

Dear friends,

Welcome to our story of this penultimate year of the millenium, and we look forward to sharing it with you. It has been a saga of highs and lows, but has ended with joy.

New Year's Day saw us as a fragmented family:

- Jeanette and Christopher were in Cornwall, England with our Aunty Judy;
- Elwyn, Tristan and friend Brett were tramping along the South Coast Track, in Tasmania (a 6-day adventure through swamps, leeches and mountain ranges);
- Rob and Wendy were in Hobart, Tasmania, watching the last surviving yachts of the ill-fated 1999 Sydney-to-Hobart race limp up the Derwent to safety in Centennial Docks.

### January

Wendy's health was still very fragile, so she was not able to take on any heavy tramps during their month in Tasmania. Rob was very understanding, and organised a two-day tramp to the beautifully named Twilight Tarn in Mt Field National Park. They took the long day tramp through the Park in to Twilight Tarn, past beech trees, ferns, small tarns and the spectacular mountain scenery. At the mountain hut, the moon was kind to them and showed them a reflection of her lovely silver face in the tarn – a very special gift. But they didn't see any platypuses.

Their second venture took them on a three-day tramp by the Overland Track, to the lovely Pine Valley. On the second day, they climbed up to the Labyrinth, behind Mt Olympus. This is an amazing secret place, a high mountain shelf where tarns and beech trees make a labyrinthine track (where Tristan and friend Owen got "temporarily misplaced" later in the month).



Elwyn on Mt Anne, Tasmania

Their third venture was to the wild west coast. During a magical walk through a beech forest near Strahan, they saw a platypus in the wild, which Wendy had been waiting most of her life to share. For once in her life, she was speechless!

Meanwhile, Elwyn, Tristan and Brett returned from the South Coast Track, rested for a little, before Rob and Wendy dropped them at Cradle Mountain. There they met a large group of their friends, to take a tramp along the Overland Track to the Walls of Jerusalem. They made their own way back to Hobart, to clean up at Wendy's long-suffering sister's place.

**Tristan, Brett & Elwyn on the South Coast Track**



**Wendy at the helm**

We finished January separately, too:

- Tristan was cycling along the Tassie Trail (a circuitous 500 km track through the middle backblocks of Tasmania) on his mountain bike, on a "Boys' Own Adventure". Rob met him a couple of times along the way, with essential supplies such a replacement helmet and bike rack.
- Rob and Elwyn climbed Mt Anne together; a special, very challenging place in the Southwest Wilderness, which they very much enjoyed sharing.
- Wendy was sailing for a week with her sister Fiona, up the east coast to Schouten Passage (south of Freycinet Peninsula). This was another life-long dream, and Wendy was in her element with the ocean and no seasickness.



**Mum sailing off Cape Huoy, Tasmania**



**Rob at the Royal Prince Albert Inn,  
Launceston**

## February

Our family had a “gathering” back at home in Perth, sharing Tristan’s 19<sup>th</sup> birthday (it was a little sad seeing the family’s baby turn 19!) and a belated celebration for Elwyn’s 22<sup>nd</sup>. Rob went back to work in his anaesthetics practice (a little reluctantly), and Wendy combined very part-time work with the start of her long path to healing. Her wonderful little work team was very supportive with her attempts to work in this way.

Elwyn and Tristan went back to Uni in late February – Elwyn for the second-last year of her Electronic Engineering/Computer Science double degree, and Tristan for the second-last year of his Geophysics degree.



Tristan’s Birthday Party



Elwyn’s Cricket Trophy

## March

We had a tremendous family event in March, watching Elwyn awarded the WA Information Technology and Telecommunications Award for a Student Project – for her Honours project in 1998. Jeanette and Christopher applauded from afar – from their home in Newcastle, England.

Elwyn’s cricket continued to go from strength to strength – she finished the season by winning the Western Fury (WA) player of the season trophy, for the second year in a row.

