

# THE CROFT CHRONICLE

January 2021

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Dear

I hope you had a lovely Christmas with your family, and I send my best wishes to you for a happy and safe 2021. Thank you to those who sent cards and good wishes, it is always wonderful to hear from family and friends both near and far. The biggest thing to happen so far this year is I have reached the grand old age of 90. I have always told my kids I would make the Big 100 so only 10 years to go. You know the bad news about me living for another 10 years is you will all have to put up with another 10 more Croft Chronicles ha-ha.

Over my 90 years I have seen many things both good and bad. I started writing this newsletter on December 7th. The date took me back 79 years to 7<sup>th</sup> December 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, destroying the American Pacific Fleet and bringing America into World War II. I was only 10 years old and at boarding school at St Patricks College in Ballarat, a City about 75 miles North from Melbourne. The war has already been raging since 1939. The Nazis has occupied most of Europe and the Japanese had taken most Western Pacific Islands and countries, including Philippines, Malaya, Burma etc. They captured Singapore and New Guinea in January 1942 and Australia was their next target. The bombing of Darwin and Broome and midget submarines in Sydney Harbour in February 1942 brought the war to our shores. Japan is the only country to have invaded Australia and within no time we had many, many thousands of American servicemen stationed in Australia under the command of U.S General Douglas Macarthur.

Melbourne served as Head Quarters for both U.S and Australian Military Forces involved in the Pacific War. The Coral Sea battle was the turning point in this conflict. It took almost four years to regain all territories occupied by the Japanese. The Nazis had surrendered earlier in 1945, but it was not until two atomic bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima that Japan surrendered bringing the war to an end on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945 Without America's involvement, the Japanese would have occupied Australia – so long may we say, "God Bless America".

The Corona Virus spread like 'wildfire' around the world in 2020 and changed life for us all. Restrictions were introduced by governments with lockdowns, self-distancing, wearing of masks etc. Yet by the end of 2020 82 million were infected and 1.8 million people had died. Australia had extremely strict rules. Even closing borders between states and as we have entered 2021, our infection rate has virtually ceased, but still increasing in America, England, India etc. Now that vaccines are being administered, it is hoped that this dreadful disease will be eliminated. Vaccinations are due to commence in Australia on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February.

Let us all hope that the vaccine works, and the world can start to travel again. The bloody Virus shut down my big party that I was planning for my 90<sup>th</sup>.

So, once we can travel again, I am expecting you all to jump on a plane and come and see me and have a bit of a look around this great country that I live in. I will make a fantastic travel guide, but the bad news is that you will have to take me along with you ha-ha.

Donald Trump did not get a second term as President of United States. He was certainly a different president but Love him or hate him he certainly got the nation and even the world talking about things. There have never been so many people in America get out and vote and I think that is a good thing.

Well Biden the new main man and if he does nothing else let us hope he manages to settle things down and bring people back together. He has a big job ahead of him to re-unite the country.

Our Melbourne summer commenced in December with cool, windy days. By Christmas, it was reasonable and so was the rest of January, but it did get cool and wet again. The bureau of Metrology predicts the rest of summer will have some hot and dry days, but overall, it will be wetter than normal. Thanks to the El Nino weather pattern currently effecting our part of the world.

Last February I was lucky enough to have spent a week with my daughter, Jeanette in Sydney this was just before all the COVID-19 lockdowns Whilst up in Sydney I got to see 2 friends who I met in England in the 1950's, Roma Van Brink and Beryl Gray. Myself, the 2 girls, and 3 other chaps travelled overland in a converted ambulance from London to India via Europe, through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and into India.

Not a trip that you could do today and come out alive. Roma has written a small book about our adventures. It was a best seller!!!! Well, all 5 of us got a copy each but Spielberg has been on the phone asking if he can make a film of the journey. I said I would let the film go ahead if I was played by Clarke Gable one of my all-time great actors.

Mr Spielberg informed that he died a long time ago, so I am thinking of letting Chris Hemsworth play me. I have seen a picture of him, and I had a body like him way back then.

