

THE CROFT CHRONICLE

April 2016

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Dear

Greetings and Happy New Year from Down Under to those who sent cards and emails and also to those from whom I have not heard.

Two thousand & fifteen was an unusual year for me. It will be two years this coming June since Joan died. She was a very special lady and I miss her so much. At times, living alone can be quite depressing and talking to oneself is not recommended. I enjoy daily walks and working in the garden which gives me the opportunity to communicate with neighbours and make new friends. I feel that I am slowing up a little, but, I guess this is understandable as I am in my eighty-sixth year. Thankfully, I am still very fit and healthy.

My youngest son Robert has lived in America for twenty-seven years. He married a lovely American girl in 1989 – Paula Bush. She is the youngest of eight children – a good Catholic family. As I mentioned last year, early in January 2015, Robert's two eldest children, Chelsea (23) and Madeline (21) came to visit us. Chelsea was here for six weeks and Madeline four weeks. Their brother James (19) and my son Robert arrived here on 18th December and returned to the USA on 16th January 2016.

During their time here they were kept busy spending time at the beach at Blairgowrie, on a house-boat at Lake Eildon, fishing and sightseeing in Gippsland (east of Melbourne) viewing the sights and fireworks on Sydney Harbour on New Year's Eve, a trip along the Great Ocean Road here in Victoria and a visit to the City of Ballarat.

I was in hospital when they arrived. I had a blockage in the main artery of my left leg necessitating an operation where a new artery was inserted down the leg from above the hip to the ankle. After six days in hospital, I was home for a week when an infection developed which took me back into hospital for another eight days. Having had the stitches and staples removed on 23rd December, I was discharged on Christmas Eve. The cut has healed well and I can now walk without any pain.

On arrival back in Baltimore, Robert and James found the Winter there to be quite mild, but soon after, below-freezing temperatures arrived with blizzards and lot of snow. We do not experience such low temperatures or snow in Melbourne (Thank God). However, we do need rain badly. It has been an exceptional Summer with temperatures varying from 26 deg.C to

40+Deg C. and there have been bushfires in several States. Now that it is Autumn (Fall) temperatures are still in the mid 30 deg.C. It is the hottest start to Autumn on record.

My youngest daughter Jeanette came down from Sydney for two weeks so a great family get-together was held on Christmas Day. Suzanne, my eldest daughter organized lunch at "The Acorn" which is a little English style pub which she and her husband Ross own. They sold their carpet business in December 2014 to retire but only enjoyed a year of retirement when they bought this business. Their plan is to build it up and sell it, hopefully making a profit.

Suzanne & Ross's eldest daughter, Paige (21) has recently returned after six months in England and is now working at the pub. Their youngest Kahala (14) is doing well at College.

Jeanette's two boys, Benjamin (23) has had a trip to America as well as two weeks in Japan and Christopher (21) is at Sydney University and recently had a trip with the University to Poland.

John's two girls, Danielle (28) and Melissa (26) are both working. Danielle is a school teacher and Melissa is a physiotherapist. Danielle was married in January 2014 and I have just learned that I am going to be a Great Grandfather on 24th August. Melissa is engaged to a South African young man and their wedding will be held in March, 2017.

Robert's children have busy lives also. Chelsea is now working for N.B.C. at a Television Station out in the centre of America at North Platte, Nebraska. She says the weather is freezing there but she plans to stay twelve months. Madeline graduates from University in May 2016 and James is still at College. He loved it here in Australia and says he will be back by next Christmas.

In my last "Croft Chronicle", I mentioned that Paula Twiss from Bhopal, India was coming for a visit. We were shocked when we were told that she was unable to come. She was diagnosed with very high blood pressure, had had a slight stroke and her kidneys weren't functioning. I understand that she is now on the road to recovery so maybe we will see her next year. We were also expecting friends from Colorado Springs (USA) but this didn't eventuate either.

