



Campbell Christmas News 2004

This was one of those in-between years, with the wedding behind us and Blaine becoming pregnant with her and Tristan's first child; Tristan and Blaine moving house; Elwyn making moves to leave Perth and live in the UK; Jeanette and Christopher making plans to move back to Perth to live; Rob consolidating his role as Cruising Captain at our sailing club and starting to find his work decreasing; me continuing to write my first book and developing new avenues of work; Rob and I doing lots of 1-3-day sails in "Dusky Dolphin" and so constantly improving our sailing skills.



On 1st January Rob and I on Dusky Dolphin were anchored at Quindalup with many sailing friends when Elwyn called us with some very sad news - our friend and mountain guide, Paul Scaife, had been killed by an avalanche in the mountains in New Zealand the previous day. It took a few days for this dreadful news to sink in...

In February the group of anaesthetists to which Rob has belonged since 1986 celebrated the 50th anniversary with a splendid dinner at the Burswood Resort. The guest list included past members of the group who had retired, and the many speeches honoured those who had founded the group and had led it through the many times of change since. It was a good night and I was proud to see Rob so appreciated and respected by these highly respected leaders of the anaesthetic profession in WA.

As a gift of gratitude to Paul Scaife's widow and mother, I finished a round of editing of my book about climbing Mount Aspiring with Paul as my guide, and send the manuscript to them. Rob put together a video of all the video clips of his various climbs with Paul and sent it to both of them, along with the book. They contacted us after a few weeks with many thanks, from them and from Paul's 2 sons.

In May we joined in celebrating Blaine's 21st birthday. Blaine has given a good description of this special event in her news. Being an only child it was a cherished opportunity for all her family and friends to come together and celebrate her birth. For Rob and me it was one of those occasions where, although we had rushed from a sailing function on the other side of town to be there, we wouldn't have missed it for anything in the world!



The winter was a long one for Blaine, enduring serious morning sickness that was actually all-day-and-all-night sickness. She got very thin, apart from the growing bulge in her belly...

At the end of winter, in August, Rob and I took a week's break from work, family and sailing and had a "land cruise" to Denmark in our south west. It was the best time to visit our tingle forests, which are unique. Huge trees blocked out the sun and the pungent smell of the bushes with which they cohabit filled our noses as we wandered among these ancient giants, and also the grove of sequoias (Californian Redwoods) which we discovered near Pemberton...



And the coast here is rugged, and when the waves crash to shore and the seabirds cry I'm filled with awe and joy...



Later that month Elwyn approached us with an idea: the lease on the house which she was renting was coming up for renewal for at least 12 months and she was planning to leave for UK in 6 months so perhaps she could move back home until she left for UK? Elwyn is so lovely to have around that we didn't hesitate to agree, and in a very few weeks were helping her move for the 4th time in 2 years. Her cat Tiger was overjoyed and immediately moved from the couch on which she had been sleeping onto Elwyn's bed!



And on September 4th - Judy and Arthur's Wedding...

In early September Rob and I flew to England. After meeting Jeanette and Christopher in Plymouth we spent some time with my Aunt Judy and her fiancée Arthur. On the day of the wedding we provided the company and transport for Judy's marriage to her childhood friend, Arthur Morris.



The bridesmaids were Jeanette and Christina (Judy's niece), and best man Arthur's brother. The reception - an afternoon tea - was at a delightful tea house nearby. With children playing around them Judy (with her highland terrier Rosie beside her), Arthur and his family stood under the autumn sun and made speeches of joy, of welcome and of sharing. It was a lovely occasion and we were very privileged to be there.

We spent a few more days in Plymouth, then drove with Jeanette and Christopher to Wales. They would be leaving UK to return to Perth to live the following month, so were wanting to share all the places that they had come to love during their 8 years in the country. We stayed in Betws-y-Coed (pronounced "betus a coyd", meaning "the chapel in the wood") at a delightful inn by the rushing Llugwy River (which we could hear from our cosy attic rooms) running into the River Conwy, and took day trips to climb the Welsh hills and visit Port Merion - a folly, a designer's village with buildings created to reflect various classical designs - an amazing place.





While Jeanette and Christopher drove back home to Newcastle, Rob and I drove north to one of our favourite haunts, the Lake District. We spent a few gorgeous days there, walking and scrambling, even in the high winds that scream across the fells.



