

# THE CROFT CHRONICLE

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5 View Street  
Canterbury 3126  
Melbourne Australia  
T: +61 (3) 9836 1594  
E: [essmac1960@gmail.com](mailto:essmac1960@gmail.com)

Dear

My apologies for my newsletter once again arriving after Christmas. One of these years I will get organised and get it out on time ha ha or maybe not. Thank you all for your Seasons Greetings and I wish you a healthy and Happy New Year.

The past year I have endeavoured to keep myself busy, spending a lot of time maintaining the gardens and lawns around my old home that was built way back in 1920. I have obviously not lived there since then but we did move in a long time ago. It was back in 1964, and we paid a staggering amount of 8500 pounds (\$17,000), an amount that at the time seemed as though I would never ever pay back to the bank, but we have all, over the years had that ahead of us, and most times, you look back and laugh at how much you actually paid.

In May this year, Australia had a Federal Election, and as I have mentioned before I have been involved with the Liberal Party and do my bit to help where I can. This includes letter box drops of pamphlets and erecting big corflute signs on the boundaries of properties. My daughter Suzanne gets mad with me when I tell her I've been up ladders and even climbed a few trees to make sure I get them in the best spot. She tells me I'm 88 and I'll kill myself. I just tell her "yes" that's right, I am only 88 and doing well, doing something I enjoy is maybe a good way to go.

I was supporting 'Gladys Liu' – she was the candidate for the electorate of Chisholm which has 102,000 voters. I added up the other day that there are only 127 that I haven't gotten to speak to so far – they don't call me Mr Hav-a-Chat for nothing. All the hard work paid off and she won by the smallest of margins. I made sure I let her know that the signs were the deciding factor!!! I have known Gladys for many years. She is now an elected member of the House of Representatives and the first Chinese born Australian in the Australian government. The day she was due to make her inaugural speech in Parliament, my daughter and I drove the 8 hours to Canberra, our Capital to hear the speech. We spent a few days in Canberra and then drove home. My son in law, 'Ross' says I should run for the Prime Minister's job!!

I think if I was 30 years younger I would have done that and I would do a bloody good job running the country. John Croft for P.M – Now that has a nice ring to it.

Even though most of you think that Australia is the land of sun, sand and surf, this winter has been freezing or maybe it feels like that because I'm getting on a bit. Although cold we have had very little rain and so much of this vast country is experiencing one of the worst droughts on record with continual cold winds blowing in from the Antarctic, then came excessive hot weather causing very dry conditions. Bushfire season has come early with New South Wales and Queensland experiencing the worse of the fires in all states. But most states are in for a bad season according to the authorities. Over 1500 homes have been lost, over 20 people have lost their lives and many people injured and farms completely gutted with lots of stock and crops lost.

On a happier note I managed to wrangle my way on to the tail end of a trip to Perth with my daughter 'Suzanne' thank goodness for my kids!!! I had that trip to Europe in 2018 with my youngest daughter 'Jeanette', my youngest son 'Robert' and his son 'James who flew over from America to drive the camper van around for us. This year's trip to Perth was not quite so epic as the overseas trip, but I still love to travel whenever I can and I never miss an opportunity. Ross told me he was going on a charity event called 'The Bash' driving from Melbourne to Geraldton a distance of about 3700km. Geraldton is a town 4 hours north of Perth. This is a big event where 100 cars that must be at least 30 years old set off from Melbourne and travel through the outback, visiting small towns and injecting cash into country towns, at the same time raising money for kids in need. So far this charity has raised \$1.8 million dollars this year.

Suzanne and the wives of the 3 men who travelled with Ross – they fly to be at the finish line to meet the cars and their men on arrival and then all are involved in a big celebration. I flew to Perth with Suzanne and the other wives, they then drove up to Geraldton and I stayed in Perth for the first week with my sister-in-law 'Celia Twiss'. The last time I was in Perth was in 1993 when my mother died there – she is buried in Mandurah. My main desire in returning to Perth was to look up some friends and relations. For those of you that know me well, you will know that I enjoy looking up the dead ones as much as the ones still living.

Ross had great stories about his trip, but the main story was that he and his 3 companions ended up rolling the car onto its roof on a dirt track. The car was a write off, but they all climbed out without a scratch. They bought another car the next day and drove the last 2500 kms in that.

