

THE CROFT CHRONICLE

February 2012.

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Greetings

Christmas has come and gone and time has caught up with us, hence our annual letter is late again. We hope you had a joyous Christmas and we wish you and yours a very Happy and Prosperous 2012. Thank you to those from whom we heard, it was great to hear your news and to those we haven't had any contact, we hope to hear from you soon.

It was a quiet time by ourselves this Christmas. We did not go anywhere or even see anybody – correction – we did attend a luncheon on Christmas Eve with good friends, Pam and Jean McCarthy. We declined many invitations but chose to have a quiet time. Our four children were not in Melbourne, John Jr., and Lynne live in Blairgowrie which is about 50 miles south of Melbourne. They had their four daughters (two from each of their previous marriages) with their boyfriends celebrate with them.

Suzanne, Ross and their two daughters, Paige (17) and Kahala (10) were on a cruise around New Zealand. They left Melbourne on 13th December on the "Dawn Princess" sailing across the Tasman sea to Milford Sound on the west coast of New Zealand then around the bottom of the South Island to Dunedin. They did not call at Christchurch because of all the damage caused by recent earthquakes but docked not far from there at Akaroa. From there they sailed on to the North Island to Wellington, Napier and Auckland where they were given a wonderful day by our friends, Fred and Glenis Margetts. Finally, they arrived home on 28th December.

Jeanette and her two boys, Ben (20) and Chris (18) with girlfriends holidayed on the New South Wales coast north of Sydney.

Robert and Paula and their children Chelsea (20), Madelene (18), and James (16) live in Maryland, USA.



Not long after Christmas on 22nd January, John had another birthday turning 81 years young and thinks he is still in reverse (18 yrs.) Joan was 74 last October. Healthwise, we are doing well except

for a few aches and pains. They say it is wear and tear!! Fortunately, we didn't even catch a cold in 2011 and hope this will continue.

Last March, we had our annual visit to Ballarat, 75 miles North-west of Melbourne, for a St. Patrick's College school re-union with some of the old boys, with whom John went to boarding school from 1940-1947. This coming March, the re-union is on Friday 16th and we shall probably spend three days there. John feels it is so important to attend every year as there is usually a few less each time due to sickness and deaths.

Last April, (13th to 28th) we flew to Sydney to spend time with Jeanette and our two grandsons Ben and Christopher. We also attended a re-union of six people (5 Aussies and 1 New Zealander) who travelled together in the 1950's overland from England to India. John was one of the six. The trip took six months through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan to India and then by ship to Australia from Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Their home was an old bull-nose Austin Van which had been used as an Ambulance in North Africa during the Second World War with six bunks built in. The six explorers – all still alive – were John McKinnon, Frank Kerley, Beryl Gray all now 83 years, Roma Van Brink (nee Heppel) and John are now 81 years and Fred Margetts from New Zealand is now 79.

What a great re-union it was. Roma organized everything at her beautiful 4th floor North Sydney Unit overlooking Sydney Harbour and the Bridge. Sydney is 560 miles North-east of Melbourne. Fred and his wife Glenis came from Auckland, NZ. It was the first time John and Fred had met since the 1950's. We are hoping to hold another re-union, perhaps, in Melbourne next time.

Through the year, Joan continues with her hydro-therapy swimming pool classes every Friday which she enjoys. She has a group of friends, usually eight ladies and two gents that she organises outings for every month or so. They attend live entertainment followed by lunch or home get-togethers.

