

Anne and Dave's Christmas Letter for 2015

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Season's Greetings to all our friends and family - we hope you all had an enjoyable year accompanied by good health.

Our 2015 year started off with a flurry of activity and trips away before settling into two sessions of home confinement. Firstly, for Dave to get a new shoulder at the end of June – recovery almost complete. Secondly for Anne to have a total knee replacement in October – from which she is still rehabilitating.

We started off the year back in Kendall for an 80th party for dear friend Milly before a quick trip to Lennox Head to see Anne's cousin Judy in her lovely new apartment. We returned via Taree and Wingham staying with friends Bill and Eugenie who we met on last year's Cape York trip. Next we went overseas to journey by small bus from Singapore up the west coast of Malaysia to the island of Langkawi. From there we flew back to Singapore to stay with great nephew Pete and wife Bex to explore and experience their new home city.



Malacca, Malaysia
Trishaw driver/guide Kamal with part of our group



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Twin towers at night



Penang, Malaysia
Chinese New Year goat



Singapore Gardens by the Bay – Chinese New Year floral goats and Supertrees



The end of March saw us driving to Derek and Lisa in Orange to view the exciting project of their own farm and then on to see Paul and Heather and friends in Canberra. We returned home via Alex and family while they were still house

hunting. They finally found a place and moved at the start of June and we were the first to see the house in daylight!

They love living in a quiet beautiful leafy environment with lots of space to spread including a huge play room for Jamie and Emma to cover with as many toys as possible. There is room for us too when we manage to get to Sydney which we have gratefully taken advantage of several times. They are all settling in nicely to their lovely new home with a nice big garden (for Alex plus gardener to look after!) and a swimming pool (supposedly looks after itself!!). Numerous items of furniture have arrived as a vast collection of flat packs which Steve has been valiantly assembling (without too much fuss!) – all looking really nice.

Other hasty family visits to Australia for Anne were by great nephew Michael and friend Nessa on their gap year from UK, and in August a quick afternoon with Derek's brother Jeremy from Zimbabwe. Sean and Clare and her family joined us for lunch. We also see Bev at Mona Vale for concerts or a meal in between her music commitments.



Nant Whisky Distillery at Bothwell



Maria Island
coastal scenery



Cox's Bight on the south coast of Tasmania



Our transportation at lunch spot on
Bathurst Harbour



Our seaplane taking us from
MONA to Freycinet



Rock sculpture at Windgrove,
Tasman Peninsula

At the end of April, we managed to fit in another trip to Tasmania - this time to see and do the things that we missed out in previous trips. A flight to Melbourne

allowed us to see friend Susan (from our Cape York trip) for a couple of days before flying to Flinders Island for three blissful uncomplicated days exploring. We continued on another small plane to Launceston for a quick stay near Cradle Mountain and back south to Richmond, from which we experienced a wet boat trip around Maria Island and a flight into Bathurst Harbour in the wilderness of the south west of Tasmania (Dave had previously visited this wild beautiful spot almost 50 years ago).

We then enjoyed Freycinet Experience's Art of Nature tour starting in Hobart with a visit to the Mona Gallery, next day we flew by sea plane to Freycinet Lodge (which we last visited 5 years ago) for a night. We then returned via Windgrove Gallery to Hobart for a couple of days recovery (not helped by terrible colds for both of us)! All very memorable even if the weather and photos were not so good.

A quick few days at Hawks Nest enabled us to catch up with old friends - Martin and Christine - I hope we do not lose them for so long next time!

Dave's reverse shoulder operation went very well with a good quick recovery, enabling us to fit in a three-week WA trip starting in Broome (via Darwin) on a 4-wheel drive Outback Spirit bus down towards Perth.



Stromatolites at Hamelin Pool, Shark Bay, WA



HMAS Sydney Memorial, Geraldton, WA



Roadside flowers



Wildflowers in glorious bloom



The Pinnacles at Nambung NP, WA

We viewed many parts of the Pilbara and the Karijini National Park, before heading back to the coast to see the Ningaloo Reef and Monkey Mia on the way. The scenery

was very diverse but fascinating and it all seems a different world - and we were so lucky to see carpets of wildflowers on most of the drive as the land had received unusual winter rains.

After a couple of days in Perth to see Kings Park (in full wildflower bloom) and Fremantle we drove ourselves south to Pemberton for further exploration and the wild flowers which were starting to come out. Pemberton itself was quite disappointing, however, the karri and other forests were well worth the journey, as was a day trip to the wild south coast and vast sand dunes.



D'Entrecasteaux NP, WA – Face of Yeagarup Sand Dunes and Wild Seas off Warren River mouth

Anne's knee operation in October was an apparent success and recovery is going well according to all except her - she of course thinks she should be fully recovered after 7 weeks!

We see Alex and the whole of her family for the weekend before Christmas this year, which will be our celebration - the rest of the month will be at home but we hope to be on the road again in January if it is not too hot!

Have a great Christmas and enjoy a wonderful New Year and 2016 - make the most of it in this changing world.



Dave and Anne on Flinders Island beach
with large granite boulder

*All the best from
Anne and Dave*

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