



WISHING YOU A  
MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR  
DON AND LILY



# Christmas 2009

Dear Friends

We apologise for not having mailed our annual Christmas letter to you in 2008. We didn't forget you last year; it's simply that we didn't get around to writing a newsletter. Don was on a caravan trip around our state until December 11th. When he returned, he reported directly to hospital to have a pressure sore treated. To his dismay, he was incarcerated there for the entire summer until his complete recovery and release at the end of March 2009.

We are reminded that Christmas is fast approaching with 36 degree (Celsius that is) day, the disappearance of rain and the welcome return of blue skies. We're resolved to send this year's missive a little early, to keep in touch, and wishing all our friends a very happy festive season.

Lily is now finishing up her contract at The University of Western Australia. She has been working in the campus and accommodation planning area to ensure that the University's research programs can be accommodated. With the advent of a Labor Government, there has been a plethora of grants for her to manage. While this is not landscape architecture, she has enjoyed the meld of research, grant writing and campus planning. After four years of intensive study, being fully committed to coursework and dissertation work, Lily is again working business hours and Don welcomes seeing Lily in the evenings and on weekends. Still her evenings are filled with business, managing our investment properties and catching up on a gruelling book club reading schedule.



Aitutaki, Cook Islands

In September 2008 she spent a week in the beautiful, tropical Cook Islands in the South Pacific. With a suitcase of books and a keen desire to miss the Olympics again, she enjoyed long walks and longer sleep-ins. She was centred in Rarotonga, but managed a trip to Aitutaki, a number of motus (small islands) including the islands where Survivor was filmed and a number of cultural and garden tours filled her days. She was amazed at the investment from China in the islands. The intrusion of pattern-book Chinese architecture was at odds with the island vernacular building style.



Don has been chastened by his first substantial hospital visit since breaking his neck in 1978. Four months confined to bed were decidedly unpleasant. Although it's not exactly clear what caused the problem, he's refrained from any caravan trips this year. Fortunately, after his detached retina operation in 2007, and cataract operations, Don's eyesight has returned in both eyes to 20:20 vision.

Last year he drove north with a South African back packer, Sean and a carer for a month to see the stunning displays of spring wild flowers near the photogenic cliffs of Kalbarri. He then visited interior wheat belt towns during harvest and watched long rows of harvesters cutting wheat and queues of trucks at the wheat bins.



Don went to Bali for two weeks in September, 2009. He hired a car and driver to take him to many parts of this tropical paradise. Although this is his fourth trip there, the last being in 2004, he still enjoyed new excursions, the local Bintang beer, warm tropical weather and the comfort of a luxurious tourist hotel.

Don has continued his fascination in developing video editing skills using VEGAS PR. He has applied to do a full-time one year course in Film Making and TV Production in 2010.

Most of his 500 short videos have been transferred to wide screen high definition format on

<http://www.youtube.com/user/DON434>

There are videos related to every place visited on his 2007 and 2008 caravan trips, listed on his home page

<http://donpugh.dyndns.org/>

He enjoys exploring the history of hamlets such as Widgiemootha, population 25, site of one of the largest gold nuggets, the Golden Eagle, found in Australia. As an example, his ten minute video on this town is located at

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AH\\_K1d-w2uEO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AH_K1d-w2uEO)

Don still runs his amateur radio IRLP radio link, node 6200, eats out with a group of friends every Wednesday, enjoys movies, and takes excursions on Perth's cycle routes in his 14 km/hr electric wheelchair. Three years into retirement, he continues to lead a satisfying and full life.

Wildflowers near Kalbarri



We have seen a great deal of Robyn and Ken, Lily's sister and brother-in-law, now that she has two children at Boarding Schools within 2 kms of our home. Curtis, Don and Lily's seventeen year old nephew, has completed his final year at Scotch College. Next year he will be undertaking a gap year at George Heriots School in Edinburgh, before going to university in 2011. He finally completed the challenging and strenuous Bibulum trek, a strenuous 500km trail from Perth to Albany. We are sure that he'll be telling his grandchildren of this achievement long after his other memories of Scotch College are forgotten.

In 2008, he accompanied the school pipe band to Washington, New York and Norfolk, Virginia in the United States. There he participated in the international Tattoo with the US Marines and other bands, leaving a strong desire to travel. Curtis was honoured with the being selected as Pipe Major and has earned extra money playing for weddings in his full regalia. During his summer holidays, in 2008 and 2009, he gained experience in hard manual labour working at Co-operative Bulk Handling at the Merredin wheat-bin- hard work and fabulous pay.

Our niece, Britt attended Presbyterian Ladies College for her first year as a border completing year eight in 2008 and is now through year 9. She is active in every aspect of school life and relishes her involvement in the school rowing team - complete with 5 am starts on the river in winter. We see less of Britt than we did of Curtis at a similar age; her loyalty and affection for her 138 sisters (as she calls her fellow boarders) excludes visits to us.



Curtis (with arrow) and fellow end-to-enders on the Bibulum Track near Albany WA

Don's sister Margaret and husband Ken Richmond are both retired and are busy travelling the world on ocean cruises. Both their children, Chris and David are both doing well and have provided a raft of grandchildren. Don's brother George continues in emergency medicine as a doctor in Vancouver. With his wife, Pat he also does two to three ocean cruises annually. The three boys Trevor, Kevin and Steven have completed their university studies.

In the last year we've enjoyed regular visits by our friend Michael Hand, who has returned after two years of travelling Australia in a small camper van. Steven, George and Pat's youngest son, working in Singapore for the 2008 summer, also joined us for twelve days of diving, and bike riding.

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 merry Christmas and a happy, healthy 2010.

# Don Pugh & Lily Auld