

Xmas 2011 eLetter from Anne and Dave

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2011 was again a busy year and we seem to have managed lots of things. The choir history got finished (at last) and we had numerous trips away including the Warrumbungles, 2 trips to the farm at Orange, a bus and plane trip to Lake Eyre, a Barrier Reef cruise and another trip to Tasmania.

Anne became the proud owner of a heart pacemaker which was installed mid-year and has made her "a new woman" - it turns out that her heart liked to go to sleep for many seconds at a time with consequent effects on her well being. Although Anne still finds walking up hills or stairs quite tiring she manages the rest of our walking and other activities quite well. Dave on the other hand is getting a little deaf losing some higher frequencies and complaining about loud noises (and maybe losing a few other incidentals?).

We had several visits to Sydney to catch up with relatives. Anne's brother Peter continues with the aid of an oxygen machine and his wife Bev enjoys playing the violin with string groups in the area. Peter's 80th birthday was at the end of April and we all had a fun time with Derek and Lisa plus Derek's 2 boys and girlfriend (Peter, Shaun and Bex) at Peter and Bev's place at Mona Vale. Dave's daughter Alex, her husband Steve and son Jamie continue to thrive in spite of excessive work commitments. Jamie is now 3 and a half and a delightful but demanding boy who is now too heavy for most of us to pick up. Steve tries to keep fit and is even trying to add swimming and running so that he can do a triathlon.

Irene continues her slow decline at Regis. Helen had to close down her Companion Care business following a minor stroke so Irene does not get visited as much now. Judy continues to visit and sometimes even gets Irene to do some art but mostly it is a case of guessing what Irene is talking about and having fun with the 'goings-on' around them. We continue to visit when we can, which she enjoys. Sadly her life is fairly limited.

Dave had a very sad trip to Canberra to attend the funeral of Lindsay Hood, a brilliant young friend and colleague with a weak heart condition. Dave managed to meet up with many old friends and reminisced over a glass or three. Dave returned later in the year to meet up with our ex-director Peter Fox and Paul Shelley to discuss business futures and the state of Cumbrian living.

House improvements have included a new toilet in the main bedroom's ensuite, a new cooktop and oven, new downlights mainly in the kitchen, a new washing machine and solar hot water. Outside we have replaced the weed factory with fancy concrete paving and improved fences. The planter tubs and troughs are waiting for a rainwater tank and irrigation system, which might happen early 2012. We have also acquired a couple of nice paintings by local artists.

In June we had the Hastings Choristers 21st year "Celebration" concert and launch of the choir history "Our Story" on which Anne and Dave have been working over the last couple of years, with help from a small team of helpers. It was very satisfying to see the culmination of all our work and the book was very well received. Anne has now stopped singing as her voice has become too weak and unreliable to enjoy the required amount of effort (more like a croak now!).

During 2011 we attended several events at the Glasshouse including shows about John Lennon and Edith Piaf, the Cuban Creole Choir and the Bar at Beuna Vista shows, which together with a number of plays and concerts made for a very worthwhile and enjoyable cultural experience. We also attended some of the Camden Haven Music Festival items in Port and in Taree. A couple of trips to Newcastle took us to the Melbourne Comedy Festival Roadshow and Cirque du Soleil's Saltimbanco. All this was

supplemented by Jazz at Westport, James Morrison at Panthers and the highlight of the year with the showing of Mrs Carey's Concert film at the Laurieton Plaza.

In March we visited Coonabarabran and the Warrumbungles National Park with Paul and Heather Shelley to check up on some of the walk details and take additional photographs for our updated version of the Walks Guide. We had a good few days dodging heavy rainstorms, with the girls going to the Coona Show including wayward sheepdog demonstrations, while Dave and Paul did one of the Mt Exmouth walks (well at least Dave went all the way up while Paul took some side trip photos). We all did some of the shorter walks including the Tara Cave Cultural Walk. In his spare time Dave has since completed the revised version of the Warrumbungles Walks Guide, which is now in print. Paul and Heather returned to Canberra while Dave and Anne went on to visit Derek and Lisa on the farm at Orange.

In August we went to see Lake Eyre in flood, a relatively rare event that normally happens about every 20 years. We started in Adelaide with the bus travelling up to Maree with a couple of interesting stops along the way. The Maree accommodation consisted of demountable cabins adjacent to the only pub in town. While at the pub we realised that we had seen the ABC helicopter on the day it crashed and killed Paul Lockyer and his colleagues. We flew in a small aircraft over the southern and northern parts of Lake Eyre before landing at Kalamurina station to the north of the lake. The aerial view of the lake and the time taken to cross it gave us a great perspective of the scale of this unusual feature, as well as providing many spectacular photo opportunities. At the station our enthusiastic guide drove and walked us around looking at many of her favourite outback animal and bird residents as well as the unusual grasses and shrubs in which they lived. The wedge-tailed eagle nests with chicks on the banks of the Warburton River was a special site that we all enjoyed. We then climbed into the aircraft again to return to Maree via the Cooper River with the drowned crossing of the Birdsville Track and the rare site of the ferry taking vehicles across the normally dry Cooper River. We combined our Lake Eyre trip with visits to some of our old friends who live in and near Adelaide.