During my week in Sydney a ship called 'Acadia' was on a world cruise and was in port for 2 days. On board was a passenger, David Garrity, from Bath, England. David's mother 'Mary Twiss' and my wife's father, Robert Twiss were related. We enjoyed showing him some of the Sydney sights including Botany Bay where Captain Cook on his Ship 'Endeavour' came into Australia in 1770.

From February to November was a non-event as I like most of you was locked up at various times. I still walked to the shops and to McDonald's whenever I could. McDonald's is not for the burger, but I go there and pinch the TV guide out of the paper. If they ever catch me ill just act old and vague and I am sure they will let me go ha-ha

Christmas day lunch was held at the home of Suzanne and Ross. They set up a big table for both the croft family and the Mackintosh Family so we could all celebrate together. The table was set up in the extension that was built for me to move into. Ross loves telling the story of how he built the lovely extension for me to live in. Sue and Ross asked me that if they built a big extension would I move in. This was after I lost Joan and the house in Canterbury was too big for me on my own.

I said, "yes that would be wonderful". A year later when it was almost complete and I was looking out of the new windows admiring the view, Ross said "well Johnno you'll be in soon" I then turned and said, "I don't think I'll move in till I'm old". Your 83!!! Ross said. Well now I am 90 and I have still not moved in!!!!

Maybe that is the secret of a long and happy life. Staying independent!!!!

Over Christmas There was a COVID-19 limit of about 20 people allowed in the home and we came in at about 18. We did the Kris Kringle thing, and we all got a gift from Santa.

We were lucky that Santa even came and gave the gifts out. We had to sit on Santa's knee to get the present. When I got up close, I could see that the beard was not real, I am not 100% sure but I think maybe my son in law Ross had dressed up. I did not say anything in case no one else noticed and I did not want to ruin it for the others.

On Boxing Day, we set off for another great day at my son John and his wife Lynne's home in Mt Martha. This is about an hour from Ross and Sues place. The same silly limit applied for COVID-19 and we had about 15 people including some overly excited kids. Max (4) and Charlie (2) belonging to Danielle and Dim and we had Josh (1) Melissa and Deans little one. There was William (4) the son of Lynn's daughter Sally so all in all it was a great day.

The same fat bloke in a red suite that had been at Ross and Sues the day before turned up again and the little kids where so excited. Unfortunately, Ross never got to see the big man in red as he had gone out somewhere and missed him!!! Funny that, the same thing happened on Christmas day.

My 90<sup>th</sup> was a wonderful celebration and even though I missed having a big party that you were all invited too it was still a great fun.

My big party is not cancelled only postponed so it is now planned for my 95<sup>th</sup> so do not forget to put it in your Diaries. 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026

Many thanks to Suzanne, Ross and John Jnr for their efforts. My cousin Janine brought along a huge birthday cake and it took me all my breath to blow out the candles. It can be extremely dangerous bowing our candles at 90 as no one wants false teeth stuck in the top of their cake!!!!

Since my last newsletter We have lost 2 members of the Twiss family, Celia aged 84 and Paula Twiss aged 63. Celia was married to Joan's brother. I stayed with Celia for a week when I was in Perth in 2019. Paula Twiss died from kidney failure In India. Joan's father adopted Paula when she was only 6 from the Catholic Orphanage in Bombay. Robert Twiss and his wife Cath gave her a new life, a good home and education. All three are buried in the Christian Cemetery in Bhopal (Central India).

John and his wife Lynne have their home and garden in Mt Martha looking great, it could get some credit from Lynne as she is now retired. Lynne recently had a week in hospital with pancreatitis but is now up and about again. John is like most working people and is working from home. He says he quite likes it as his office is on the other side of town to where he lives and can sometimes take 2 hours to get there and back. His company is building new offices that should be open soon and they are a lot closer than the old ones so that will be better for him. Like a lot of companies, the working from home thing is likely to stay around even after COVID-19 finally becomes a distant memory. John told me that he gets a lot more done and it very productive for the company.

John's eldest daughter Danielle is teaching primary school teacher and juggles life with 2 gorgeous boys, Max 4 and Charlie 2. His second daughter, Melissa who has Joshua who is nearly 2 and has her second child due on 7<sup>th</sup> April and it is a girl this time. This is great news as the other 3 grandkids are all boys so it will be lovely to have a little girl.