Then it was on to Newcastle to stay in the B&B next to Jeanette and Christopher's flat. First of all we visited their flat which Jeanette had just finished decorating. It was truly beautiful, a sort of Tuscan style which you would not expect in northern UK.



A place which Jeanette and Christopher adored was an estate outside Newcastle called Cragside. Created by an industrialist in the 1800s, it included an arboretum of old fir trees from many countries and a range of buildings housing the (then) latest in industrial technology. It was fascinating, and we were glad to share this place that Jeanette and Christopher had come to love.





Despite my best efforts it was a tearful farewell, but we would be seeing them again soon...

Towards the end of the year, Jeanette and Christopher arrived from the UK then celebrated their 11th wedding anniversary, Elwyn completed her plans for moving to the UK, Tristan and Blaine celebrated their 1st wedding anniversary and Rob and I made plans to participate in our 3rd Quindalup Cruise.

On the 26th December, after celebrating Christmas with our entire family (a very treasured occasion as it didn't happen very often!), Rob and I moved onto Dusky Dolphin for a 3-week sail south to Quindalup beach on the shores of Geographe Bay. Our sailing during the year had exposed us to all sorts of weather conditions, from wind-less, flat sea to broiling thunder storms, from gentle breezes guiding us along from behind to screaming sea breezes hauling us forward from almost "on the nose". We had become adept at navigating and helming in all these conditions, and very careful with what weather to sail in. So we looked forward to this time with many of our sailing friends with whom we would be sailing "in company".

Little did we know what was to come...

Early on the morning of 27th December, we were preparing to leave the marina in which we had spent the previous night with the first-time-Quindalup yacht we were leading. We cast off the lines and Rob reversed Dusky Dolphin into a vicious easterly wind. All seemed OK until he was in the channel between the pens, waiting for the wind to blow the boat into the right position for us to leave. Instead the boat was slammed hard into the wind against one of the jetties. There was a horrid crunch, then a grinding sound from her side. Then the wind blew the boat off the jetty and Rob very cleverly managed to get her safe against the end of the pens while all the crew of the other yacht raced over and tied her up. Then they stood looking at her side in silence. I went cold. Rob and I crept off the boat and saw what they saw - a ragged hole in her side.



We wouldn't be sailing that day!

Rob gave the skipper of the other yacht instructions to get to that night's anchorage safely, and I radioed another yacht to keep an eye on them. We helped them to cast off and waved, trying to keep brave faces, then climbed back on board Dusky Dolphin. I boiled the kettle and made us a cup of tea. As we sipped we chatted about our options. There were no workmen available in this marina. The nearest place to go



was Mandurah, 1-2 hours sail north. But how to sail with the hole in the side? Rob grabbed his red “gaffer” tape which he uses to mend anything from sandals to ropes to proceeded to make a huge red bandaid over the hole. Once the wind had died down we cast off carefully. Although we motored very carefully, the water did come up over the bandaid a number of times. We prayed none would go in.

As we motored into Mandurah marina I called a friend there and told him what had happened. By the time we arrived at the dock he had a big group of friends along the wharf, ready to tie us up and work out what to do next. By lunch-time someone had loaned us his pen and Dusky Dolphin was safely ensconced; we had a fibreglasser booked for 7am the next morning; and friends had arrived on 2 other yachts. We spent the afternoon on their boats, then decided that it was too hot to stay on board that night so got a taxi home to Perth. From our air-conditioned family room we learnt of the horrible Boxing Day tsunami that had devastated Aceh and surrounding areas, and was sending waves right down our coast. And we watched a massive thunderstorm make its way down the coast to our friends anchored in Bunbury Harbour. We hoped that they knew about it in time...

Next day we were up early for Rob to drive to Mandurah to meet the fibreglasser. As I did the morning house-work I realised how we had holed the boat - the tsunami waves were causing big, rapid, hourly tide rises and falls, and nasty rips in harbours. We must have been leaving our pen as a tide rip happened, and that’s what slammed us against the jetty. When Rob returned I shared this thought with him. He was very relieved, as he thought it must have been his fault yet couldn’t work out what he had done.

So our New Year’s Eve was spent in Mandurah on our roughly patched-up yacht, waiting for good winds to get to Bunbury and then our friends at Quindalup...

With best wishes for Christmas and a wonderful New Year to you and your loved ones,

Wendy, Rob, Jeanette, Christopher, Elwyn, Tristan and Blaine.