The results of Wendy’s heart investigation showed quite a sick heart, and not much treatment available other than to rest and wait and hope. At least Wendy shared her 48<sup>th</sup> birthday with her family – a change from her 47<sup>th</sup>, on top of Mt Aspiring with Rob.

## April

The family pattern of travelling separately continued. Elwyn and Tris went down south to Margaret River with friends, and shared caving (Tristan) and mountain biking (both of them). Elwyn stayed on for a rest, and Tristan rode 220km from Margaret River to Dwellingup to meet other friends.

Rob and Wendy spent a few delightful days on the Bibbulman Track, sharing easy walks which Wendy’s health could cope with.



Rob and Wendy drove southeast to Esperance after Easter. They were greeted by the new moon rising into the dusk sky – a lovely portent for a delightful (but short) holiday. They shared snorkelling (a new passion, learnt during sailing in January) and camping on Woody Island – a night walk across the island to see the shearwaters landing at their nest sight was a definite highlight. The return trip included a magic night camping at Quoin Head in the Fitzgerald River National Park.

Tristan ended his April with yet another marathon event – riding his mountain bike from York to Perth ride at night (100km). It was very cold, so his fingers were quite numb!



## May

Elwyn was selected for the Australian Women's cricket squad, and attended her first training camp in Thredbo. The rest of us wondered what the training camp was actually for, but she assured us that it was strictly cricket!

Tristan had gained a lot of confidence from his adventurous forays so far this year, so he started playing hockey again. His shoulder had been dislocated for the first time several years ago when he played hockey, so this step was a significant for him.

He also started his first "real" job, working part-time at Main Peak outdoor shop in Subiaco. He had a steep learning curve at first, but focussed on the customers, which was the primary part of his job. So, when the rest of us wanted any outdoor gear, where did we go? AND we made sure that Tristan served us.

## June

A tense month, with Elwyn and Tristan both taking exams.

For some relief, Tristan decided to do the Avon Descent in September, and started training with early morning paddles on the Swan River. For someone who surfaced at 8am on a good day, getting up for a 6am paddle was a tremendous feat. He also signed up with Internet Squash group.

Wendy's heart test showed that there had been no improvement over the past 3 months, so she was very despondent with her health at this time. She continued with her healing doggedly – there must be an improvement sometime! So work remained a part-time activity for the foreseeable future. However, there was some joy, in the learning she was doing centred around personal growth.

## July

Elwyn finally used the birthday present given to her for her 21<sup>st</sup> (a return air ticket for overseas), and travelled to England. She spent time with friends in London (the highlight visiting Lord's the Home of cricket), her great-Aunt Judy in Cornwall, and Jeanette and Christopher in Newcastle (the

highlight sharing a trip to Scotland). This was Elwyn's first overseas trip, and it gave her a taste for solo travel which she definitely plans to continue. The rest of us were very happy for her, to discover an independence she had never previously known.



Elwyn & friends in London

The computer game, "Driver", to which Jeanette and Christopher had given 6-8 months of enormous effort, was launched world-wide. Once they had recovered their health and energy, they were both (justifiably) very proud to have been part of this extremely successful venture.

In preparation for the Avon Descent, Tristan started white water training. He worked full-time at Main Peak for his July holidays, and found that he thoroughly enjoyed his work (the old adage – "you get out of life what you put into it"....).

### August/September

Rob and Wendy made their (almost) annual pilgrimage north. One dream that Rob had had for some years, to share walking the Murchison/Kalbarri Gorge Walk with Wendy, was finally realised. However, it was harder than they both expected, so Rob valiantly shouldered most of the load in his backpack because Wendy's heart played up. After a recovery in Kalbarri, they headed further north to Exmouth/Ningaloo, and relaxed with snorkelling, reading and a wonderful, magical afternoon on the ocean with the humpback whales.