In October we enjoyed a Barrier Reef cruise courtesy of our friends John and Jenny who gave us their prize. We added a bit more so that we ended up with a week on the boat at about a quarter of the normal cost. The first part of the cruise took us from Cairns up to Cooktown and then on to Lizard Island where we first tried snorkelling and Dave even attempted some scuba diving (without much success). Dave's beard and moustache made the face mask leak after a short while so snorkelling was carried out in short bursts - very enjoyable in the warm clear water (we did not swim with the sharks this time!). From Lizard the boat proceeded back south towards Cairns visiting some of the outer reefs that do not get above high tide - a really odd feeling swimming off the boat in the middle of nowhere but just above the coral reef and lots of fish and other animals. The most spectacular reef stop was at Nathan Reef with clear light and smooth water. The second part of the trip was from Cairns to Townsville when the weather gradually got worse and we both suffered from some seasickness. The remains of the Dunk Island resort following the cyclone earlier in the year was quite daunting with the shattered rainforest slowly returning to normal - rebuilding still has not started. Before the cruise we took the train up to Kuranda (which is nice but full of tourists) and the cable car back down (with spectacular views of the rainforest crown and the coastal plains below).

In November-December we returned for another trip to Tasmania. This year we joined a small group on a walking tour of NW Tasmania and the Tarkine. Dave really enjoyed returning to an area where he had worked many years previously without the benefit of several newish roads that now greatly assist in exploring the region. Anne did really well and thoroughly enjoyed the parts that she was able to complete. We then returned to spend a few days at Cradle Mountain Lodge for more exploration and indulgence - the highlights were the food and a walk around beautiful Dove Lake.

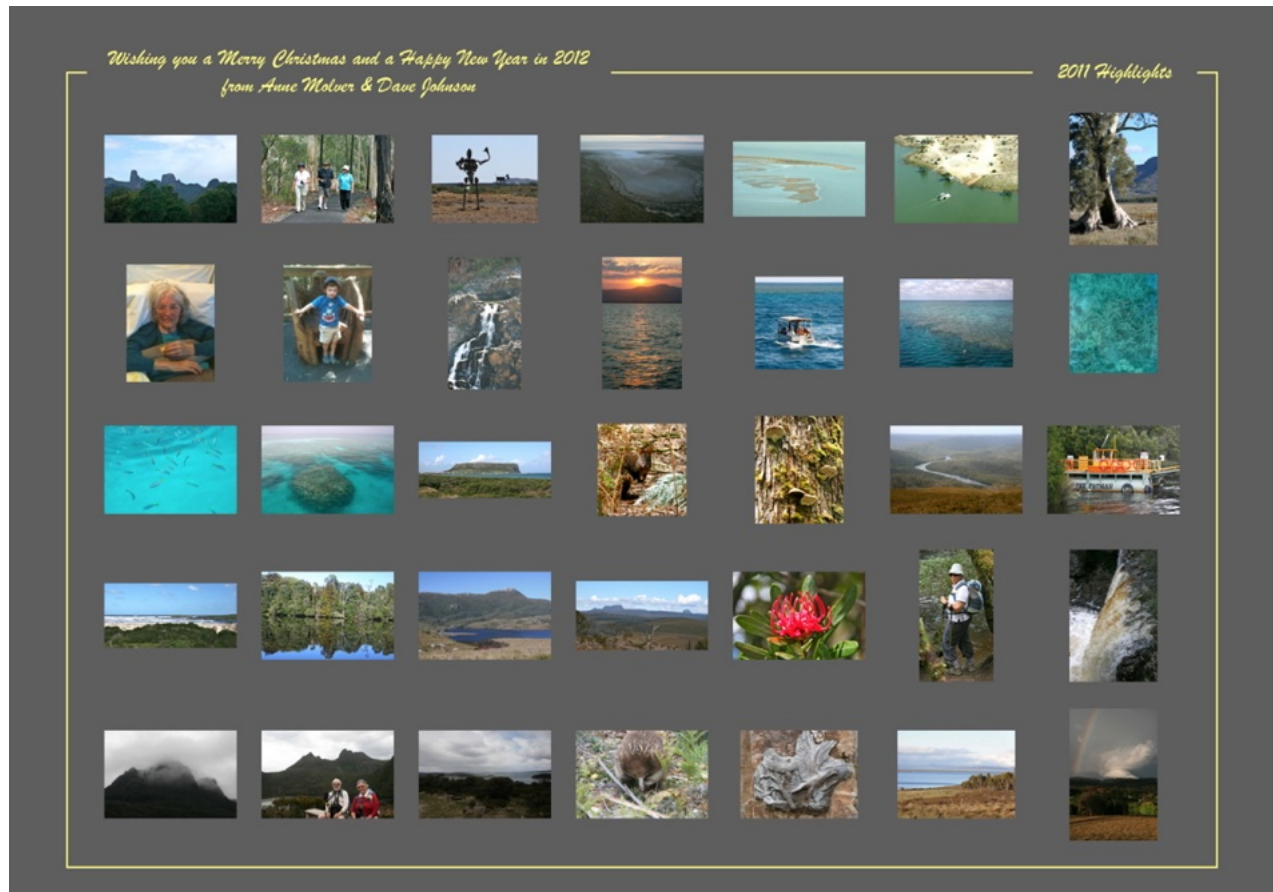
The last part of our Tasmanian experience was a snowy visit to the Great Lake area in the centre of the island – yes snow in December but we were at nearly 1000 m above sea level. We spent a day at Lake St Clair and did a really nice short walk where we saw several platypus that turned out to be waves running around a rock !!