After Ross and his mates flew home, Suzanne remained with me for the second week. We hired a car and headed off to a fascinating place called 'New Norcia' – 130 kms north east

of Perth. This is an old mission town with a Monastery, Church and school buildings, set up by Spanish Monks 170 years ago, dating back to the 1800's. If any of you are travelling that way, you should put this on your 'must do' list. We stayed one night in the monastery, even went to evening prayers with the Monks. First stop next day was Karra Katta Cemetery in Perth to visit the grave of Joan's grandmother – Mary Twiss (nee De Burgh) then on to Mandurah where we stayed two nights with Lois Cade – long time friend of Joan's, also visited my mother's grave. After Bunbury, we arrived in Busselton where we met up with Kingsley McSwain (another cousin) who runs a 1200 acre dairy farm – milking 600 cows twice daily. We walked out to the end of the Busselton pier, you may smile, but the pier is 1.8kms long extending out into the ocean. I was proud of myself for the big effort, but I felt exhausted when I got to the end.

I cheated on the way back and returned on the miniature train. We didn't have time to look up all the Twiss relations but some we did see were Alene Samson (Twiss) and Cynthia Strickland (De Burgh), we had a tail wind on the 2000 mile flight home from Perth – it took only 3 hours.

Like all of us – I am very proud of my kids – I have 4 children, nine grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

'John' the eldest is married to Lynn. He still works very hard and tells me he is on his home run to retirement in a couple of years. He is Director of Sales – National Corporate Accounts for a worldwide French company that deals in everything that is needed in the hospitality industry. Although John runs a large sales force around Australia, he loves to tell you that even though he is the boss – he still sells more than anyone else in the company. He has always had the gift of the gab. He could sell ice blocks to Eskimos! He recently went on a two weeks work trip to visit various factories in Milan (Italy). Whilst there he also visited Lake Como and Venice. John has two daughters – the eldest 'Danielle' (33) – married to 'Dim' – they have two sons, 'Max' and 'Charlie' and the younger daughter 'Melissa' (30) married to 'Dean' and they recently had their first child – a boy called 'Joshua'.

'Suzanne' – married to 'Ross' – both now retired. They lead a hectic life related to many social events. They have two daughters – the oldest 'Paige' (24) is out living in her own place, and the other is 'Kahala' (18) who recently graduated from High School, passed her driving licence and is now finalising her University Admission.

'Jeanette' – after living here in Melbourne since returning from Europe - has decided that Sydney is where her heart is and where she belongs. She has lived in Sydney for 30 years and is now settled back into her job there. Her eldest son 'Ben' (27) spent the past year in Melbourne, but he got itchy feet and recently headed off to Europe where he has just seen many Christmas Markets. He is thinking of working and staying there for a while. The youngest son 'Christopher' (26) got his degree at University of NSW and now works for 'Fire

Fly' in Austin (Texas) – a company that designs and builds space rockets. He is living his dream of being a Rocket Designer!! Yes, you are right he is a genius. Jeanette says all the brains are from her, but I tell her that they skipped a generation and the brains are from me.

'Robert' – my youngest has lived in America for 30 years where he has raised 3 adult lovely kids – 'Chelsea' (26) is an anchor/reporter at a top TV station in "Wichita" (Kansas). Check her out on YouTube – search Chelsea Croft. 'Madeline' (24) moved to Nebraska to be close to her sister and then Chelsea moved to Kansas. Now it appears Madeline has fallen in love – maybe with a cowboy and has stayed in Nebraska. 'James' (22) enjoyed his trip in the camper van in Europe with us in 2018. Robert lives in Baltimore (Maryland) as does James and we don't know what their plans are – so you can see my clan are all spread far and wide and this is one reason I keep up with my newsletter, because as you get a little older like me, you come to realize that the most important thing in the whole world is family and friends. I hope my little bit of news that I send out each year reminds you all how important it is to stay in touch.

Socially, during the past year I have attended various functions – my school reunions, lunches, concerts and talks, trips to the houseboat at Lake Eildon and Morning Melody shows – recently to the Dusty Springfield show featuring singer 'Wendy Stapleton' and the Elvis Presley show with 'Damian Mullins'.

In this Newsletter I have included some photos taken during our European trip in 2018.

