



# The Croft Chronicle

CHRISTMAS  
ISSUE

A MERRY CHRISTMAS &  
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL



*Melissa, Christopher, Joan, Benjamin, John, Sarah and Danielle on 28 May 1995*

Dear

Well dear folks, you're probably wondering why you never received our newsletter last Christmas. No

On the 3rd of April, 1995 our eldest daughter Suzanne and her husband Ross became the proud parents of a darling and ever so wanted baby girl, Sarah Anne Mackintosh. Sarah was 8 weeks premature and needed blood transfusions at birth.

except for a liver transplant. After weeks of an agonising wait for a donor, Bubs received a liver. Sadly, complications occurred during the operations and Sarah passed away a few days later after fighting a very hard and brave battle.

It wasn't any fault of the post or anyone else. The fact is 1995 was by no means a good year for the Crofts. A great deal of worry and sorrow which left us very flat and unable to concentrate on writing our annual Christmas letter.

We brought in 1995 knowing that a lump in John's neck was diagnosed as a secondary cancer. Because of its position it was urgent to have it removed and more importantly to find the primary cancer. This started our endless list of visits to various specialists, x-rays, body scans, bone scans, blood tests, skin examinations and at age 64, a tonsillectomy hoping to find the source of the problem. We lost count of how many times John went under anaesthetic. Anyway, he ended up at Peter McCallum's - a wonderful hospital that only treats cancer patients. After six weeks of very severe daily radiotherapy treatment, his skin was allowed to heal for 2 months in preparation for the next big operation. In July '95, the specialists removed the node in the neck, also the muscle that goes up the neck and left shoulder as a precautionary measure just in case the cancer had spread. Naturally John's left shoulder has dropped a little and he has a slight restriction in that area but thank God he is doing well and the doctors are very happy with his progress. Of course he will now be monitored for the rest of his life. They never ever found the "primary cancer" and the specialists think his immune system has probably destroyed it or the radiotherapy knocked it out.

blood group). You can imagine what joy she brought as Suzanne and Ross waited ten years believing they would be childless. Sarah remained in hospital for a few weeks and then came home, making progress in every way.



*Sarah Anne Mackintosh*

Unfortunately, she soon started to show signs that not everything was all right. In September our darling granddaughter was diagnosed with a liver disease called Biliary Artesia. At this point in time, there is no known treatment

1995. It was one of the hardest events in our life to endure. The courage of Suzanne and Ross has certainly helped us all. You can send for an enclosed article that Ross wrote on how they have now dedicated their time to promote the importance of becoming an organ donor. The dinner dance they ran was a great success and they were able to raise over \$38,000. They purchased a "cell saver" machine for the Childrens Hospital for \$36,000 and a few other needed instruments. They plan on this being an ongoing fund raiser and of course taking every opportunity to make people aware of organ donating. Since forming O.D.A.G. - Organ Donation Awareness Group, they have thousands of people who have signed up. Hopefully one day someone's life will be saved by the group.



*The Only Club Where You Give Nothing Until You Die*

As time passes on, our lives are settling down to a certain amount of normality again. Suzanne and Ross have sold their carpet business at the end of June 1996, packed up their 4 wheel drive and headed north along the eastern shores to northern Queensland then

inland to Mt Isa, Kakadu National Park, Darwin, Broome, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock, and eventually Adelaide before heading back home to Melbourne sometime in January of 1997. We are looking after their 3 cats - and that's a full time job.

Our eldest son John and his wife Merrilyn after 11 years of marriage decided to separate. This caused us sadness and concern as they have two lovely daughters. But we take comfort in the fact that they both got on with their lives and the girls, Danielle (9yrs) and Melissa (7yrs) are both doing well at school and with their outside interests. The girls' newest activity is music lessons on the piano.

Some good news on the American front, our young son Robert and his wife Paula became the proud parents on the 23rd of June this year when James Ryan arrived weighing in at 7lbs,14oz. A very heavy responsibility lies with James as he is the only Croft male to carry on the Croft name now. Chelsea now 4 years and Madeleine 2, both find their brother a living doll and from the photos received he looks a beautiful child. We are planning to visit Robert and Paula and their little family in 1997. Robert's 1995 Christmas present from Paula was a return ticket to visit with us in Melbourne. He was such a pick-me-up for all of us when he arrived in February '96 for 2 weeks, which just went by too quick.

On June 5th, with the car packed up we took off for a month away. Meandering up the coast



*Benjamin & Christopher Miller*

Once again we thoroughly enjoyed our time with part of our family. One of the highlights of our stay was a trip to the theatre to see "Miss Saigon" with Jeanette and Joan's mother who then lived in Sydney. Another day we visited Sydney's Taronga Park Zoo. Unfortunately, Chris was not up to an outing so Ben had twice as much fun and attention.. John, true to form and unable to help himself, got stuck into reorganising Michael & Jeanette's

**O**ur best wishes for the coming festive season and may the new year bring you good health and happiness.

Do keep in touch but better still, come visit us sometime.

With kind regards,  
From your friends down under,

John & Joan Croft

PS, Please note the change in our postal address & telephone number

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MELBOURNE VICTORIA  
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where we met up with friends, 24 in all. At a place called Merrimbula - a beautiful holiday resort. We met there for the annual jazz festival. There were 112 bands playing over a period of 4 to 5 days. The town had such a wonderful atmosphere with jazz coming down from every restaurant, coffee lounge, street corner, club, park... We had such a great time that we plan on returning next year for the event.



*Chelsea, Madeleine & James*

Merrimbula is only 200 miles south of Sydney. Our daughter Jeanette and son-in-law Michael live in Sydney with our two very entertaining grandsons so wild horses could not have kept us away. Benjamin turned 4 in May and Christopher is 3 in October so you can just imagine how many inquisitive questions can be asked by two very active little minds.

front garden. We all agreed that he did a truly professional job. After Sydney, we left for home via stopping with friends in Albury, Shepparton, the wine growing area of Rutherglen and Bendigo.

It's always good to be home, John likes to catch up with his garden and after a month away the swimming pool needed to be ridded of all of its alien life forms. The next surprise came just a few days later when Jeanette rang from Sydney to say Joan's mum had gone down heavy with the flu virus and her husband Reg was also very sick. With Michael away on business and two boys to keep up with and a business to run, it was decided that her call for help should get answered. Joan flew back to Sydney for another month. Reg (94yrs) was hospitalised the same day and with a bit of TLC Joan's mum (88yrs) made a good recovery. The folks have since sold their house and moved down to a nursing home here in Melbourne.

This winter has been very wet and cold in Melbourne but spring is here and what a welcome it is to see the leaves back on the trees, the flowering bushes in bloom like the azaleas, camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons. Together with the bulbs freesias, daffodils, hyacinths etc. So with all this colour, John's garden is a pretty sight. Joan loves admiring the garden but much to John's despair it is impossible to get her to share the work load!!



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*"With all I've learned about psychology recently, establishing who's naughty and who's nice is not as simple as it used to be."*