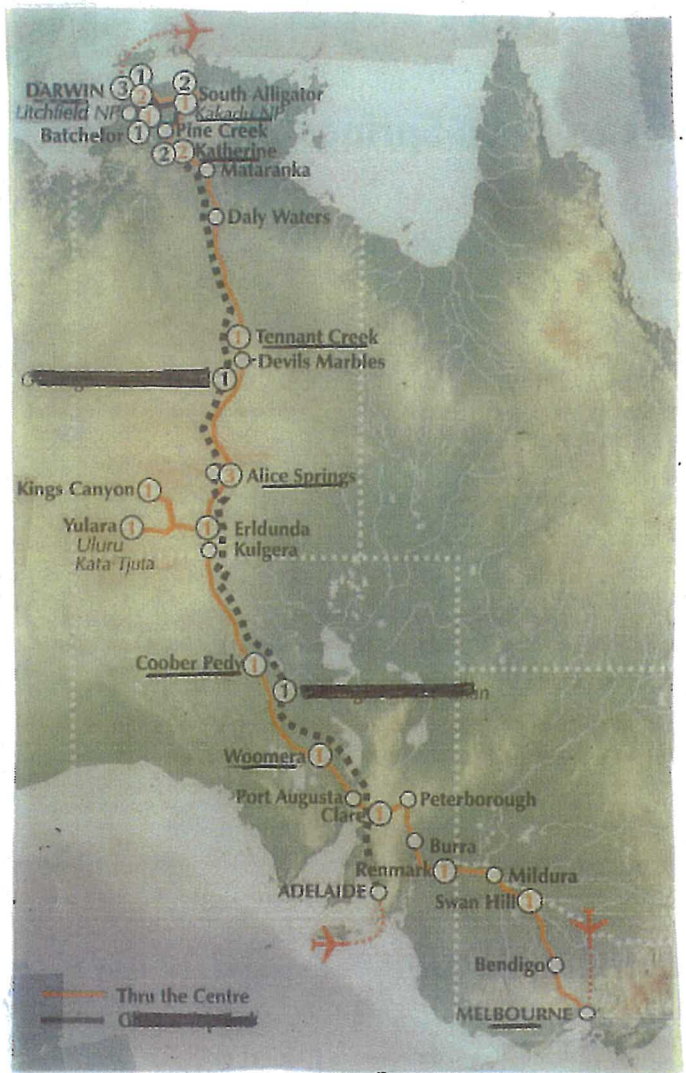
John keeps himself busy with the interest he has in the Liberal Party politics. He looks forward to the next Federal Election to oust our first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard and her Labor Party cronies that he dislikes with a passion. We are sure he regrets not going into politics and Joan says – "Thank God he didn't".

In August our youngest granddaughter Kahala (10) made her First Holy Communion. She looked beautiful all in white as did the other children with her. Then on 29th October, our eldest granddaughter Danielle (23) announced and celebrated her engagement to Dim with a party for 120 guests – congratulations to them. They plan a wedding in 2013. Danielle is a school teacher. That same evening, Suzanne's eldest girl Paige (17) made her debut. She looked absolutely beautiful in her white gown. It was more like a wedding with a Limousine arriving to take them to the reception venue.

In 2011, a couple of overseas friends visited us. Firstly, Blanche Tappin from England who was in Australia for two months. She stayed with us for five days in October. We had several outings and it was great to see her. Following her visit, Casey Rush from Morrisville, Pennsylvania USA arrived. She is the daughter of Joe and Becky Rush. Joe was best man at our youngest son's wedding in Baltimore in 1989. Casey was in Melbourne for two months on a working holiday and she stayed with us at weekends. She is now 27 and has grown into a lovely young lady.

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In October, Joan and her good friend of nearly 50 years, Faye McKnight went on an organised tour with the Australian/Indian Association to Central Australia. They first flew to Darwin over 2000 miles away. Three nights were spent in the "Top End" with a City Tour then they visited surrounding places of interest including a Jumping Crocodile Cruise, and a Crocodile farm etc. They then travelled by coach right through the centre of Australia taking the Stuart Highway from Darwin to Adelaide including Highlights at Kakadu, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Ayres Rock, Coober Pedy, Adelaide then home to Melbourne. Coober Pedy was a very interesting town. It is where people mine for opals and they mainly build their homes underground because of the heat. It was fascinating to visit underground habitats, mines, hotels, churches etc. They found it pretty tiring but a great trip.



There has been much turmoil and unrest around the world during the past year affecting most countries. Financial problems as well as uprisings and mother nature wreaking havoc bringing out the best and the worst in human nature.

Finally, we are planning our move back to our old Canterbury house. The builder has finished his work but the painting, curtains, carpets and garden work is yet to be done. Our house in Heathmont has 14 steps to the front door and this is no good for Joan. The house in Canterbury is on the flat. It will take a few months before this happens. The address there will be: 5 View Street, Canterbury 3126.

We would appreciate knowing if you received our last newsletter posted to you at the end of January 2011. Attached were three pages of photographs of my 80th birthday, our eldest daughter Suzanne and Ross renewing their vows after 25 years on the Greek Island "Santorini, grandchildren etc. You can advise by email to our daughter Suzanne. Her address is rspmack@bigpond.net.au. Please give us your telephone number also. You may just get a 'phone call from us.

We would love to hear from you with updates of what you have been doing and any family news. We think of you often so please keep in touch. Should you decide to visit "Down Under" make sure you take time to visit with us.

Fondest memories

John & Joan
John & Joan.