I am from the old school and still enjoy receiving letters sent by 'snail mail' – now in the modern world everyone uses 'email' – quicker and cheaper. However I do receive some emails sent via my daughter 'Suzanne' who lives close by and I see her regularly and her email is [essmac1960@gmail.com](mailto:essmac1960@gmail.com) and her mobile 0419 313 146.

For those who know my younger daughter 'Jeanette' she is now living in Sydney. Her contact details are [jeninthemoment@gmail.com](mailto:jeninthemoment@gmail.com) and mobile 0400 882 291.

Next year I will turn 90 years young on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 and am looking forward to a big birthday celebration.

Love, best wishes and God bless

John Croft and Family



MY COUSIN PHIL DEGRUCHY 26-6-1928 TO 12-3-2019 (AGED 92) HIS MOTHER & MY FATHER WERE BROTHER & SISTER



PHOTO OF GRAVE & LOVELY WIFE AT SPRINGVALE BOTANICAL CEMETERY

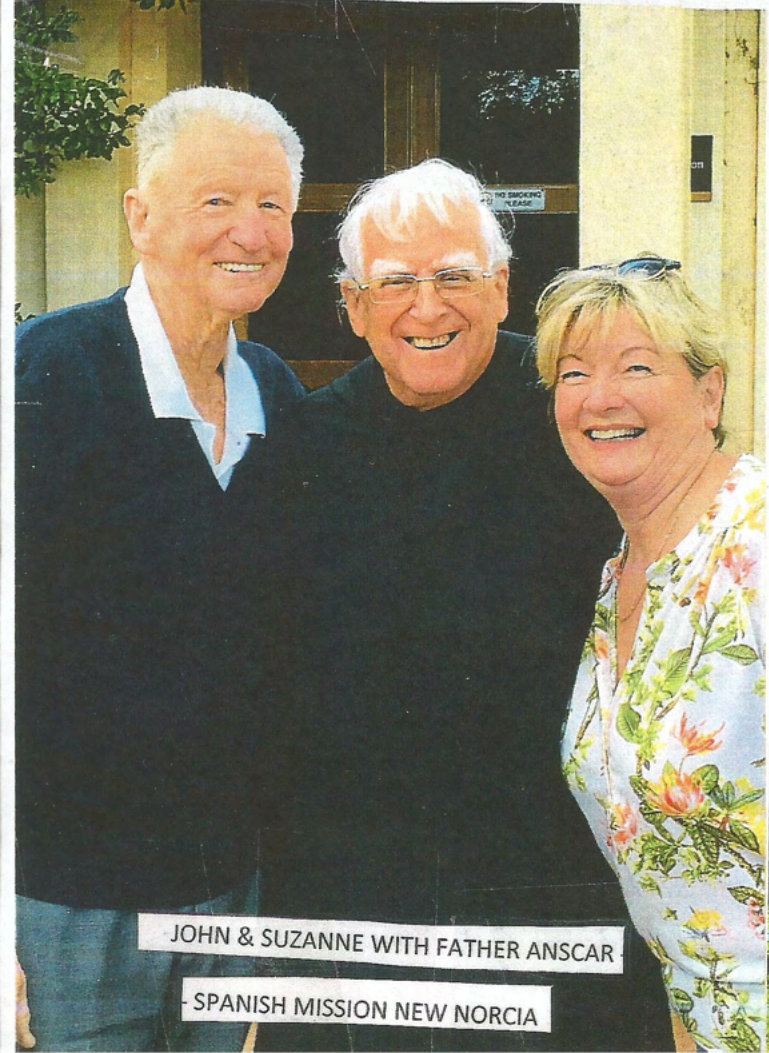
JOAN ANNE CROFT (NEE TWISS) 18-10-1937 TO 17-6-2014 (AGED 76)



JOANS COUSIN ALENE SAMSON (NEE TWISS)