Suzanne and Ross have had a houseboat on lake Eildon for the last 9 years. The lake is one and half hours from Melbourne. I have shown pictures in past newsletters of the boat, they both love it on the lake and over Christmas decided that it was time for an upgrade, so they went out and bought a bigger boat. They took over the new boat 2 weeks ago and have spent the last 2 weeks moving

stuff between the old and the new. The new boat is called Diversion and Ross jokingly said they are diverting money from the kid's inheritance ha-ha

They have now polished and painted Santorini the old boat to get it ready for sale. Suzanne and Ross will miss Santorini they have had some marvellous times on her, but I am sure the new one will bring even more new great memories. I love going to the boat and go every time they ask me.

Ross and Suzanne's daughter Paige is now 26 and Kahala is 19. Paige moved out a few years ago and lives not far from mum and dad in her own apartment on the top floor no less. Paige loves the freedom of being away from mum and dad.

Kahala (19) the youngest daughter is currently working at a great little café in the hills not far from home. The café specialises in making handmade chocolates which they post all over the country and even some get sent overseas.

Jen my youngest daughter has started in Property Development and Ben has recently joined her since getting back from an overseas trip. This is something that Jen has wanted to do for years and has finally decided to jump in and give it a go. If I know Jen, she will not give up till it all works out for her.

You can see what they are up to at [www.atelierproperty.com.au](http://www.atelierproperty.com.au).

Jeanette's eldest son, Ben 28 quit his accounts payable job and went travelling in October 2019 and travelled through the UK and then over to Europe to see the Christmas lights in many cities and then met friends and they all did a Top Deck 30-day European trip together. The trip was cut short in early 2020 when the dreaded COVID-19 hit and made everyone return home.

Chris 27 now lives in Austin Texas working for Firefly as he is a Mechanical Engineer and designs rockets. He loves what he does and just recently moved in with his girlfriend, Bri, and their 2 cats. I love to see him doing the thing that he has worked so hard for. It was his dream and now he is living it. His mum told me a story where he had decided that Firefly was the company that he really wanted to work for. They had an opening for some new people and although applying he just missed out. Not one for taking no for an answer he called them and said, "I only want to work for you and no one else so I am willing to work for nothing". How could a company knock someone back with that much front!! Well, he has just been promoted to the head of his department. In February 2020 Jen and Ben met in Austin USA to visit Chris and Bri. Ben returned to Europe for a couple of weeks and decided it was best to go home so had to self-isolate for 14 days back in Sydney Australia.

My youngest son Robert has three children in the US, Chelsea 28 in Kansas, Madeline 26 in Nebraska and James 24 in Maryland. Chelsea loves being a journalist and moved states for a promotion. If you google Chelsea Croft you can see her doing her news crosses on the TV. Madeline has recently announced her engagement to Brandon and the wedding is 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021 in North Platte, Nebraska, she enjoys a country lifestyle living on a farm with her animals and dogs. James has bought his very first home in Stevensville Maryland, just across the Chesapeake Bay

I would love to hear from you and as my kids keep telling me, email is the way it is done now. So please send messages and news to my daughter Suzanne [essmac1960@gmail.com](mailto:essmac1960@gmail.com) or if you prefer, drop me a line and send to the address at the top of the news letter