Rob & Wendy in Kalbarri Gorge



Elwyn had her second training camp with the Australian Women's cricket squad camp in Adelaide – much harder work this time. Also, her cricket club was merging with the nearby men's club,



Maris Newman. Because she was treasurer, she was very busy (and essential) behind the scenes. Her work over the past few years, in sorting out the accounts and putting them on the computer, paid great dividends. With uni taking a lot of time as well, she had NO spare time!

Tristan fitted uni around his other activities. He and his support team headed up to the Avon for the 2-day paddle. It was a long way, and he finished it well – a valiant effort for his first time in the race. When Rob and Wendy called from Exmouth to see how he was (just after he got home), he could not talk, he was so tired! However he was soon back into the fray with the Nanga Challenge – a triathlon event around the Murray River comprising a 12 km paddle, 21 km mountain bike (hilly) and 9 km bush run. This was also exhausting – he was seriously losing weight by this time.

Maybe because he didn't have time for it, he met his first girlfriend, Rebecca MacKay. So he had to MAKE time for her! Thus the pennants squash competition at UWA got off to an erratic but successful start. His week-long field trip to Northam for his geology studies ended a very eventful month.

Wendy's week-long sailing trip in January had left a smouldering desire to learn more. So Rob and Wendy started learning ocean sailing with the Bowman Sailing School. The lessons happened on the "Prince Regent", a 47-foot yacht, on the ocean out of Fremantle. Well, it was REALLY hard to concentrate on the learning they were doing, (given the wonderful environment) but they demonstrated their commitment and worked hard.

## October

Wendy travelled to England, on a solo journey. She stayed with her Aunty Judy in Cornwall first. Unfortunately, Judy got very sick as soon as Wendy arrived, so Wendy carefully nursed her and took care of Rosie, Judy's little Scottish terrier. Jeanette and Christopher could not take much time off work, so Wendy took the train north to Newcastle to see them. Jeanette came down with a nasty cold that night, so Wendy felt like the agent of death. However, it was not serious, so they all spent time together in Newcastle, ending with an overnight stay in the North Yorkshire Moors. Further train travels between Newcastle and Cornwall allowed Wendy to catch up with Aunty Judy when she was getting better, and then Jeanette and Christopher when she was recovering. Wendy's journey ended with a training course in Bath, on the Cultural Change process, Appreciative Inquiry. Coming home was restful!

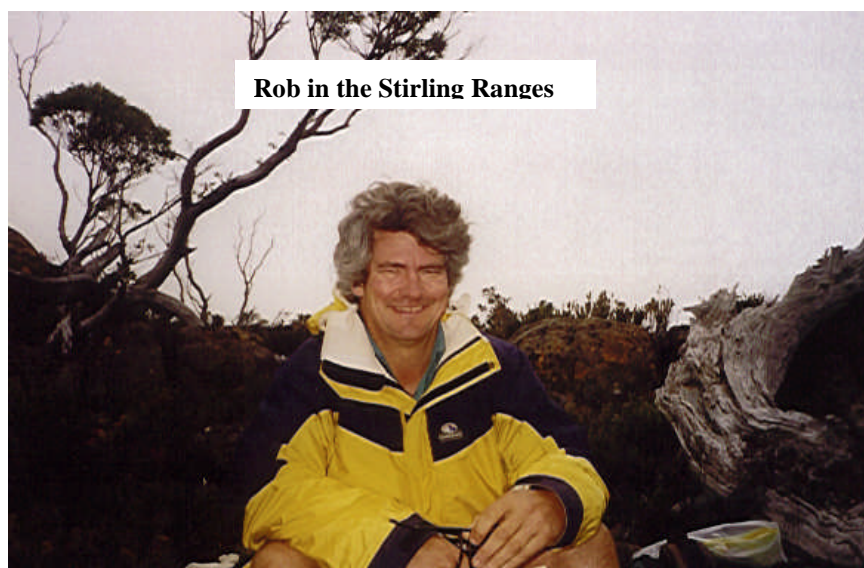


Jeanette & Christopher in Scotland



Judy and Rosie in Cornwall

Rob, in his inimitable style, drove south to the Stirlings to do the Ridge Walk while Wendy was away. However, he had been very sick with a nasty cold (Wendy didn't send it to him!), and the weather turned nasty too, so he walked for one day then came home. This was disappointing for him, but he started to put plans in place for a trip to New Zealand in February 2000.