LAHORE – (PAKISTON) IN 1950's

BACK – ROMA HEPPELL, FRANK KERLEY, BERYL GRAY

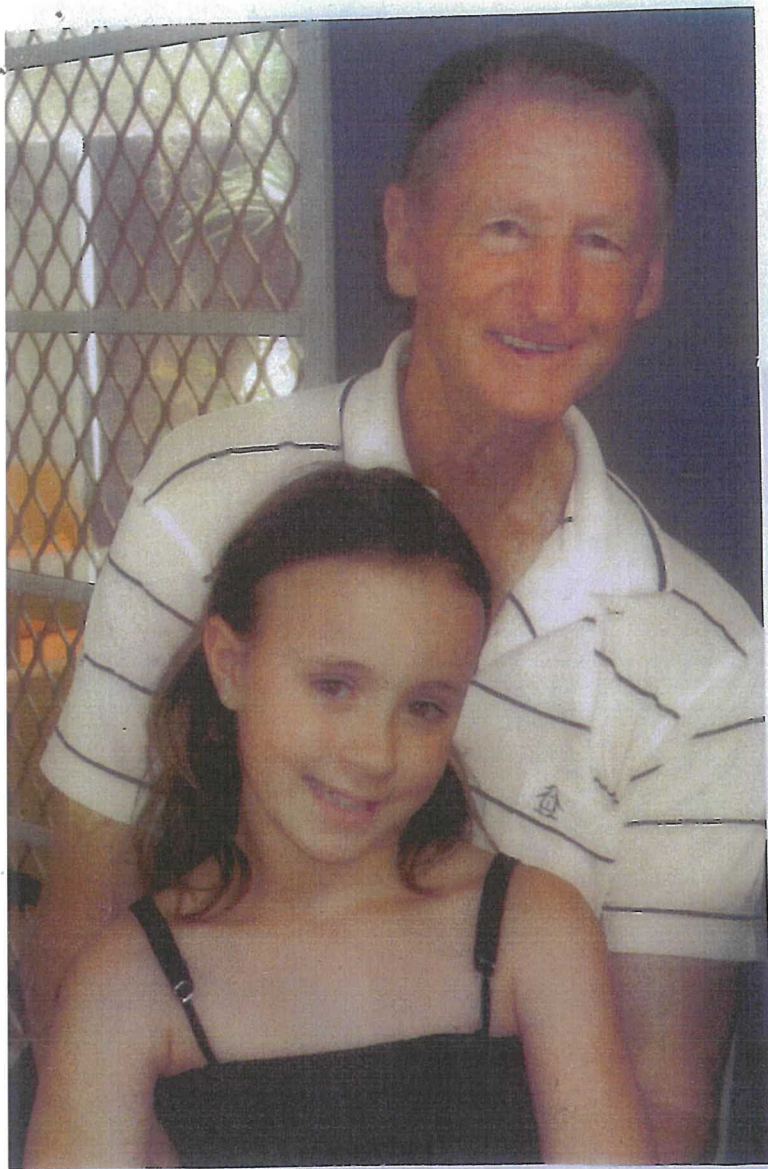
FRONT – JOHN McKINNON, FRED MARGETTS, JOHN CROFT