Love, best wishes and God bless,



John Croft and family



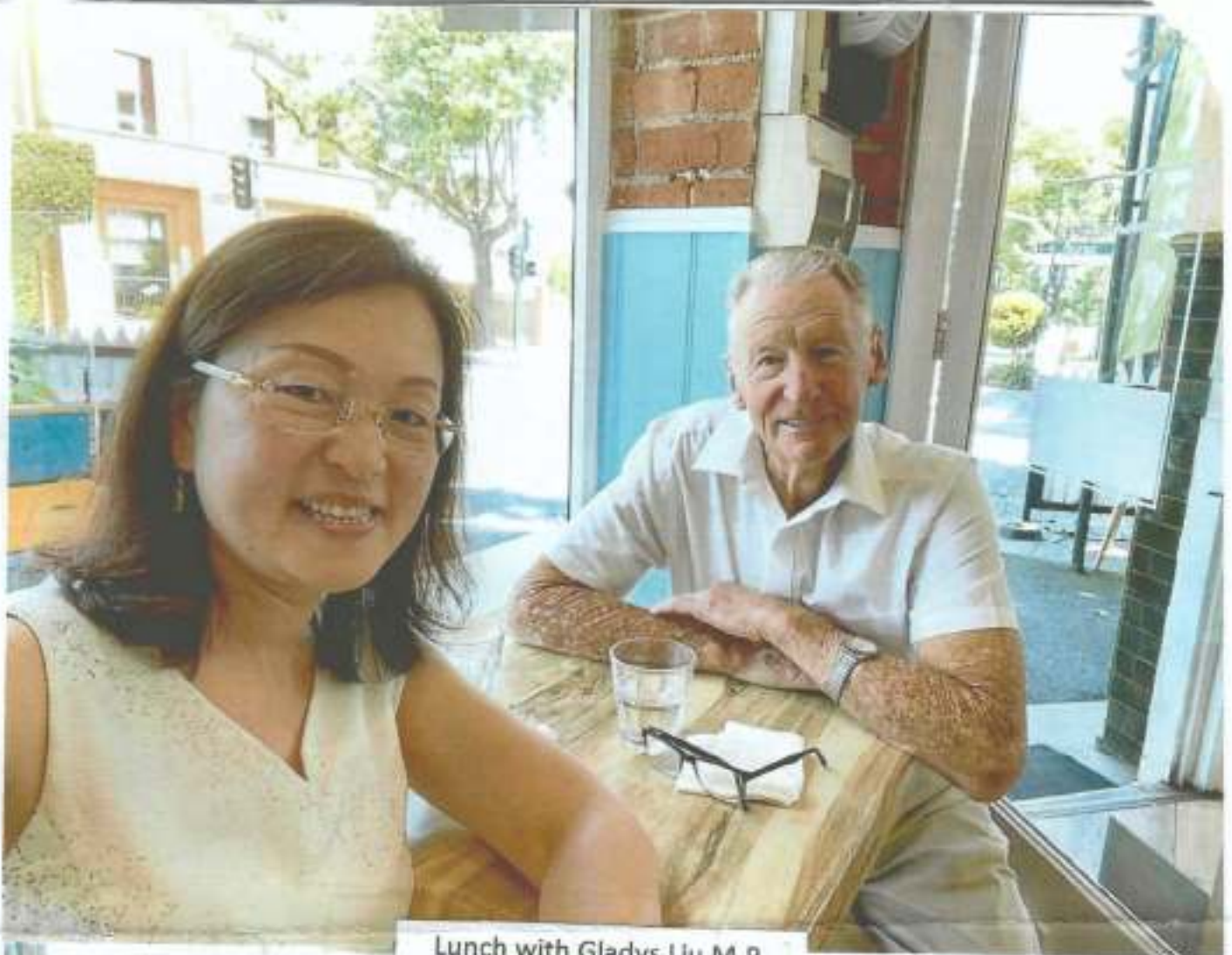
Johns 90th Birthday Lunch



Suzanne Preparing Lunch



The "GIANT" Cake supplied by my cousin  
Jannine



Lunch with Gladys Liu M.P.



Some of my Guests



*Congratulations and best wishes  
on the very special occasion of your  
90<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

**Mr John Croft**

*You have reached an amazing milestone in  
your life and may there be many more  
wonderful years ahead.*