WEST AUSTRALIA CYNTHIA STRICKLAND (DEBURGH) WITH HUSBAND FRANK

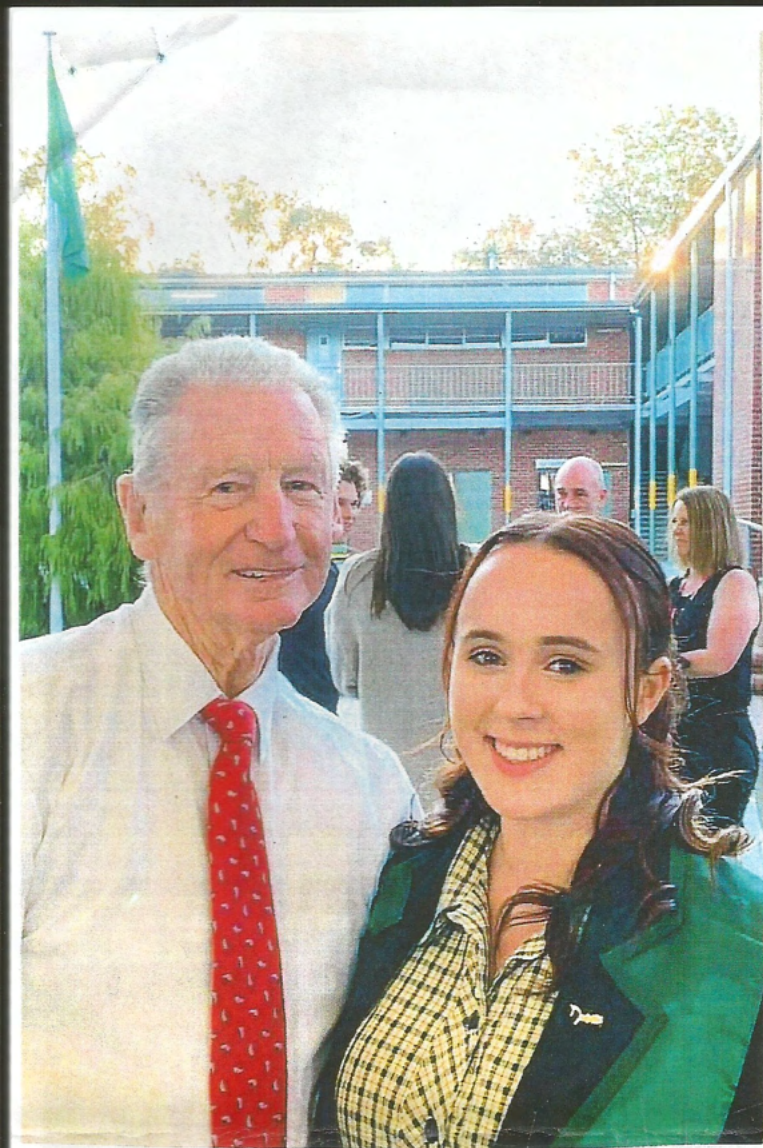


JOHN & SUZANNE WITH FATHER ANSCAR

- SPANISH MISSION NEW NORCIA



KINGSLEY MCSWAIN - JOANS COUSIN, BUSSELTON

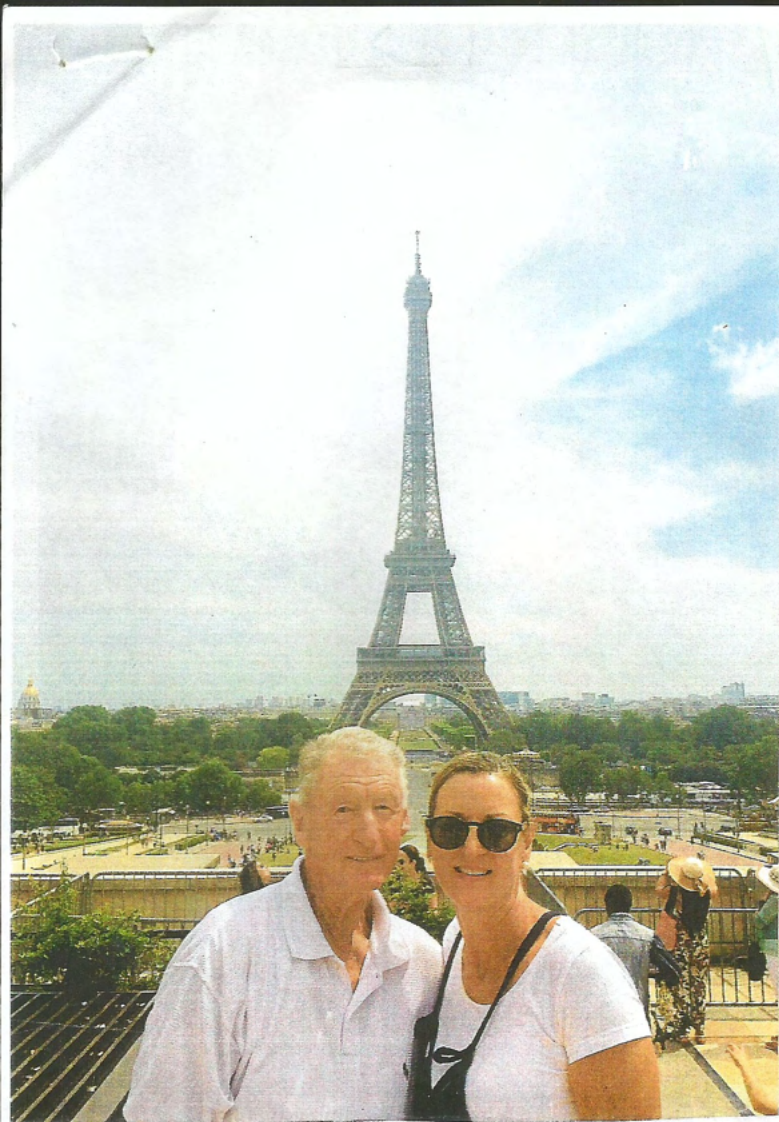