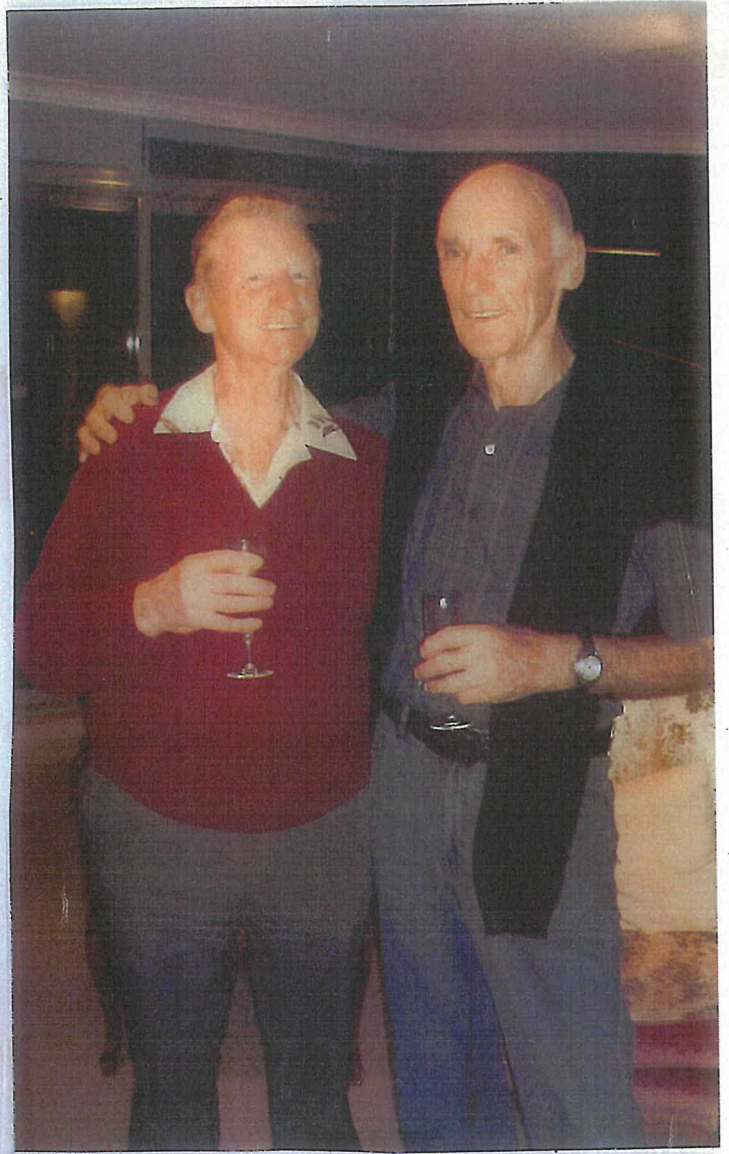
RE-UNION (SYDNEY) 20TH APRIL 2011

BACK – JOHN CROFT, BERYL GRAY, FRED MARGETTS

FRONT – FRANK KERLEY, ROMA VAN BRINK (nee Heppell) , JOHN McKINNON



JOHN + KAHAKA - YOUNGEST GRANDDAUGHTER



SYDNEY REUNION - JOHN + FRED (N.Z)



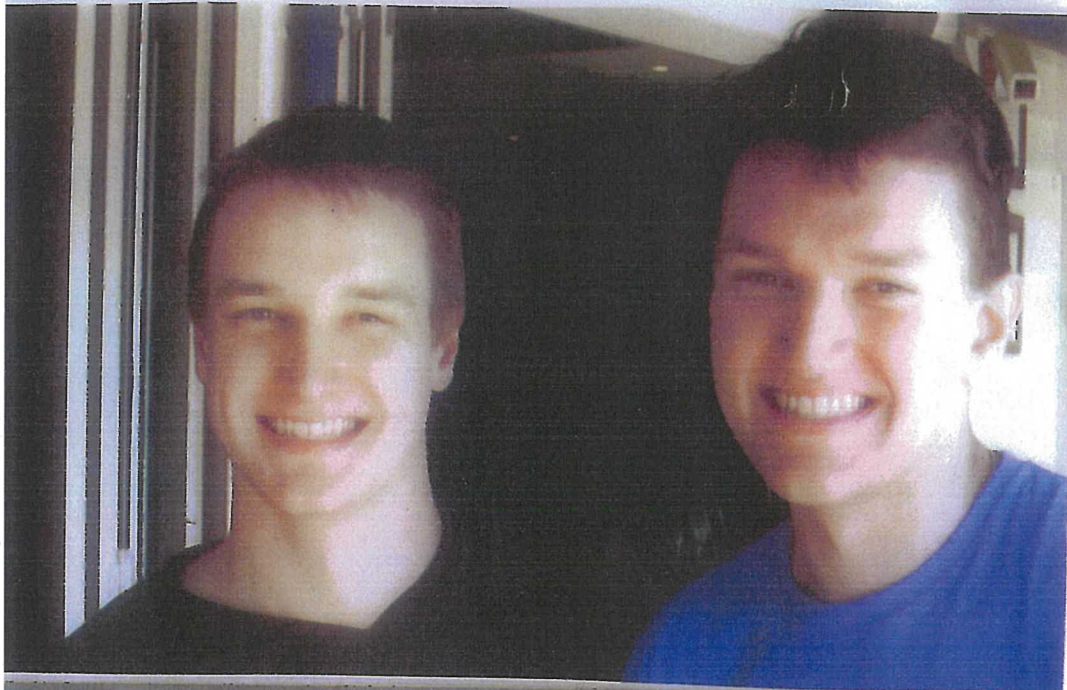
JOHN + JOAN (SYDNEY 2011)
OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF
SISTER MARY McKINLOP
AUSTRALIA'S FIRST SAINT