*Gladys L*

**GLADYS LIU MP**  
Federal Member for Chisholm  
22 JANUARY 2020



Santa Clause (Ross) presenting gifts



Four Generations John Snr John Jnr Melissa  
Danielle & their Children



My Cousin Janine and Husband Fred



Lunch with Sue and Ross's friends at the  
paradise hotel 2020

Granddaughters



Madeline and Fiancee Brandon



Chelsea Brandon and Madeline



Melissa and Joshua



Danielle Dim Max and Charlie





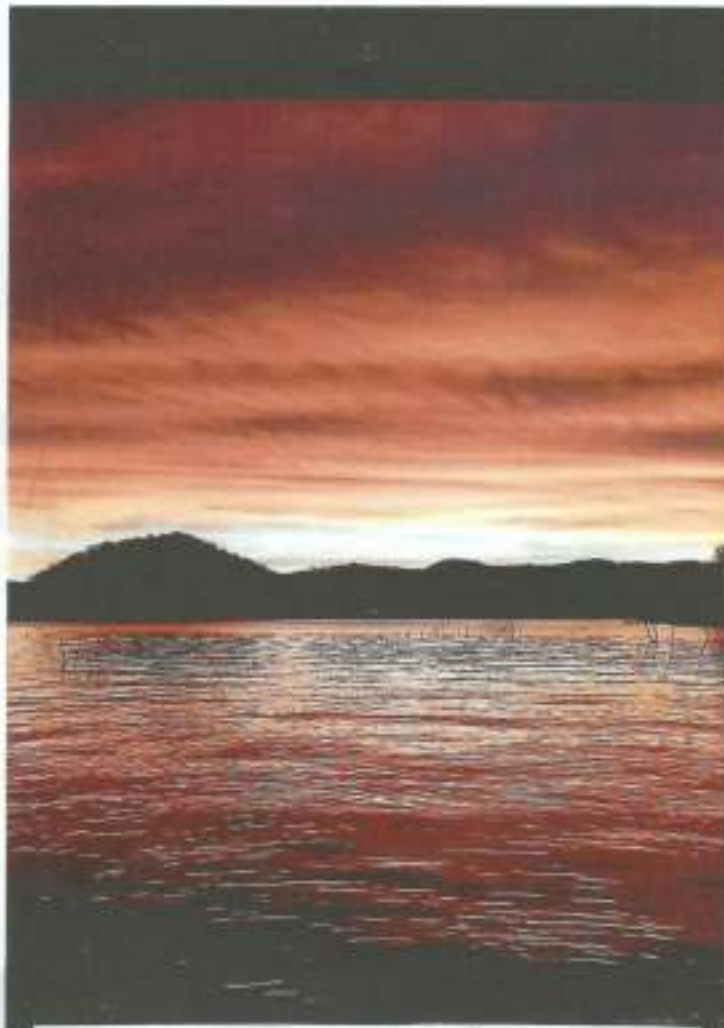
Paula Twiss - Died 2020 (aged 63)



Paula Twiss - (aged 13)



Joan's Father Robert Twiss and Wife Cath



Sunset on Lake Eildon



Celia Twiss - Died 2020 (aged 84)



"Toby" Ross and Sues very Spoilt Dog



Feeding my pet Magpie on my back lawn



Madurodam - Miniature Village near  
Amsterdam 2018



Arch De Triumph - Paris 2018



Colditz Prison Germany 2018



Birkenau Concentration Camp - Poland 2018



John & Jeanette - Windsor Castle London  
2018



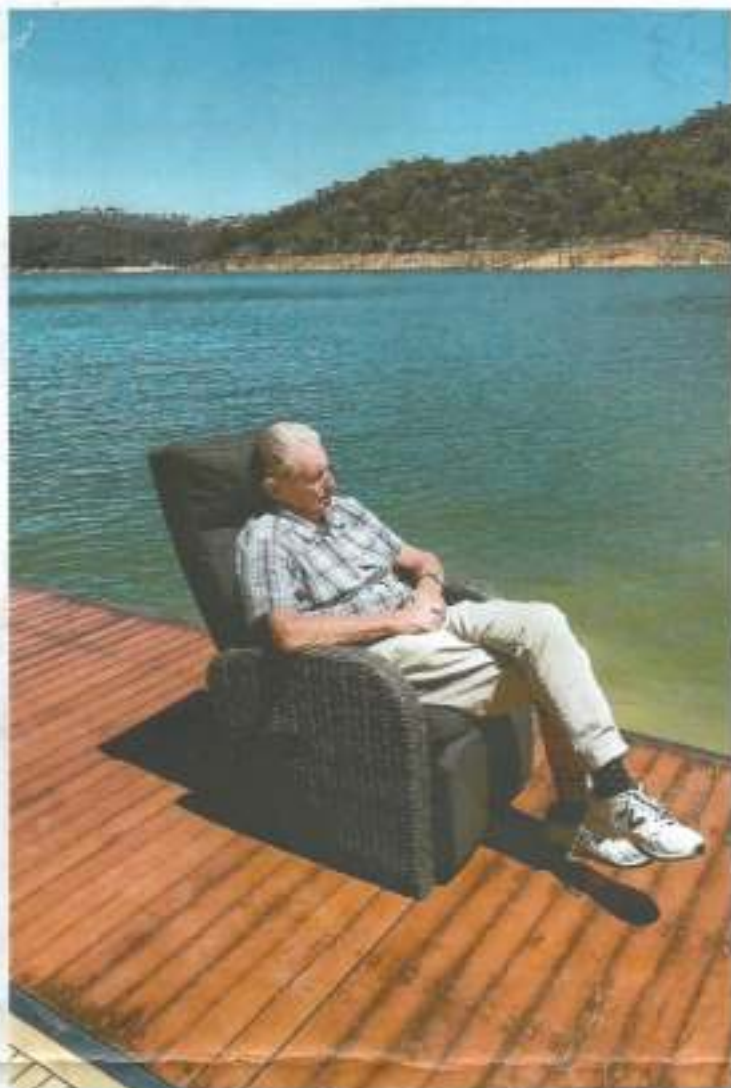
John & Suzanne - " Althorp Estate" where  
Princess Diana is buried In England