RANDAUGHTER KAHALA MACKINTOSH AT HER COLLEGE GRADUATION | WENDY STAPLETON (SINGER) AT HER DUSTY SPRINGFIELD SHOW



JOHN WITH GLADYS LIU MP – MEMBER FOR CHISHOLM

SUZANNE WITH DAMIAN MULLINS AT HIS ELVIS PRESLEY SHOW



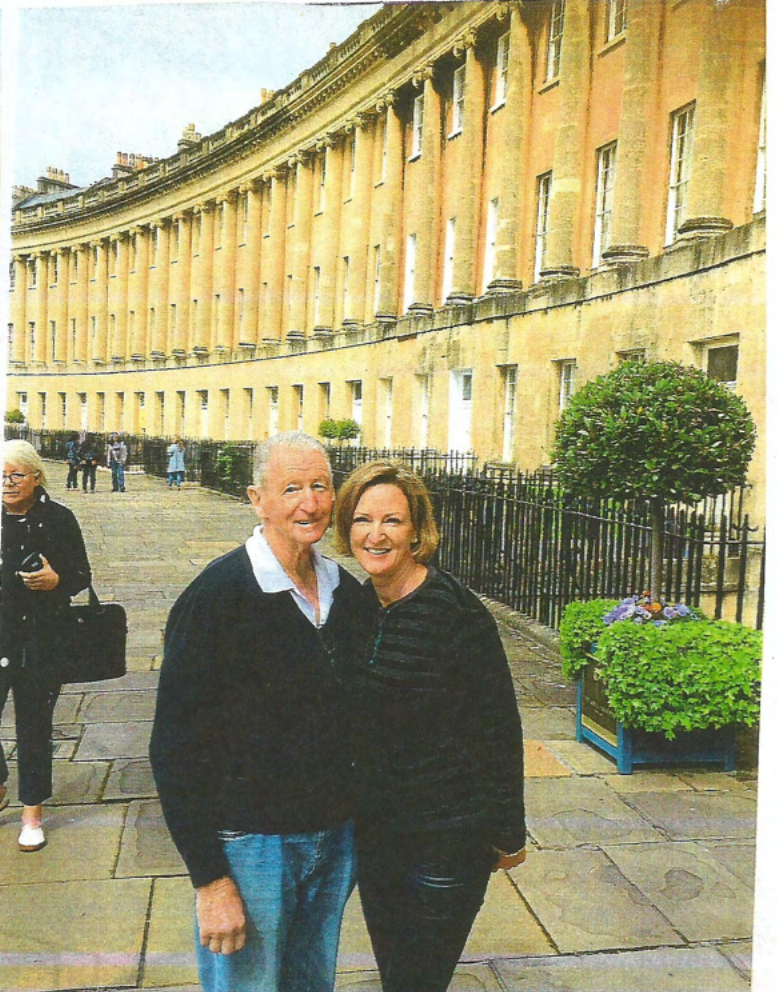
JOHN & JEANETTE - PARIS 2018



HORSE GUARDS AT WHITEHALL, LONDON