This eLetter is being written at the farm in Orange where it is raining quite hard from time to time - a good time to do chores that have escaped and to indulge in some good food, company and wine. 2011 will finish with Xmas in the Hunter and a visit by Alex, Steve and Jamie.

We are looking forward to 2012 and trust that it brings us many good times to report on in a years time. We also hope that you all have a great 2012.

Best wishes
Anne & Dave

Xmas 2011 eCard from Anne and Dave



<i>Captions for 2011 Highlights</i>				<i>Photos by Dave Johnson and Anne Molver</i>		
Classic Warrumbungles skyline, Warrumbungles, NSW, 12 March 2011	Anne, Paul and Heather on Whitetums Lookout Track, Warrumbungles, NSW, 13 March 2011	Man and Dog Sculptures at Plane Henge, Lake Eyre, SA, 18 August 2011	Aerial View, Lake Eyre, SA, 19 August 2011	Aerial View, Lake Eyre, SA, 19 August 2011	Birdsville Track Ferry, Cooper Creek, SA, 19 August 2011	Heyzen's Tree, Wilpena Pound, SA, 20 August 2011
Irene's 87th Birthday, Port Macquarie, NSW, 27 August 2011	Jamie at Sea Acres, Port Macquarie, NSW, 18 September 2011	Barron Falls, Kuranda, QLD, 11 October 2011	Sunset en route to Cooktown, Barrier Reef, QLD, 11 October 2011	Two Isles snorkelling boat, Barrier Reef, QLD, 12 October 2011	Ribbon Reef 9, Barrier Reef, QLD, 13 October 2011	Glassbottom view of Ribbon Reef 3, Barrier Reef, QLD, 14 October 2011
Nathan Reef fishes, Barrier Reef, QLD, 16 October 2011	Nathan Reef snorkell heaven, Barrier Reef, QLD, 16 October 2011	The Nut, Stanley, TAS, 20 November 2011	Wallaby on the Nut, Stanley, TAS, 21 November 2011	Tarkine Fungii, Corinna, TAS, 21 November 2011	Pieman River from Mt Donaldson, Corinna, TAS, 22 November 2011	Pieman's Fatman Barge, Corinna, TAS, 22 November 2011
Pieman River mouth, Corinna, TAS, 23 November 2011	Pieman River reflections, Corinna, TAS, 24 November 2011	Cumberland Lake and Mt Agnew, Trial Harbour, TAS, 24 November 2011	Cradle Mountain and Barn Bluff from west, Cradle Mountain, TAS, 25 November 2011	Tasmanian Waratah, Cradle Mountain, TAS, 28 November 2011	Anne on Waterfalls Walk, Cradle Mountain, TAS, 28 November 2011	Knyvet Falls, Cradle Mountain, TAS, 28 November 2011
Misty Cradle, Cradle Mountain, TAS, 29 November 2011	Dave and Anne with Cradle background, Cradle Mountain, TAS, 29 November 2011	View of Great Lake from north, Miena, TAS, 3 December 2011	Echidna, Lake St Clair, TAS, 4 December 2011	Eagle sculpture, Steppes, TAS, 5 December 2011	Evening at Great Lake, Miena, TAS, 5 December 2011	Evening storm at the farm, Orange, NSW, 19 December 2011