During the past twelve months, I have attended ten funerals of friends and relations including the father of my son-in-law and on Joan's side (the Twiss family) her sister's son who died in Ballarat, aged 62. Also, I went to Sydney for the funeral of Joan's first cousin, the daughter of her father's sister. However, I did not attend the funeral in Perth of Joan's brother's son, Mark Twiss who died from a heart attack, aged 50. Perth is 2000 miles from Melbourne.

No, doubt many of you may have seen the world-wide broadcast of Cardinal George Pell's evidence given to the Australian Royal Commission into Child Sex Abuse. George gave evidence from Rome as his health would have been in jeopardy had he flown to Australia. He had recently had a pacemaker for his heart inserted. Both George Pell and I attended the same school, St Patrick's College Ballarat, but I was there from 1940 to 1947 and George attended from 1949 to 1959. However, we got to know each other through the Reunions which I attend regularly.

Regrettably, a Priest in the Ballarat area was sexually abusing boys for many years and was eventually jailed. Some of this occurred during the time George Pell was a young priest in the

Ballarat area. He says that he was totally unaware of this abuse at that time and I believe him. Later on, other cases of abuse became known but the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church is such that all power vests with the Bishop and despite reports from Monsignors, Priests, Parents and Parishioners, some Bishops ignored the reports and moved the abusive priests from Parish to Parish.

When George Pell was appointed Archbishop of Melbourne, he then had the authority and he removed the perpetrators. He was the first to do so in Australia. He set up a Commission and a Fund for those who had been abused. It is good to see that George Pell was prepared to give full and complete answers to what had occurred. The Australian Government and various State Governments have set up separate Commissions to enquire into Child Abuse over the relevant years. Many different organizations have been found to have had serious problems with child abuse.

The approaching Election in the USA is making headlines around the world. It would seem that the very controversial Donald Trump might be the Republican Candidate and Hilary Clinton the Democrat Candidate. It remains to be seen whether both these candidates, actually, will be endorsed. However, Australians are being given a good look at the American political system.

Here in Australia, we will have a Federal Election this year also and at the present time it is looking as though there may be a Double Dissolution called. This means that the Prime Minister may go to the Governor General to advise that both Houses of Parliament be dissolved on the grounds that the Senate (the Upper House) has become obstructionist. In other words, the Senate will not pass the Bills from the Lower House. Should this happen, we could have an election in July.