JEANETTE AT THE LOVELY VILLAGE OF HALLSTATT, AUSTRIA

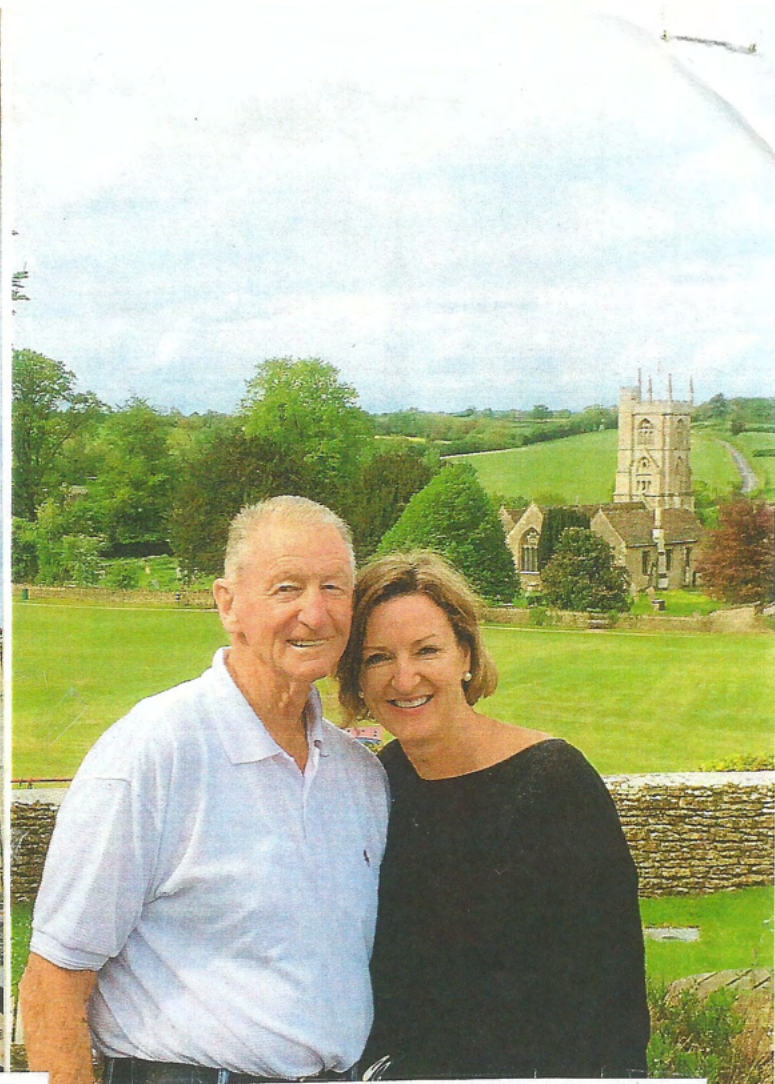


ROYAL CRESCENT, BATH, ENGLAND





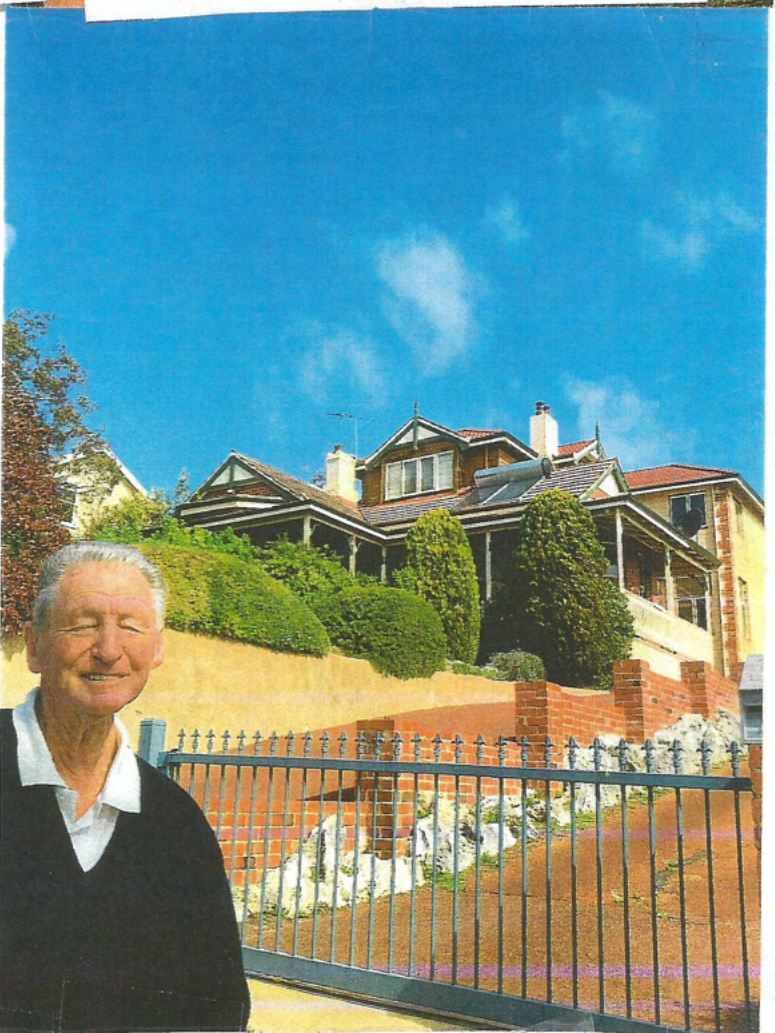
THE CROFTS – JAMES, JOHN & ROBERT ON CHARLES ST BRIDGE IN PRAGUE



