rear yard and double garage. The house has a convenient location, with the village amenities close by.

CONTACT: Noel Jones – Berwick

TEL: 0061 3 9707 3555; www.noeljones.com.au



PARK LIFE

A\$490,000 (£283,277)

Set in a prominent parkside position, this four-bedroom double storey home is dressed to impress. The enormous formal lounge and high ceilings set the scene for open plan living, while the kitchen, family and dining areas are a true space to enjoy. The master bedroom features a walk-in robe and ensuite. Tropical landscaped gardens surround the property, with a large outdoor entertaining area and spa pool.

CONTACT: Harcourts – Berwick

TEL: 00 61 3 9707 4222; www.berwick.harcourts.com.au



FAMILY HOME

A\$570,000 (£329,579)

Located in a leafy estate close to a shopping plaza, primary school and parks, this 12-year-old, five bedroom will tick all the boxes for enjoyable family living. The open plan kitchen, dining and lounge area is designed to exude space and quality. It is well-maintained with a generous, landscaped garden, and features all conveniences you would expect, including master with walk-in robe and ensuite.

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