

# Merry Christmas 2012

## Happy New Year

### 2013



Christmas is here again. It seems to me that it is becoming more frequent, or is that a figment of my imagination. I guess that is what getting old does to you.

We have not had a good year. It all started off very well with us looking forward to a long awaited visit of Don from Nova Scotia, he was coming to meet and take home his new black puppy, PUCK, and enjoy seeing some of our beautiful country after he showed us his home last year. We were all very excited. Then the wheels started to fall off. Our dear friend, Jack had been diagnosed with a return of his melanoma, this time in several different areas. He was very ill and had an appalling prognosis. We were busy driving up to Melbourne regularly to see him. At the same time we had the house in Albion on the market so things were a bit tight for time and energy.

Jill was having a new treatment for her Rheumatoid Arthritis. After the first of these treatments, a problem showed up and she had a CT scan in order to detect if there was an issue. Well, there certainly was an issue, but not with the treatment aftermath. The radiologist detected a shadow on the liver and a subsequent biopsy diagnosed this as a return of the breast cancer from 4 years previously only this time it was in the liver. Very bad news and this came through on the day Jack died with the biopsy scheduled on the morning of his funeral. This had all happened and it was only the 1<sup>st</sup> March.

We had a very busy few weeks, Scott and Ben came to visit and then Jan and Kelvin came and stayed a few days. Tim and Cate and Jude spent a day with us. John and Connie invited us to go on a helicopter ride they were taking to Metung, so we really enjoyed that trip. In the meantime the house at Albion sold so things were looking up.



Jill decided now was the time to buy that new car she had wanted for so long, so after shopping around she decided on the Mercedes Benz ML 250 SUV. We test drove it and it was just right.

Kade came for a sleep over and went hunting with Grandpa on the duck swamp. He was very excited when grandpa shot a duck and 'SCOT' (the dog) fetched it out of the water. He carried it home very pleased with the whole exercise and immediately put in a request with Wayne to join him at duck opening next year. As part of the hunting lesson, he took the bird home for Mick to cook for him to eat, he did share it with Mick though.

Now it was time to start some treatment for the cancer, Rick, Jill's Oncologist was anxious for her to go onto a Trial drug being tested at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. This involved many trips to Melbourne and unfortunately the drug did not suit Jill at all and she became very ill so it was stopped, we later found out it was a toxic dose and it was stopped around the world at that point.

Back to square one, we consulted Rick as to what plan B was. He decided to continue with an anti hormone drug that had been involved in the trial (but not the trial drug). This involves ongoing four weekly treatments with regular scans to check on what the cancer is doing. Jill's last scan on the 7<sup>th</sup> December was very positive, the cancer is stable and has not developed at all so the treatment is holding it. This secondary breast cancer cannot be cured but, all being well, it can be managed for varying periods of time.

During this terrible interlude, the unstinting love and support afforded by my very special sister, Ann, was immeasurable. She was there at every turn, helping us with all the many disasters that seemed to be happening. Thank you Ann, we love you very much and appreciate how important you are in our lives.

Ian and Sue Axton came to stay from Tasmania, they were attending the Labrador National Show and so they decided to stay with us for the week before and the week after the show. Jill went to the show too and we all enjoyed a catch up there. 'PIPER' had her pups and Sue held her paw while Jill was in Melbourne at the hospital in the week after the show. PIPER and her nine babies relocated to Bendigo as time and energy were lacking at Kadnook with all that was going on here. Kelly, Jo and Jen have been so amazingly supportive during this disaster and the dogs have spent some time with them as Wayne and I dealt with the whole mess here. Thank you all. Annabel spent some time here and she was a great support to Jill and dogs throughout. Love you all and appreciate your ongoing help.



On the 16<sup>th</sup> May, MITCH DANIEL McMASTERS arrived weighing in at 7lb 9ozs. Ben and Ella were very excited upon the arrival of a baby brother. Scott and Nelly were too, three under three is a little daunting though. Mitch is as gorgeous, as are his siblings, and all is under control, most of the time, in Myrtleford.

We travelled to Myrtleford to meet Mitch, say hello to Ben and Ella and spend some time with Scott and Nelly and Mick and Sam and Kade. We had a good weekend and spent Sunday in the King Valley, lunching at the Gracebrook Winery and having a look at Lake William Hovell, then afternoon tea at Millewa.



With the help of Mick, Jill arranged a special birthday gift for Wayne, it was a day driving the steam engine from Maldon to Castlemaine and back. Mick and Sam and Kade came with us and we made a weekend trip of the whole exercise. We had an amazing day, one of the bonus's was that an old friend of Wayne's was the driver and he made the whole experience awesome. Wayne had a ball and so did all of us.

We had been treating SLEET, the Whippet, for some time for an enlarged heart and she was having great difficulties with fluid retention, she deteriorated very rapidly and we finally made the decision to end her suffering. She was 13 years old and she had a good long and healthy life up until the heart problem raised its head, we miss her but we loved her being in our lives. VALE SLEET.



The Smith's arrived from Queensland and we enjoyed their company for ten days. It was great to catch up and reminisce as we had not got together for years. The thing is with good friends, you can pick up where you left off as if all that time had not passed. It was a real pick me up.

The next event of note was a bit scary as Scott turned





40, really makes one feel old. We went to Myrtleford for the 'big bash' and it was terrific to catch up with all the young people that have been in Scott's life for such a long time. He has grown into an amazing individual, he is a really good dad and Nelly has developed him into a good husband (we think) as we heard her mutter that you have to 'mould' the material you get. She has done well. As we were all gathered in Myrtleford for Scott's birthday, Scott and Nelly decided to include Mitch's baptism in the weekend's festivities, so he was duly baptized Mitch Daniel McMasters in the presence of friends and family.



Our next adventure was a short trip away in the caravan. We set off in the Pajero and caravan and spent two nights at Swan Reach, checked out Paynesville, Metung and Lakes Entrance. Graeme and Margret joined us there and we drove on to Marlo to spend four days. We all enjoyed ourselves in a relaxing environment and DEW loved the trip and having two caravans to share.

In the meantime, CHAZA the greyhound had been to pre training and it was decided after this first preparation, he was a bit immature and so he came home for a few months to grow on. He has now gone to have another preparation with a new trainer and things are looking promising.

Speaking of Greyhounds, DEW the Italian Greyhound, has accompanied Jill and her handler, Leanne, to several shows during the year. Leanne has done a great job and DEW now has 51 points towards her show title. Leanne made sure Jill was well set up at the National Lab Show and looked after her all weekend, what a gem of a friend she is and how blest we are to have her in our lives. We love you Lee, you are very special. When things went pear shaped at the hospital for Jill, Leanne spent the day holding her hand, thank you, remember you are so appreciated.

Glenice rang for a chat and we decided it was time for a catch up, in a flash she had booked a flight and arrived to spend a few days. We had a wonderful time, huge amount of time to cover as we had not got together for years. Again, good friends just fit back in and we sorted out the dogs and the world in general really. Thanks for coming Glen.

The Labradors are all well. We have had very few pups this year, for obvious reasons. SCOT enjoys his harem of TAWN, FLICK and THYME. They enjoy the lifestyle here almost as much as we do.



All the animals are thriving. The sheep excelled themselves, all but one of the ewes producing twins, so the flock has grown very quickly. The cows are away with the bull as last years' calves are all grown up now. The grass is growing well and we are hoping for a bit of rain.



So ends another chapter and another year. We sincerely hope that each and every one of you have a safe and Merry Christmas, and, that 2013 will bring us all the things we hope for. Lots of love

Jill & Wayne

