

December 2012

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Celebrate Christmas

For Unto us a child is born

to us a Son is given - Isaiah 9:6



Dear

We enjoy sending Christmas Greetings to our family and friends and to you, even if it seems like yesterday that we sent our last greetings!

The Lord has blest our year with many joys and challenges. No problems/ tears/issues in our lives only challenges!! And plenty in between!!!!



Karin - Dec '11

One of the challenges was a phone call from Karin, four days before Christmas(2011) - 'Mum, I have ruptured my Achilles tendon 'How?' playing social netball! Joy - Karin was home with us for two weeks. Karin has spread her wings, this year with new friendship groups. She has helped with working bees at El Kana at Marysville, amongst other activities. It is good to hear the Guest House is up and running again after the fires. Following months of physio., Karin is able to run again although the original strength will probably never be there again. Her latest adventure is into surfing. Karin is still enjoying teaching at Heathdale Christian College.

The next joy was sending a 40foot container of humanitarian aid to Ukraine in March, the UKR Aid and Education Fund's 7th container. Although packing it 9 foot high under blazing hot iron is not fun. The photos show the appreciation of the recipients. The new articles are loved - new shirts, handknitted/crocheted rugs and beanies and jumpers, as are the other items. Less problems with the documentation this time as a lady in the Govt offices in Sumy, NE Ukraine, personally instructed us and followed through. Thank you, Larysa. The Look First Opportunity Shop is thriving with over 20 volunteers making it the number one tourist spot in town as well as a great place to browse.



Recipients of beautiful knitted rug and toy

The Joy of the farm was the beautiful crops standing at the end of August only to have the challenge of the steady decline in yield as the Spring crept on with little to no rain. However, we are pleased with the higher prices. Ian is harvesting now with average yields.

This may be Ian's last crop as we are planning retirement. Stand by for the big announcement! Don't hold your breath though, we may have concerns over your demise if you did because Ian is struggling with his decision. Lots of blood, sweat and tears have gone into building up the farm. It will be a beautiful legacy to leave to the future owners.



30 bag barley crop on the overflow of Lake Buloke.
Water receded in Feb '12. Crops utilized the sub soil moisture during the growing season.

learning curve for him. The joy for Alison is to walk through her bush. - the challenges - plenty of them - hoses blowing, difficult to drive vehicles, rabbits that won't die, profusely growing weeds

after 2011 flooding rains.

It has been a privilege this year to have Clarence Barlow with us one day a week for work experience. He and Alison methodically worked through the remnants spot spraying weeds and dealing with open rabbit burrows. Clarence is an indigenous, young man from an urban background so to learn to drive, weld and shear and be exposed to the vagaries of farm machinery and the numerous tasks and skills on the farm has been a steep



Clarence spraying with Round Up with dye

Of course, the big celebration was Alison's 70th Birthday in May celebrated with 3 parties! 'We won't over do it, says Alison'!! It was a joy to have the immediate family for tea on the Saturday night and afternoon tea for her lady friends who have shared her journey on the Sunday afternoon. One of the highlights was a skit on Alison multi tasking at breakfast time! - more true than funny. Debbie led the afternoon and it was a joy to share an entertaining program with friends. Two weeks later sharing a restaurant meal in Blackburn with long standing friends and Melbourne family members was special.



We took time out and had a holiday in August. It was to be restful - 'a sit down' holiday, Alison calls them - no constant travelling. All the camping gear packed into the car and off we set - joy - Bairnsdale, first night (motel), visited friends next day and onto Tathra on the south coast of NSW - wonderful four days staying in Ian's cousin's holiday home with views of the sea. North to Sydney - the big challenge - return to Melbourne for Cassandra's (Rob and Marianne's eldest) 18th birthday! Stayed with cousins, Allan and Barb Nicholls - negotiated public transport - caught air flight to Avalon - met by Karin. Joy - celebrating Cassandra's birthday with our family and Marianne's family. - Challenge - taxi to Avalon 4.30AM - flight to Sydney 5.45AM. Alarm set. Stirred in my sleep - checked time - Oh no!!! panic - 4.55AM! - putting head out the door, is taxi there? - can't see - voice at the door - do you have taxi booked? - relief - drag clothes on - grab belongings - make it to the airport in time. Return to Sydney and continue restful holiday!!! (* flight down requested mobiles off, Alison's on silent, forgot to put the sound back on). Holiday continued with camping a week at Red Rock, north of Coffs Harbour. On to Surfers Paradise - three days in a luxury apartment!! - challenged to invest in holiday scheme - did not succumb. Onto Brisbane and enjoyed more visits with friends and cousins then made our way slowly back home via Gunnedah Field Days. A special month with lots of happy memories, - time with friends and extended family.



Family doing well. - Joy for Debbie when she sold her home. There were strong indications that it would be very hard to sell. Her future plans are fluid at the moment, although she is still working as practice nurse in Charlton. Challenge - recently Debbie has torn ligaments in her foot. Bill and Steph, in Mackay, Qld. have bought their own home. Bill still driving out to the mine. Steph B. has completed her first year of Social Science in Melb. Olivia has completed her Diploma of Agriculture and is working on one of the larger farms near Minyip. Rebekah has finished her 1st year of Nursing in Horsham and Levi has left school at the end of Year 11 and

Alison relaxing has an electrician's apprenticeship. James enjoying the challenge of the world of hydraulics - completed a short course on hydraulics at the Ballarat School of Mines. Hamish finished his 2nd year of Steel Fabrication, including an advance welding course. He sat and passed that challenging written and practical examination on the day it was 44 degrees!!!! Renee has finished a very good Year 11, doing Year 12 Art. Grace busy keeping up with the family - has added helping with MOPS in Donald. MOPS is wonderful program for Mothers of Pre School children. Rob and Marianne continue with their challenging jobs but support the family with all their activities. Cassandra has completed an excellent Year 12 and we look forward to her results. She plans to do a Bachelor of Psychology degree at Monash. Georgie goes into Year 10 and Harrison starts at Camberwell Boys Grammar.

We both continue to enjoy our extra curriculum activities. Ian loves the challenge of bowls and it is relaxing for him after the tiring days on the farm. He has appreciated Chris and Robyn Sellick's support over the last two years. Chris is an excellent mechanic and seems to be able to fix anything. All good things come to an end and Chris would like to return to the mining scene in the West and plans to leave at the end of March.

Our faith in the Lord under pins our activities. So we are enjoying supporting the Warracknabeal Baptist Church by sharing in their services from time to time. Church at Granite is continuing to be enjoyable and spiritually challenging through Jono and Katie Ingram's ministry. We are appreciating our own study in Isaiah and our faith is in God's promises. Our lives here on earth are full of joy and challenges but we have confidence in the promise that eternal life is with the Lord ' --- be glad and

rejoice forever in what I will create for I will create Jerusalem (heaven) to be a delight --- the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard no more.' Isaiah 65: 18-19. All because God, Himself came in the form of man - as a babe 'For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given'



May you enjoy this Christmas season with family and friends

May the New Year bring blessings from the Lord Jesus Christ,

Ian and Alison

