

8 Sproats Lane
Donald Vic Australia 3480
Ph +61 03 54971328
M 0429160676
M 0407313648
Email: amc12370@bigpond.net.au
Skype: ian.r.mcewen
Blog: AMC12370.wordpress.com
Facebook: Ian McEwen



Dear

May **love, joy, peace** and **hope** light up your Christmas. It is a joy to bring you greetings this Christmas and a joy to read your greetings and news. We love our Christmas mail.

Our year opened with 'This is the plan – work out on the farm in the morning – sleep during the hot afternoon heat' What were we doing? **Preparing for our clearing sale.** We were really retiring - sale of all the farm equipment. Weeks of repairing, washing down, sorting nuts and bolts, placing in lines-65 years of collection- a life time. The big day arrived–good weather, good crowd, good auctioneer, good food but poor prices!!! Alison was very distressed that night for Ian and James



but Ian said next morning **'Just think of all the people who have woken up excited about the treasures they have bought!'** ever positive. Finally, weeks later it was all over. Mixed emotions of relief, sadness, thankfulness for a good life and deep appreciation of James' help that made the Sale possible. Check out James McEwen Facebook page for a very effective video for a reminiscent walk around the farm.



Time for a break; we flew Melb - Darwin – Katherine (car) – Darwin– Cairns - Weipa – home. Always special to see the family up north. Debbie, Steph, Olivia and Adam, Levi and Hannah. The NT has beautiful scenery. The special feature this visit was a helicopter ride over the **Katherine Gorge.** The Darwin War Museum and harbour tour by boat is a 'must see'. Cairns stay included a snorkel over the coral on the outer reef and lunch with Alison's niece, Sandi. **Weipa** in far north Queensland is unique. Oldest grandson, **Bill and his wife, Steph** welcomed us into their home. We gained a glimpse of their lifestyle by doing a tour of the bauxite mine. Bill drives a haul truck. It was an eye opener to see that only the top 3 or 4 meters is



scraped off and then the top soil is replaced and revegetated. Steph is nursing at the hospital and this year completed an anaesthetist course and is the anaesthetist for

the visiting surgeon. The isolation gives great scope for expanding skills. We are thrilled that they are expecting their first baby in March. Bill and Steph were so generous and drove us to **the Tip of Cape York**—6 hours from Weipa. Although raining, it cleared as we approached the Tip and we were able to walk out to the sign 'the northernmost point of the Aust. continent' sign and enjoy the view.

While away Ian received a phone call from the Maryborough, QLD police station inquiring if we knew **Elizabeth McEwen** of Jeffcott Nth—memory jumped back over 40 years – she had died. Alison was surprised how emotional she felt. Elizabeth was Neil's first wife and mother of Ian's niece and nephew, Jason and Samantha. We had brought her into our family, and being part of our lives for a number of years were distressed when she decided to leave and over time drifted well away, having had no contact for over 12 years. The memorial service at Granite was a time of remembrance and healing. Being home for the winter was a change. Ian set up his workshop with equipment he didn't sell and Alison helped a friend pack up his house and move. **The Op Shop** is a constant pleasure. However, the challenge has been set for Alison to diverse the management tasks over the next 12 months to ease the load. The first approach was to send **our last container** of aid to Ukraine. It left Donald on the 10th Nov, courtesy of 19 volunteers who helped pack it.



It is with mixed emotions that we will farewell our **Pastor Jono Ingram** and his family in the New Year. He will take up a position in the new suburb of Woodlea, near Melton. We have so appreciated Jono's preparation and delivery of his sermons and of his pastoral work. Kate's contribution to MOPS has led to a number of young couples with their small families coming into church life. We wish them God's blessing on their new appointment.

We are enjoying family which now includes great grandies. Hamish is 15 months old and lives in Birchip with his mum and dad, Bek and Billy and Arktavia who was born in Katherine to Hannah and Levi is a month old. Alison enjoyed an eight day cruise to New Caledonia with Debbie and other family members in October. Hamish was so interested in all the new people and experiences he wasn't heard to cry once.



Each of **our grandchildren are now young adults**. Harrison being the youngest has completed Year 11 and is planning a music teaching career. His Year 12 will have extra

responsibility as House Captain (Camberwell Grammar). We enjoyed the main orchestral concert midyear. Cassandra is starting a clinical psychology PhD, at Monash in 2018. Her thesis will be looking at young refugees and their mental health following trauma and Georgina is taking a year off from studying her double degree of business and arts, to travel and get work experience. This year she has enjoyed study, work and a trip to Europe. (Rob and Marianne's family).

Renee is home from Canada and is working in Telstra head office in Melb. Hamish has been working in London and travelling in Europe,



Iceland and Scotland. We were thrilled he touched base with relatives in Scotland and saw and heard of his 'roots'. (James and Grace's family).

Debbie has had a very busy year with her family and nursing which has had the additional responsibility of leading the team to successfully achieve accreditation for the Katherine Hospital. **James, Grace, Rob and Marianne** also have had busy year work and family wise. After seven years, **Karin** has concluded her time at Heathdale Christian College and is currently completing a course on teaching children with dyslexia. She is planning to launch her own business of tutoring children with this learning difficulty.

We sing a song 'the Joy of the Lord is my strength' We particularly notice the joy after times of stress. The year has brought times of

stress and joy. The key is **being able to laugh at oneself**. – stepping out of the lift on the cruise ship and saying to myself am I going aft, forward, port or starboard? - not once but a number of times, made Alison laugh. Oops, Ian runs over the cordless phone!!!!



Alison left it out on the bonnet of the car forgot to take it back inside!!! Trying to do the Nut Bush dance – grandson saying you're not quite in step there Nan!!! One of the blessings of the year is by courtesy of the State Govt., we have **permanent water in our river**. The weirs either end of the town have been lifted to hold an attractive body of water, to be topped up by the piping system from the Grampians. Wonderful to no longer have salty, muddy, smelly water holes in the summer. Our first foray onto the river in our small rubber boat finished with Alison being ordered to 'Stand up and step out onto the bank', to which she was duly acquiescent 'to him who must be obeyed' and slipped down the muddy bank fully clothed into the water!! Enjoy! We keep very well. Ian more so since he stopped taking the anti cholesterol-vastatin. He had an adverse reaction to it.

We enjoy sharing our walk of faith with friends in Church, Convention, Bible Study group, Neighbourhood Group – sharing our ups and downs, enjoying the challenge of growing more like the Lord Jesus – some days more like Him than others. (Alison doesn't quite look like the Lord when Windows 10 drives her berserk or when she has a bad day at bowls!)

May God richly bless your Christmas and New Year