

Dear Friends

December 2007

It seems to be such a short time since we agonised over last year's newsletter. It has been a full year for both of us, with the usual gamut of busy lives, full of travel, home and family. We love to share our updates with you.

Lily has just completed her final year of a Landscape Architecture degree with Honours while increasing her workload at the Planning and Design section of the University of Western Australia. She succeeded in gaining a full time position a week after submitting her final design folio. She works with University Landscape Architect, mainly concentrating on the auxillary campuses, research stations and heritage sites. The work also involves wayfinding through new signage and building access. Many of her classmates are envious of her autonomy and freedom to design and construct with good budgets while they are working for organisations with an eye on the bottom line. She is thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to place another landscape layer onto Perth's oldest university.

The coursework and dissertation work has filled most of the evenings and weekends and Lily wonders if she will cope with

an increase in leisure time. While the garden is looking good, she is keen to revisit its design and implement some changes for its next incarnation.

She has worked on a number of speculative design programs this year, including the design of a botanic garden in Perth and a revitalisation of a laneway in the CBD. Together with an Arts organisation and two artists in residence, she is involved in producing a book on individual projects and the joint works. Below are some of Lily's installations which featured in her adopted laneway-the dirtiest, most graffiti ridden, home-to-the-homeless place.

Lily had a week in Melbourne in September, with a couple of days to catch up with friends, and drooled over the Guggenheim Museum collection at the National Gallery of Victoria. The main purpose of the was to attend the Australian Landscape Conference . This biennial event attracts great speakers and an interesting program of garden visits.

Two of Lily's favourites are featured below: Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's (93 year old mother of media mogul, Rupert) garden features a road lined with eucalypts that is an iconic Australian scene. The Australian Garden at Cranbourne is a 2 year old garden and a showcase of sustainability. It captures the richness of Australian flora.



Lily's nephew, Curtis, is in his third year of boarding school. While we see him frequently, he has many more commitments. With homework, sport and Pipe Band commitments, his visits are fleeting. He will be performing in the Tattoo at the International Arts in Norfolk, Virginia USA in 2008. His sister Britt will begin boarding school in 2008. Her school is three blocks from our house, so Lily is expecting requests for help with homework.

This has been a momentous year for **Don**, marked by his transition from employment as a school psychologist to full time retirement at the age of **sixty**. We celebrated with sixty friends. Ken and Margaret Richmond, Don's brother in law and sister, had flown over from Ontario in January for a two week visit. We really enjoyed their company and hope to see them and other visitors again soon. Don's brother and wife, George and Pat Pugh also visited, to Don's pleasure, for a much too short a visit from Vancouver, in March. They too are travelling with George working as a ship's doctor for a number of luxury ship's cruises.

Don has always enjoyed his work with teenagers over his thirty year career in education and had assumed he would probably continue working, while gradually reducing his workload. Ongoing unanticipated medical problems, mainly orthostatic hypotension sadly hastened his decision to depart.

This causes dizziness and it did not really permit his daily two hour car drive to and from Rockingham. Fortunately, the problem is now being managed by Don without medication by watching his diet, his eating times and drastically increasing his consumption of water. Beer does not work in quite the same way, despite repeated test trials.

In May, Don suffered a detached retina in his right eye, but his eyesight was fortunately restored following **immediate laser surgery** by a retinologist. Unfortunately, from July to the present, he has gradually been losing clarity in his vision in his right eye due to cloudy fluid. He hopes to fix this condition caused by earlier cataract surgery with further laser surgery. He's grateful that his vision remains good in his left eye. Getting older is bringing unpleasant surprises, particularly in addition to his challenge of thirty years of quadriplegia, yet Don remains **fully active, busy and optimistic**.

Undaunted, Don has had an exciting wonderful year by preparing for, being absorbed in and enjoying a nearly **five month caravan** or trailer trip. He is rediscovering his old interest in local history and is combining this with keen involvement in digital photography, and movie making. He posts his efforts on the goggle movie site. Travel provides the material and Don's caravan trip took him north up Highway 1 along the coast to and around Northern Australia, from August to December.

Our dear friends Sue and Bill Vanwart from Ontario, suggested that they join Don in a trip from Perth to **Darwin** in the Canadian school holidays of July and August, 2007. Don came across an advert for a twenty foot caravan which had been expressly constructed for a wheelchair. Don bought the caravan and car that went with it, and found a friend who allowed him free parking for it. Don was fortunate to locate James Wright, a 63 year old retired Scotsman, who had worked for the CP Society, caravanned to Darwin in the past and was anxious to go again, before migrating back to Scotland in Feb., 2008. Bill and Sue confirmed their arrival date from Toronto airport, 26 July, and their Darwin departure date of 28 August. In spite of the eye problems, mid 2007 was spent in a series of short trips, climaxing in a week trip to Geraldton, accompanied by Jamie's many caravan repairs.

We welcomed Bill and Sue at Perth airport on July 26th and the trip was on. The 5000 kilometre trek north went smoothly and most enjoyably, with stunning **rugged scenery** of the Pilbarra and Kimberley regions. Everyone was awed by the stark, vast, and rugged terrain with its very empty spaces and few people. The gorges, creeks and billabongs were bone dry, sun drenched with grasses burnt golden, amidst acacia, spinifex, and mulga. Reddish sandstone cliffs, ridges, escarpments and mesas dominated the fascinating landscape. Everyone loved the dry hot weather and daily routine of unbroken cloudless blue skies and burning hot sunshine.

## Western Australia and Northern Territory



Bill and Sue camped beside the caravan nightly, wary of the **numerous crocodiles** nearby infesting the northern rivers. We arrived via Timber and Pine Creeks, Katherine and **Kakadu** on the Victoria Highway to humid tropical Darwin on schedule, August 25th in time for a memorable moonlight outdoor meal on a Darwin wharf hours prior to their long flight out, back to Ontario.

Jamie and Don enjoyed the heat and attractions of Darwin for the next month while Don explored all the cycle paths using his new fourteen kph Quantum **wheelchair**. Richard Smetek flew out to assist with attendant care duties and driving for a more leisurely ten week trip back to Perth, via the slag heaps and headframes of WA's interior goldfields on the Great Northern Highway 95 and Highway 123. The trip was wonderful but very, very hot with daily forty degree temperatures. The caravan air conditioning and insulation coped well with the extreme conditions. Don was particularly proud that he drove a third of the distance with hand controls, while pulling a heavy caravan, handling sway, impatient road trains, willy willies, and stray kangaroos, horses and cattle along the unfenced highways.

Don is truly celebrating all the joys of retirement, while Lily begins her full time career as a Landscape Architect, working to afford Don's peripatetic lifestyle. Don looks forward to future trips in 2008 and has already organised a two week outing for next January. Watch out soon for Don's improved website.

<http://donpugh.dyndns.org>

We love hearing from our **friends** through letters, emails and calls. Your warm thoughts at this time of the year sustain us and give us impetus to continue producing these letters.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

All good things

Lily Auld and Don Pugh

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