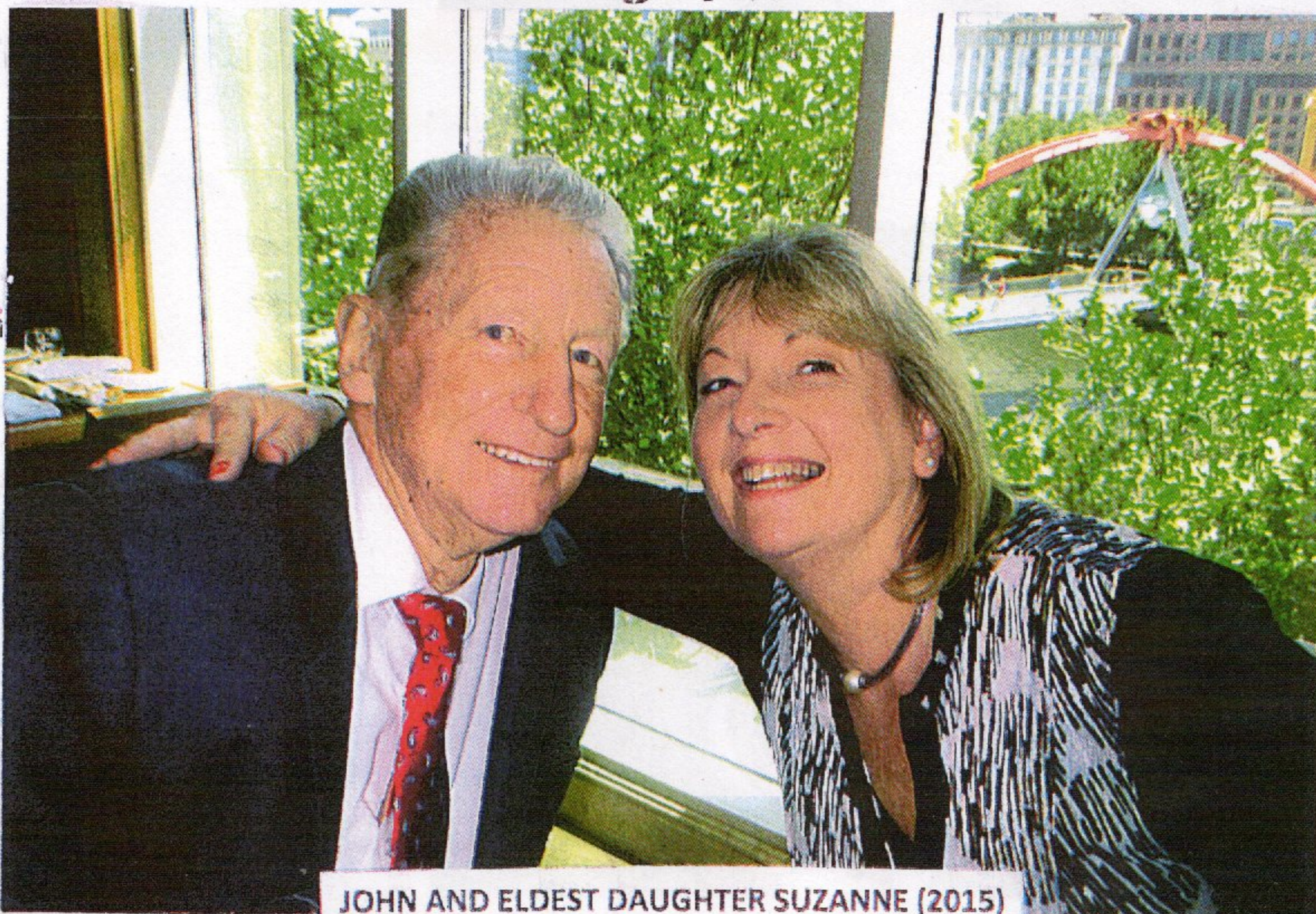
I still have in mind a trip to Europe in 2017 and hope it eventuates. Remember, if you ever come to our shores, make sure you come to visit.

I hope that 2016 is a happy, healthy and prosperous year for you and your loved ones.

The above email address is that of my daughter Suzanne's. She passes on directly to me any emails that are addressed to me as I see her regularly.

From my family to yours. Lots of Love.

John



JOHN AND ELDEST DAUGHTER SUZANNE (2015)



JOHN
WITH HIS COUSIN
PHIL DE GRUCHY
AGED 90
TAKEN IN 2015



BLAST FROM THE PAST
IN 1950'S
JOHN IN HIS TWENTIES

ST MARKS SQUARE
VENICE



JOHN PAINTING NAMES OF
PLACES ON THE VAN – HE AND
FIVE OTHERS TRAVELLED
OVERLAND IN FROM
ENGLAND TO INDIA
IN 1950'S

Roale - Whinnie Pat
AUSTRALIA



CHELSEA, MADELAINE AND MY YOUNGEST DAUGHTER JEANETTE
TAKEN IN SYDNEY - JAN 2015



CARDINAL GEORGE PELL
WITH FRIEND FAY McKNIGHT AND MY WIFE JOAN
AT ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE REUNION IN 2010