Tristan continued to fit his other activities around uni, and took his girlfriend away camping on the Bibbulman Track. He prepared all the food, and planned with route with Rob's advice – quite a learning experience! The rest of us were very impressed.

Elwyn reaped the benefits of her hard work with the cricket club merger. She was now a member of the Subiaco-Maris Cricket Club, and started playing the club matches. She was playing with a women's team, but also trained with the men to give her preparation for the state cricket competition. She ended the month on a high – as opening batter, she led the Western Fury (state women's cricket team) to play at the WACA against NSW.

### **November**

Elwyn amazed the rest of us with her stamina this month. She fitted extremely challenging exams, and state cricket matches in Brisbane, Victoria and Perth, and her computer engineering work at UWA around each other. Although she always has enormous self-discipline, this took a great toll, and she ended the month as a very tired young lady. She started seeing a sport motivation coach for her cricket, which allowed her previously untapped inner energy to flow into her whole life. Thus the final match of round, against South Australia in Perth, saw a much mentally stronger Elwyn who shared in leading the team to victory.

This got the Western Fury into the finals, a new experience for Elwyn. They travelled to Sydney to play NSW for the Ruth Preddey national cup at the Sydney Cricket Ground (otherwise known as Mecca if you play cricket!). Although Elwyn played even better – the highest scoring batter - they JUST lost to NSW. However, next year will be another story.....

Tristan continued his pattern of fitting his work, new romance and exams around each other. We think that the romance won, ending with a weekend of climbing at Margaret River!

Rob was happy that he had cancelled his planned mountaineering trip to New Zealand this month, because he decided to save up time to spend with Jeanette in December. They had to worst floods in memory, so he would have spent his time manhandling sandbags had he gone! So instead, he put quite an amount of useful time into preparing for the trip to New Zealand next February.

Wendy summoned up courage to visit the heart doctor for another checkup. She was over the moon to receive a much cleaner bill of health, and started to feel that she was getting her life back.

## **December**

The year ended with family and joy.

Jeanette and Christopher arrived from England at the beginning of the month. They stayed at various places, so everyone shared their time. Rob and Tristan had not seen them since their last visit to Perth in April 1998. So they took them away down south for short walks along the Bibbulman Track (with a “rest” night at the Karri Valley Resort). Rob really enjoyed sharing the camping experience with Jeanette, something they have been talking about for a long time.

Wendy’s sister Fiona arrived from Hobart in the middle of the month. This was a joyful reunion too, having not seen her since last January.

Wendy’s mother Shirley went to hospital early in the month with a badly infected toe from diabetes. However Shirley showed her “true grit” and took on the challenge of healing the toe. As this is written, it appears to be on the mend.

Rob and Wendy put their final plans in place for their trip to New Zealand next February – 2 years since Wendy climbed Mt Aspiring, and she has been recovering ever since! She is better now, and ready to “go back” there again, as well as taking up the new and exciting opportunities coming her way with her new career.

Tristan culminated some months of serious saving, with paying for his New Zealand trip next February – good reward for saving! He will be doing a technical mountaineering course with Alpine Guides at Mount Cook, and then spending a week with Rob to enjoy some mountaineering together, followed by a week on his own.

Christmas Day will be at our home, with the whole family together for the first time for at least 3 years – a time of great joy!

We join in sending you joy and peace at this time of change, where family and friends are the only constants.....

Rob, Wendy, Jeanette, Christopher, Elwyn and Tristan



*Sending you  
tidings of peace  
and joy*

