



Never mind the migrants – we gotta get out of this place

County enters Top 10 of emigration hotspots



GOING: Ron and Sarah McDiarmid are off to start a new life in New Zealand, top right – where £100,000 can buy you a four-bedroomed house and 15 acres of land. For others it's Spain, right.





THE number of migrants coming to Cambridgeshire often hits the headlines.

But new research suggests the county may actually be an emigration hotspot – with growing numbers of families swapping life in Blighty for a place in the sun.

Industry experts The Emigration Group analysed all their inquiries so far this year and found Cambridgeshire had made it into the top 10 areas.

About one in every 50 calls to the company was from the county – equivalent to almost 100 calls between January and May.

Among those heading for

warmer climes are Ron and Sarah McDiarmid, former owners of the Riverview Hotel and The Crown pub in Earith, near St Ives.

Ron, 48, and Sarah, 36, sold up last month and will move to New Zealand in a few weeks' time.

Ron said: "Everyone in New Zealand is much more laid-back and not so money-oriented. We're looking to slow down a bit and enjoy not being so hands-on.

"We'll get a lot more for our money, too – a new four-bedroom house with 15 acres of land for around £100,000."

Ron and Sarah, of Mere

■ CHRIS HAVERGAL

Close, Ramsey Mereside, hope to set up a new business Down Under.

Paul Arthur, director of The Emigration Group, said house prices were a big factor in emigration trends.

He said: "House prices have peaked and people with more equity realise they can get a different lifestyle abroad.

"Young people might emigrate just to allow them to get onto the property ladder."

Cambridgeshire came in at number 10 in the league table. Neighbouring Essex is in third place.

Figures released earlier this year by the Office for National Statistics revealed large numbers of families were leaving South Cam-

bridgeshire in particular.

Mr Arthur said the county was in danger in seeing a "brain drain" of doctors, scientists and other skilled workers.

John Bridge, chief executive of Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce, said: "Within the county there are plenty of opportunities for anyone who wants to be here.

"But businesses are finding it difficult to get employees with the right skills."

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Countries with the largest British ex-pat populations

Australia: 1,300,000

Spain: 761,000

United States: 678,000

Canada: 603,000

Ireland: 291,000

New Zealand: 215,000

South Africa: 212,000

France: 200,000