

John & Joan Croft  
47 Coven Avenue  
HEATHMONT 3153  
MELBOURNE, VICTORIA 3126  
AUSTRALIA AUSTRALIA

Dear DENNIS, MARGARET  
JOHN & MICHAEL

Greetings from "Down Under" - well we arrived home on the 4th of July after our eleven month trip around the world. We were met at Melbourne Airport by our eldest daughter, Suzanne and her husband Ross. Suzanne had arranged a small welcome home party for us and you know it felt like we had never left.

As mentioned in our Christmas letter last year, we enjoyed the festive season in South Carolina with Bob and Kay Miller, parents of our son-in-law Michael. Our youngest daughter, Jeanette and Michael came to the US from Sydney and Robert and Paula, the newly weds, drove down from Baltimore (Maryland) to spend New Years Eve with us. This Christmas our family will be together in Melbourne, it will be the first Christmas that all our four children will be together with their spouse. I'm sure a merry time will be had by all.

Newsflash, Newsflash, Newsflash,  
the Croft Children:-

John Jnr (32) has started a new business supplying caterer's needs to reception houses, hotels, etc. He is working extremely hard and doing very well. Merrilyn, his wife, is unable to help as she already has a full time job looking after their two lovely daughters (biased we are). Danielle is three years old (going on 33) and Melissa is 18 months and ever so sweet.

Suzanne (30) and her husband Ross (an Englishman) are working

hard in their carpet business which they started two years ago. The husband/wife team works well for them and business is booming. They are constantly kept busy with English visitors enjoying Aussie land. They recently took a South Pacific cruise on board the "Fairstar" and while they were on holidays, Joan and I looked after their shop.

Jeanette (28) and husband Michael (an American who says he is half Australian) are very excited as they have bought their first house on the outskirts of Sydney, a suburb called Camden. Jeanette has transferred her job with MLC to a branch in Parramatta, close to Camden and Michael is a Sales Representative for Kodak on the Professional Photographic side. Besides their respective jobs they also have the photographic concession on the cruise ship "Fairstar" which runs smoothly in the hands of five photographers. They will be motor-ing the 568 miles down from Sydney to Melbourne for Christmas and New Year.



Robert (26) our youngest son and his lovely new bride, Paula (an American lass) arrive from the States on the 23rd December. They plan to spend twelve months in Australia before deciding whether to live in the USA or Australia. Robert is a Fitter and Turner/Toolmaker and Paula works in Corporate Employee Benefits. The family is thrilled to be welcoming them home, it will be our summer when they arrive, so I guess

there will be lots of barbies, picnics, swimming and get togethers.

Well enough of the family, we'll fill you in on what we have been up to since our last Christmas News Letter from Seneca, South Carolina.

On January 8th we left the tranquility of Seneca and headed south for Florida. We visited Savannah (Georgia) and St. Augustine which is the oldest town in America. Down to Florida where we visited Cape Canaveral, Epcott, Disneyworld and John's favourite place "Busch Gardens" where John enjoyed the Busch beer in the most enjoyable surroundings, they even had enormous Alligators. We visited the Everglades but unfortunately at that time of year they were experiencing a drought so we were a little disappointed at the lack of wildlife. Went to a few American Indian Reservations and then out along the panhandle to "New Orleans". What a place with lively music halls and the old Mississippi River.

On to Memphis, Tennessee and Grace Lands, Elvis Presley's home, to Nashville, the home of Country and Western music. We enjoyed driving through Tennessee to Ruby Falls and on to Atlanta for three days. We finally arrived back in Seneca, left Michael's car at his parents home, and went to New Jersey for three days.

We flew from NY to Gatwick (England). A friend of Joan's, Owen Devaney, from her days in India was at the airport to meet us. We stayed with Owen and his wife Norma at Dartford (Kent) and it was so cold it was terrific to have a home away from home. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay with Owen and Norma and are looking forward to having them with us in Melbourne one day.



# Seasons Greetings

We bought a V.W. Campervan and spent a month in Southern England, visiting friends and relations. Joan has so many cousins there, in Brighton, Worthing, Exmouth, Trowbridge, etc. We endeavoured to get off the beaten track to travel along English lanes and came across some delightful villages with thatched roof cottages dating back hundreds of years.

On 30th April we caught the ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland, camped the night in our van at Delft. We met up with a friend that John met when he first went to Europe in the 1950's, John had lost contact with him, so it was a great re-union. We visited "Kukenhof" the 27 acre tulip farm which is only open in April and May each year, what a magnificent sight.

We headed for Hamburg and on the way we visited Hamelin (Pied Piper) and Celle, quaint tourist villages of the old style German houses and spent three days at the infamous "Berlin Wall". It was great to see it being dismantled. A little part of West Berlin called "Steinstucken" was very interesting, this was a dog leg where the wall jutted out into East Berlin, we wandered into the East and spoke to a lovely elderly lady who had lived on the Eastern side of the wall for the past 45 years, but was now quite content to stay in her own home. Joan chipped away and brought home a bag full of the Berlin Wall for us and the children.

We then ventured south from Berlin where we came across some delightful towns, looked around Bayreuth where Richard Wagner is buried and took a tour through the beautiful opera house. Nurnberg

was very interesting then on to Dachau and Munich (which is John's favourite city).

South into the Bavarian Alps where we were lucky enough to get tickets to the Passion Play at Oberammergau, this is held every ten years which was a real treat for us. From here we headed along the Alps to Switzerland and stayed with Joan's cousin in Geneva. Rosaline took us to a little village called Deligny not far from Geneva where Richard Burton and Alistair McLean, the writer, are both buried. We visited Charlie Chaplins grave plot near Vevey at the other end of Lake Geneva.

Travelled through the Black Forest and Rhine Country of Germany, through Belgium to Ostend where we caught the ferry to Dover, England. Joan had always wanted a Cuckoo Clock, she finally bought one and now we will always remember Germany as the damn thing never stops cuckoo-ing.

It was early June when we arrived back in England, we then endeavoured to sell our Campervan and just two days before leaving we were successful - Phew!

We flew to Delhi not realising that each day was 46 degrees celcius and just before their monsoons, this really took a lot out of us. We took a train to Agra to see the magnificent Taj Mahal once again. We stayed at Bhopal in Central India where Joan's father is buried. We stayed with his widow and adopted daughter who did a fine job looking after us. After two weeks in India we flew to Bangkok for a week, but unfortunately Joan got food poison-

ing and she never left her bed for three days. We did manage to have a lovely trip on the Burma Railway to the Bridge on the River Kwai and Namtok - about 210 km from Bangkok. Visited war cemeteries of the second world war where so many Australian and British soldiers now rest. We did a few usual tourist things, visited old cities, temples, gardens, etc., but it was once again very very hot and crowded.

Since arriving home John made a hurried trip to Perth, Western Australia (2000 miles from Melbourne) as his mother took sick, but she's since rallied on and is doing well again.

Both of us want to express our thanks and gratitude for the wonderful friendship and hospitality extended to us, this helped to make our trip so memorable and enjoyable. As it is difficult to mention everyones names in our letter, we would like to let you know that we will cherish these friendships for a lifetime and you will often fill our thoughts. We would dearly love to hear from you now and again so please don't lose contact and remember you are always welcome to visit the Crofts "Down Under".

We would like wish you and yours a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with health, success and happiness.

Regards



John and Joan Croft