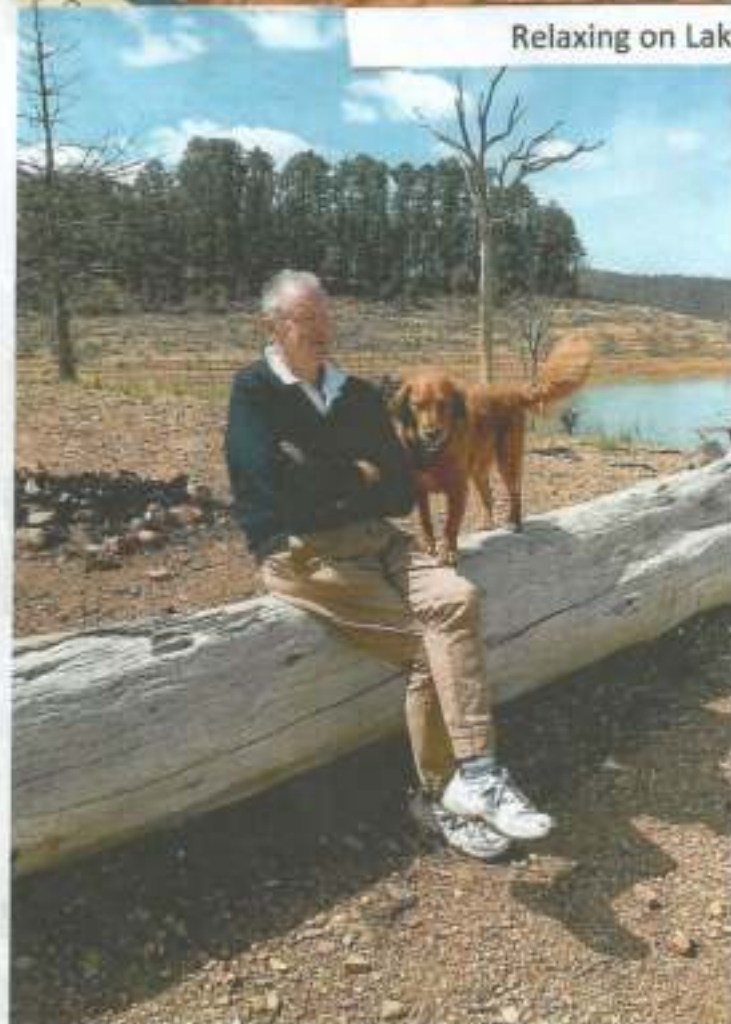
My Eldest son John Croft & wife Lynne



My Eldest Daughter Suzanne & Husband Ross



Relaxing on Lake Eildon





Suzanne and Ross's New boat Called "Diversion"



John and David Garrity overlooking Sydney Harbour



Suzanne and Ross's New boat Called "Diversion"



Beryl Gray, Roma Van Brink and myself. The 2 ladies that I travelled overland from England to India in the 1950's