

Christmas 1996

Hi Everyone,

This year of achievement, of Australia winning the bid for the 2000 Olympics, has seen great changes in our household. I hope that your year has also seen happiness and growth.

To begin, Tristan began his 11th school year with a substantial list of objectives for study, sport, hobbies (ie. Modelling and rock climbing), music and cadets. His study has been applied to science based subjects which will gain him entry to mining engineering or geophysics. He has done well, although not quite achieving his objectives. However, continual refinement of his revision techniques will see this disappointment addressed. I took Tris to the careers expo this year, and a long discussion with the representative staff of Hamersley Iron gave him clear goals for his final year of study. His recent appointment to House Prefect will also help him to focus and organise himself. I weakened and bought him a Day Runner diary system to help with the time management!

Sport has been hockey in the main - he achieved the school first eleven hockey team as goalie and the goalie trophy for the University hockey club. We were very proud of both. Unfortunately he injured his shoulder at the commencement of the summer indoor hockey season, and has not been able to play for a couple of months. Computer games against Elwyn are just not the same thing! Squash, in which Tristan's team won the school B-grade competition, was also banned.

Modelling has not been such a dominating influence this year, because outdoor rock climbing (mostly with Rob) has taken up most of Tristan's hobby time. Trips to the Stirling Ranges, West Cape Howe (near Denmark) and Mt Arapiles (Victoria) have been very rewarding for Rob and Tristan, if a little time consuming!

The school cadets unit is an excellent training ground for the boys. The Christchurch group is very talented and committed. They won the state 1996 Efficiency Shield competition handsomely, and were justifiably proud of themselves.

Saxophone has been a more relaxing hobby - other than performances at Winthrop Hall and the Christchurch Old Boys annual dinner, Tristan has just enjoyed this past - time I Yes, he HAS had a busy year!

Elwyn has been the epitome of the quiet achiever this year. She has quietly organised herself to achieve well in her cricket, hockey and engineering. Although she does not promote herself very much, she is learning to "stand up and be counted" in her own quiet way. Being nearly 6 feet tall (but shorter than Tristan) helps!

Cricket began her year with the 1995/96 national competition in Queensland. Although the Western Australian team did not perform very well, it was an achievement for Elwyn to cope so well as a touring sportsman. She also enjoyed having a few days as a tourist in Brisbane - the first member of our family to visit this city! She then came back to Perth to win trophies for her club - Subiaco Women's Cricket Club.

This season Elwyn has been proud to be part of the "rebirth" of the WA team as the Western Fury - they won against Queensland handsomely, but have had a struggle with Victoria (despite Elwyn opening the batting!) and NSW. They play SA this weekend - we have ALL fingers and toes crossed! The WACA offer the girls some excellent coaching clinics which Elwyn has taken advantage of - she now has her Level 1 Coaching Degree. Although she still can't tell Tristan what to do, she has put this to good use as coach for her old school - the PLC under-18s, who have done well so far.

Hockey is Elwyn's sport in the "off" (ie non-cricket) season. She played for the University hockey club again this year, but they missed out on the finals. However, she still enjoyed hitting the ball around!

Her engineering is now well under way. The difficult second year of her double degree has taken a lot of application and self-discipline to complete, especially with good marks. She is now getting into levels of detail which make most subjects at least interesting, and is looking forward to next year with less subjects in more depth. Many of our associates and friends have children studying different forms of engineering - we hope that they can all find work at the end of all this slog!

Jeanette and Christopher have just celebrated their 3rd wedding anniversary - it doesn't seem like 3 years since we were scrambling to finish Jeanette's wedding dress before the wedding started! Since then, she and Christopher have been working at ERG for most of the time. They have both decided that they want to travel before they settle down and have a family. Their first step is to move back to live with us next week when they leave their rented unit! However, this is just a short prelude to their trip to England in early February. Christopher has several job interviews lined up already (via the Internet!). Once he has landed a job, then they can get a work visa and Jeanette will get herself a job as well. Our Aunt Judy has kindly volunteered to give them their first lodging in the UK. We wonder how long this will last before they are looking for their own place. However, it will be company for all 3 of them during the last of the English winter.

This has come about because of the poor job market in Perth for "trainee" engineering jobs. Christopher has specialised in graphics engineering programming, and Jeanette in communications.

In response to this bombshell from our eldest daughter, I took Jeanette to Esperance for a long weekend recently. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time together, especially in view of our long separation coming up! We have all been trying to spend extra time with them both. However, I am sure that they will be back (with little Jeanettes and Christophers in tow) all too soon!

Rob has finally climbed his "Mount Everest" this year. On his second trip to New Zealand for the year, he finally climbed Mt Cook - a 20 hour guided climb which lasted from 8pm one night to 4pm the next day. This has been a goal of his for some years. We now await his next goal with some trepidation - skydiving has been mentioned!

Rob's medical practice also continues well. He now works hard most of the time with some excellent surgeons (except when he or his surgeons are away). Despite feeling that he is getting stale, Rob still rises to challenges that come his way with his medicine, and applies his special "common-sense", personal approach to all his patients.

Rock climbing with Tristan has taken up some time this year. It is very good for both of them to get to know each other through a common hobby. Rock climbing requires partners who support each other to the hilt - they literally hold each other's lives in their hands (via the ropes)! We hope that this partnership will continue for some time yet, as they plan to go to New Zealand together when Tristan has finished school and climb Mt Aspiring together.

I have taken a step back from my company now - it moved out of home last week. This was a sad and happy occasion, with many similarities to the day each of our children started school! The office is now in West Perth, and I will maintain my own office at home for "quiet times" and our personal affairs. Growing the company and my family has been very time-consuming this year, but I did find time to travel to New Zealand early this year to join Rob after one of his expeditions. This was quite special - Rob arranged for a helicopter trip for us to camp up in the mountains right next to Mt Aspiring. I have also taken an active role in Women's Cricket, by assisting with the launch of their new image - the Western Fury.

Next year I have the family to grow with, the company to develop, heaps of books to read and places to travel to (including England to see Jeanette and Christopher) - who knows what will happen!

We join together in wishing you all a very special year in 1997,

Rob, Wendy, Jeanette, Christopher, Elwyn and Tristan



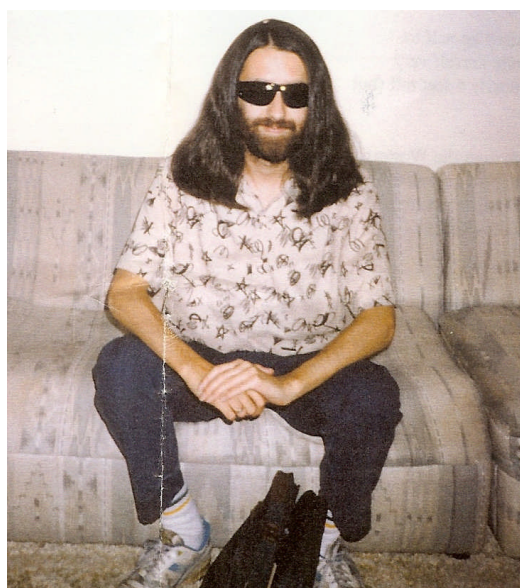
1: Tristan gearing up for a big one at West Cape Howe



2: Elwyn on the 5 day Kalbarri Gorge Walk



3: Jeanette at Woody Island near Esperance



4: Christopher the guru!



5: Rob on the summit of Mt Cook



6: Wendy catching up on culture at Bevan Col (2000m) at the foot of Mt Aspiring