MELISSA CROFT



DANIELLE CROFT

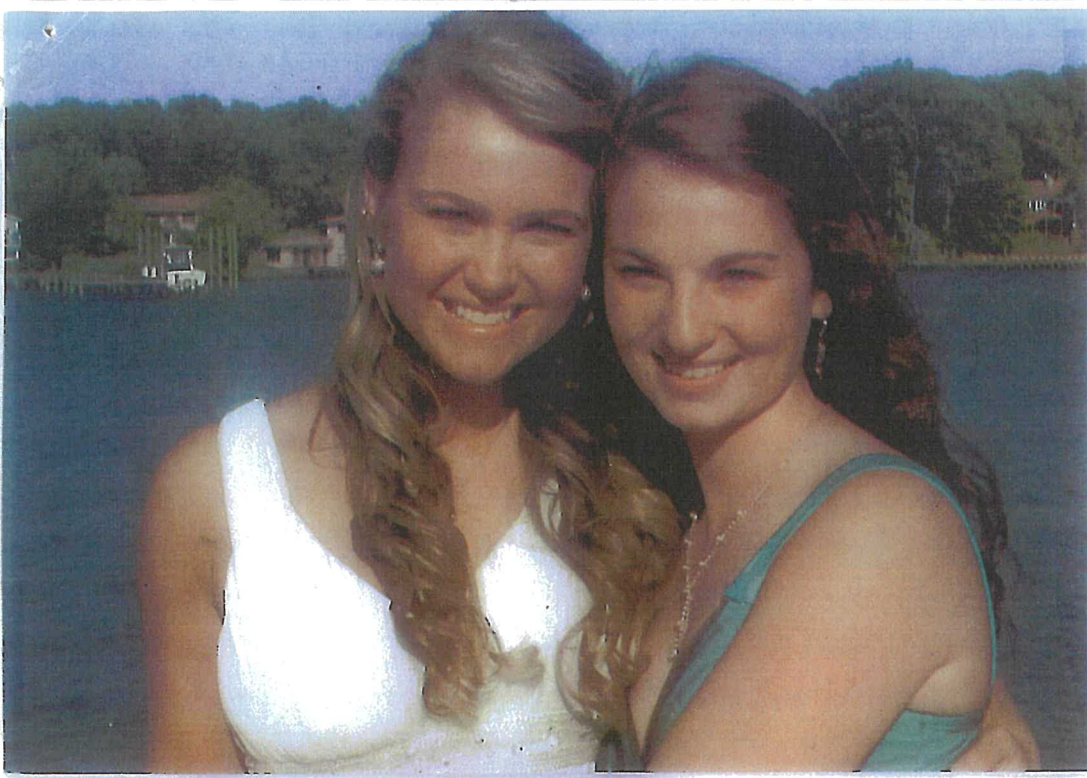


GRAND CHILDREN
LIVING IN AUSTRALIA

L to R
BEN + CHRISTOPHER
MILLER

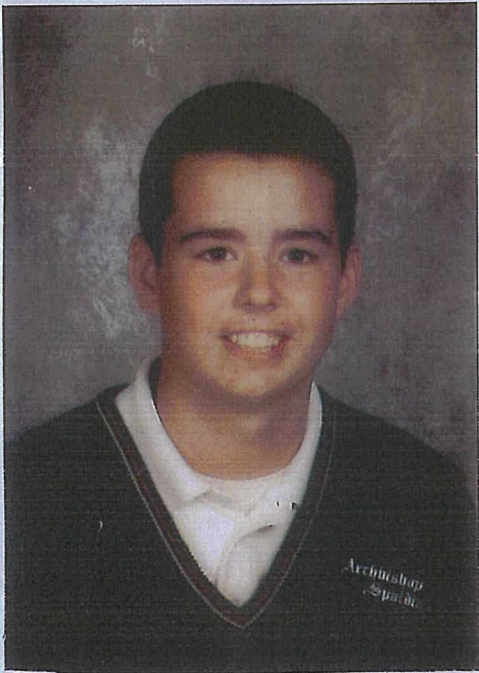


L to R
PAIGE + KAHALA
MACKINTOSH



GRANDCHILDREN
LIVING IN U.S. IA

L TO R
CHELSEA +
MADELINE
CROFT



JAMES CROFT



AMERICAN FRIEND
CASEY RUSH
WITH JOAN IN
FRONT OF OUR
HEATHMONT HOUSE