VIEW OF THE COUNTRY SIDE IN WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND



MY NEWEST GREAT GRANDCHILD JOSHUA JACOB HELBERG



MY MOTHERS HOUSE IN FREMANTLE, WEST AUSTRALIA



THE FERRY BERTH ON THE DANUBE RIVER, DURNSTEIN, AUSTRIA



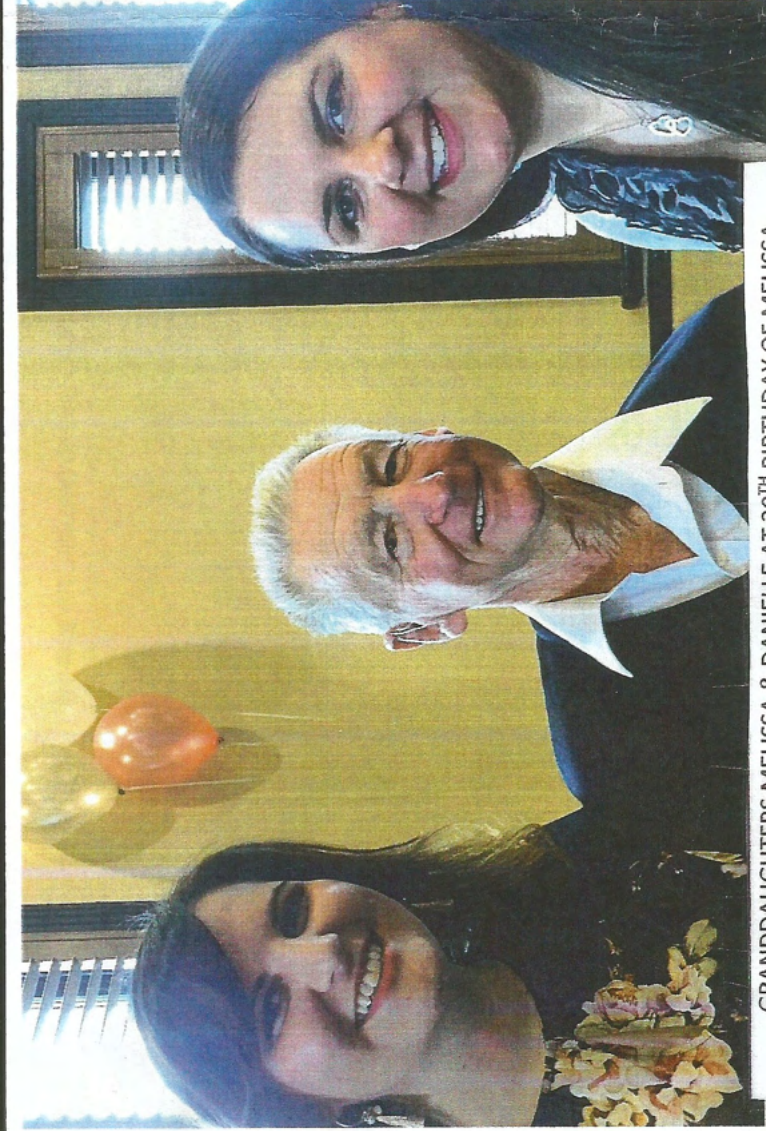
PART OF THE VILLAGE OF DURNSTEIN, AUSTRIA