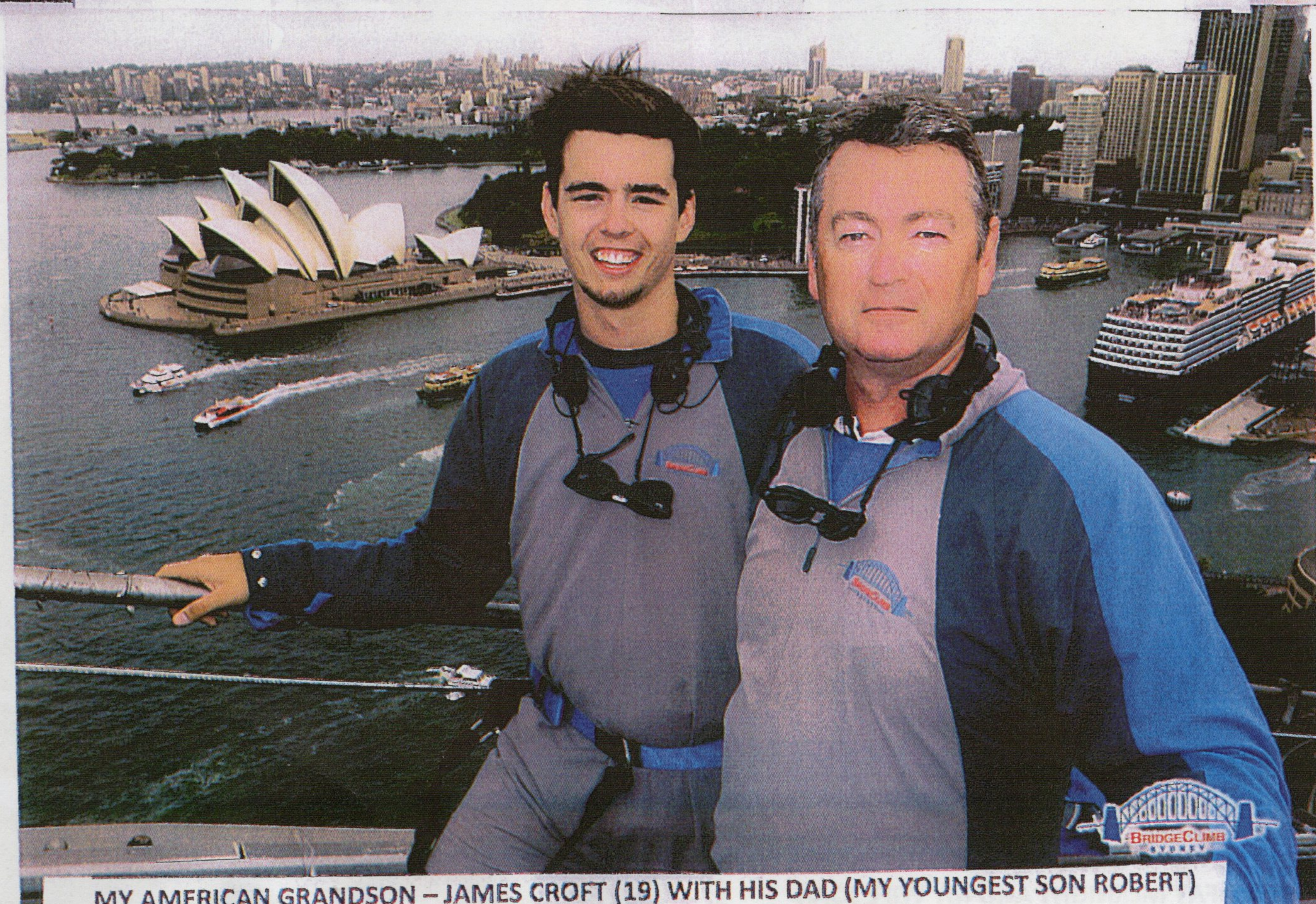




MADELAINE CROFT (21)

CHELSEA CROFT (23)

MY AMERICAN GRANDDAUGHTERS TAKEN IN SYDNEY JAN 2015



**MY AMERICAN GRANDSON – JAMES CROFT (19) WITH HIS DAD (MY YOUNGEST SON ROBERT)
TAKEN FROM TOP OF SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE JAN 2016**