



## Greetings from Chris and Geoff

Dear friends and family,

There is a good reason you didn't receive travel epistles from us in 2017. We didn't travel very far. And there were good reasons we didn't travel very far. Read on.



*This spot by Lake George provided welcome breaks in what turned out to be a busy year. The retreat centre there provided for long walks on the crusty lake bed, up into the hills and round this labyrinth*

The year started with settling in to our usual commitments. Chris chipped away at the biography she's writing. Geoff continued his duties as treasurer of this, secretary of that, newsletter editor of the other, and designer of things that crop up. Church and community involvements continued and grew. Most seemed to involve catering for crowds.

Our vocal chords got a good work out. Our choir, Good Faith, moved from practising occasionally for special church services to practising intensively for concerts and a CD. (Yes, Geoff designed the program for the former and the cover of the latter.)



*Geoff's talk, 'Tales of a Grocer's Son', continued to be in demand, this time in Yass. It is an illustrated show-and-tell about the history of grocery products*

Geoff's life changed when he invested in hearing instruments. He controls them from his iPhone and is pleased that I don't mumble anymore. However, I don't get the opportunity to enjoy his guesswork as often. We had both worked on producing a new edition of a church directory early in the year. I suggested one day while driving, 'Why don't we stop and give John his directory?' Geoff asked in response, 'Why would we give John a hysterectomy?'

We took on some new interests. I helped organise a Retreat for busy Women beside the wintry shores of Lake George. Geoff helped the National Library of Australia with their National eDeposit website. I joined a book club. We joined the National broadband Network and watched Canberra's tramline take shape. Geoff helped now and then at sausage sizzles outside a sunnings outlet not far from a Peugeot dealer. This resulted in the surprise purchase of a new car and sending our old one by truck to my sister in Brisbane.

Seeds planted a year or so ago grew into a forest. A trend of decamping for a week or so while friends and relatives used our house and fed Polly really took off in a wonderful way. We've had about a dozen such visits in the last year, especially of young families. It was a great way to catch up with people and give each other space at the same time. We simply stayed in our caravan in the bush a short drive away.



*Visitors from the big smoke enjoy the quieter pace of Canberra. We woke up one morning to find this carpet layer measuring up in front of our house*

The biggest surprise came in June when I was invited back into my old job as Centre Manager of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. I acted in the role until Christmas by which time new staff had been recruited. I enjoyed being back in an old job in new offices with a new team. To liberate some time, I pressed the pause button on my writing and my ornithological pursuits. Meanwhile, Geoff supported me in my increased busy-ness, digitised his LP collection and read the biographies of Van Gogh and Monet. He produced a book on our 2016 travels and his imagination churned away on the shape of our next journey.

We did actually fit in some small trips during the year, mainly to visit family, but not at Christmas time. Now our minds are turning to 2018 and the new challenges and unexpected surprises in store. The pause button on the writing will be released soon and, who knows, we may find time to take flight with the birds for a while.



*The obligatory bird photo. Our bush retreat at the caravan is encircled by bird baths. In a very hot spell last January, twenty species of birds visited them within a couple of days. This Rufous Whistler serenades us long and often. Some of you asked about the birds pictured on our Christmas greeting. The Grey Fantail was nesting outside the van's kitchen window. The pelicans were being fed at The Entrance. We stayed there with my sisters so as to attend a cousin's birthday party nearby*

We wish you a healthy and peaceful 2018. Oh, and by the way, the title photo is our one-and-only selfie. It was taken on a beach at Moruya Heads during one of our quick trips this year.

Love,  
Chris and Geoff