SIR JOHN MILL'S HOME IN DENHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, ENGLAND



ENJOYING A PINT OF GUINNESS AT THE PUB IN CONG, IRELAND



GRANDDAUGHTERS MELISSA & DANIELLE AT 30<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY OF MELISSA



ON PARTY BOAT AT HENLEY ON THAMES, ENGLAND



MY 100-YEAR-OLD HOME (BUILT 1920) – 5 VIEW STREET, CANTERBURY, MELBOURNE



MY YOUNGEST SON ROBERT AT MENIN GATE, YPRES, BELGIUM



ON THE PIER AT BUSSELTON, WEST AUSTRALIA



LUNCH ON THE MANDURAH ESTUARY, WEST AUSTRALIA



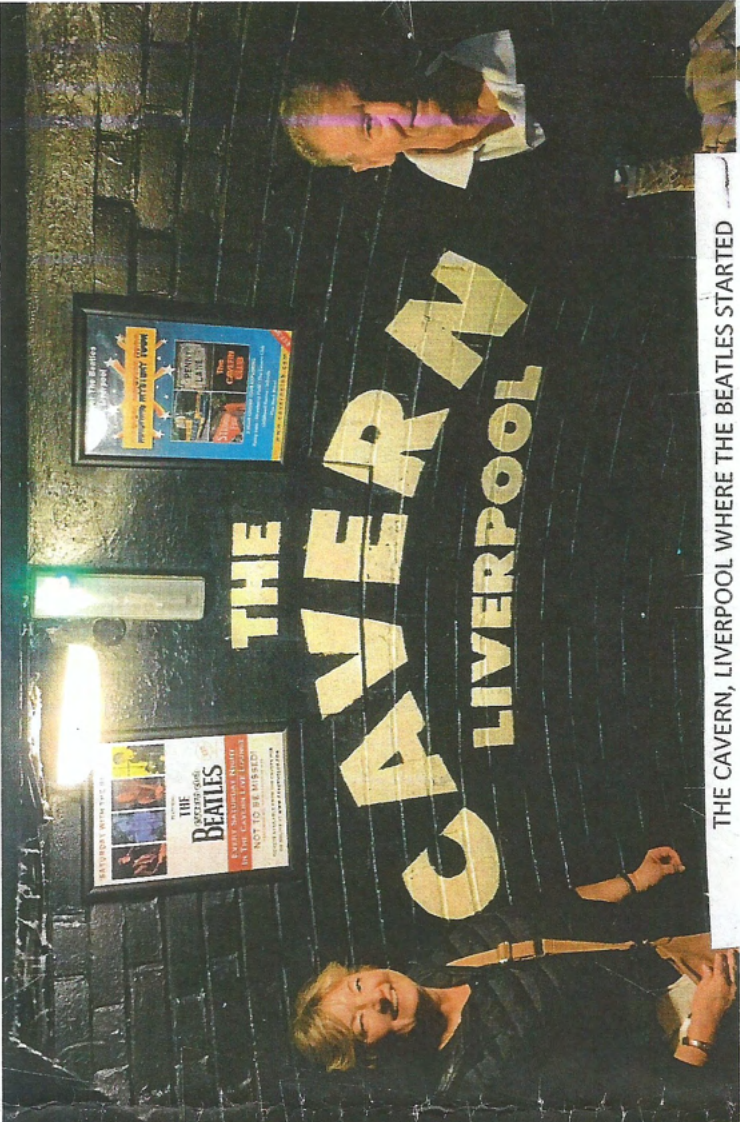
THE HOUSE BOAT OWNED BY ROSS & SUZANNE ON LAKE EILDON



MY ELDEST SON JOHN WITH HIS WIFE LYNN



STATUE OF THE BEATLES, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND



THE CAVERN, LIVERPOOL WHERE THE BEATLES STARTED



JOHN & SUZANNE AT KYLEMORE ABBEY, IRELAND IN 2018



WHERE WE STAYED ONE NIGHT  
THE 700-YEAR-OLD "GEORGE INN" AT NORTON SAINT PHILIP, ENGLAND