

## Family

The grandchildren count has increased once again this year to a total of seven, after the arrival of Melody Anne McHugh on 19th September. So Ben and Joy now have four lovely girls. Natalie has just finished pre-school and starts Grade 1 at the beginning of next year. Ben has just finished the first year of accountancy at uni, and has started working with a firm of accountants in Toowoomba. Even with four young children, Joy has continued teaching a few piano students, and takes her turn playing for church services.

After 3½ years in Port Macquarie, Simon and Melody have just moved to Brisbane as Simon takes up a management position with a private medical firm. The move came with mixed emotions for them, having become very involved in their church at "Port", and having to leave behind lifelong friends.

However, along with the family, they have been praying for a move to Brisbane "in the Lord's will and time". From our point of view, it certainly will be more convenient to visit them when we come back for short visits from Thailand. Jake starts the new "Prep" grade at school next year. Mel and Sime now have a home walking distance from both school and church.

We aim to have Christmas together with our two young families every two years and this is our year. So we are all looking forward to a very happy Christmas together at Simon and Melody's place before we leave for Thailand on the 29th.

Ruth and I feel our responsibilities towards our family as well as our work in Thailand, and we are looking to the Lord to know His perfect will. Until we return to live in Australia, we plan to make two trips back per year to visit our families.



Simon and Melody, Rebekah, Jake, and Holly



Joy and Ben, Susan, Katelyn, Melody, and Natalie

### Contact Details

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## Christmas 2006 Greetings from Thailand



### ELEPHANTS ARE STILL A COMMON SITE

Ruth and I passed this procession while on our way up to the remote north west of Thailand.

### TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

Good tidings of great joy, indeed,  
ALL PEOPLE can afford,  
Each nation, tongue, and race and creed,  
To know Him, Christ the Lord.

This message is of one who came,  
He left His Father's throne,  
Born in the town of Bethlehem,  
He came unto His own.

But He would be rejected by  
The ones He came to save,  
Lifted up 'tween earth and sky,  
For all, His life He gave.

But He could not be held by death,  
He rose, and reigns on high,  
He'll come again, and not by stealth,  
And now, the time is nigh.

But many still have not yet heard,  
This message of good news,  
Please pray that God will bless His word  
To Gentiles and to Jews.

*May your Christmas 2006 be a warm and joyful time, as you remember the reason for the season — the birth of the "Saviour, who is Christ the Lord".*

*Russ and Ruth Keanalley*



## Personal Notes

Well, as we write, we have just two weeks to go before returning to Thailand on 29th December, four days after a special Christmas with our two young families.

But let's backtrack a little. Last July we commenced our first and only furlough since leaving Australia for Thailand as full time missionaries in August 1999. We set out on a three month "deputation" trip in January, visiting assemblies and churches in Tasmania, Victoria and NSW. This trip commenced with a Jubilee reunion at Wagga with my ex-Air Force colleagues. Our intake, known as the Rosebuds, joined the RAAF 50 years ago in January.

Ruth and I have been back to Thailand twice during this furlough, for renewing visas and to be part of the second two yearly combined assemblies camp for young people. We also attended the wedding of Malin known to many of our prayer supporters. She married Saeng - a young Karen pastor at a Baptist church near Pattaya.

We returned at the end of August to complete our twelve months furlough. Besides spending time with our daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren—a very happy but



hectic time, we also made a trip to Coolamon for a reunion where Ruth spent the first years of her life.

Our health continues to hold up well and our needs have been met. Our Lord is faithful as promised, and we also record our grateful thanks to our prayer supporters.

We now ponder our future - how many more years will we be in Thailand, and what ministry will the Lord open up for us when we move back to Australia. Our grandchildren are growing up too, and we would like to be able to buy a suitable house with our young families in mind. We share these thoughts with you not out of concern (our God is faithful), but that you might join us in prayer for His guidance.

## Biennial Camp

Once again, the two yearly combined assemblies camp for young people, held during the first week of May, was a very special blessing, not only for the ministry of the Word of God, but also providing the opportunity for assembly young people from the different parts of Thailand to meet and be a mutual encouragement to each other.

The camp was



held at Baan Khun Glang, a Christian camp site on a mountain called Doi Inthanon, one of the highest accessible mountain peaks in the north west of Thailand, approximately 90 kilometres south west of Chiang Mai. Almost 200 young people came to the camp from all parts of Thailand.

## Rosebuds Reunion

In January, we attended the 50th Anniversary of the 10th Intake of the RAAF apprenticeship scheme at Wagga, where Russ first joined the air force along with over 160 other trainees. Our intake was known as the Rosebuds and 67 of us attended the reunion, with our wives. We trained and studied in a highly disciplined but basic environment with few creature comforts, so it was great to see each other again after so many years.

Eight of us, dubbed the "Boffins", then spent another 3½ years together studying and training to become Engineer Officers, so it was particularly nostalgic to catch up again with these friends.

During the reunion, a very good pilot friend, Aussie Pratt, and myself had the job of scattering the ashes of a deceased trainee over the Wagga airfield. I have very fond memories of spending an Easter weekend with Aussie and his family at Griffith NSW.

Another reunion (of many) was with Ian McLiesh. While cleaning up at our recreation centre early in our third year, Ian came to me and said "Russ, I have some good news that I think you will be interested in. Last Saturday night while in town on leave, I heard a Salvation Army group preaching the gospel and I was saved." Until Ian shared this with me, I had been pretty much on my own as a Christian, so we became very close friends. But by the end of that year, we had established a weekly Bible study group that numbered about eight-



Before the flight over Wagga airfield



The reunion with Ian at Wagga



The "Boffins" at the Rosebuds Reunion  
een from all three intakes of trainees. Some years later, I was delighted to learn that that Bible study group was still going.

## Back to Coolamon

At the end of September, we visited Coolamon where Ruth spent her younger years for a "Back to Coolamon" weekend. We drove down for the event with Norm and Nancy Pratt, Ruth's aunt and uncle, spending 3 nights there. It was a very nostalgic time for Ruth as she met many school friends from her childhood days. The picture at right shows Mrs Ellie Lucas (100 years in Feb) cutting a cake made and decorated by Aunt Nancy. Mrs Lucas taught with Ruth's Aunt Carry at Coolamon Central School. Also in the picture, is Colin Patterson who organised the "Back to Coolamon weekend event. He was a student of Aunt Carry's, and thought very highly of her.



Mrs Ellie Lucas at Allawah Lodge cutting the cake

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