

Whatever happened to...

TRISH WILSON

whose daughter, Lisa, died while on a gap year trip to Australia



LISA

Thief returns sad diary



A BURGLAR with a conscience has been caught on CCTV returning the diary of a young woman killed in a car crash.

Last month thieves broke into Clive and Patricia Wilson's home and stole jewellery and the diary of their daughter Lisa. It covers Lisa's final days as she travelled Australia before dying

said goodbye, a strange uneasiness gripped me. 'I'm worried something awful's going to happen,' I told Clive after Lisa had left. Call it mother's instinct, but I hadn't felt this way before.

'Don't be daft,' he said. It helped that we planned to fly out to Brisbane to see Lisa in November.

'I can't wait to see you!' she said, when we rang her a couple of weeks before. She told us she was going to visit Ayers Rock the next morning.

That evening, as Clive and I left the auto parts business we ran, I nipped to the supermarket.

When I arrived home, there was a police car on

our driveway.

My heart thudded. Clive and an officer were in the kitchen.

'It's Lisa,' Clive blurted. 'She's been killed in a car accident on her way to Ayers Rock.'

A guttural scream burst from my throat, then I collapsed. No, no, no! The next days were a blur of numb disbelief and grief.

Even as Clive, our sons and I flew out to Australia a few days later, I couldn't accept that Lisa was really gone forever.

As soon as we landed, we went straight to the police station where her body was being held.

Please just let this be a mistake, I prayed. But it wasn't.

I can't tell you how I felt seeing my daughter's body. Some things should be private, between a mum and her daughter.

But my heart was totally shattered.

Later, we went to collect Lisa's things from the hostel where she'd been staying.

amazing, she emailed from San Francisco.

And from Fiji: *I feel like a castaway on that TV show Survivor.*

'Lucky devil,' I smiled, looking outside at the rain.

Next, Lisa headed off to New Zealand for six weeks. *It's so beautiful, you and Dad would absolutely love it*, she wrote to us.

I felt a glow as I read about the bubbling hot springs she'd sat in, and the dolphins she'd seen.

I could just picture my daughter, the sun on her beautiful face, savouring every moment of her awe-inspiring adventure.

If she wasn't throwing herself out of planes, she was doing bungee jumps over ravines.

I missed her like mad, so when she came home to be a bridesmaid for her brother, Scott, in July 2002, I could hardly contain myself.

'Welcome back!' I cried, smothering her tanned face with kisses.

But soon, Lisa was heading back to Australia. Only this time, when I

Standing outside the departure hall of Heathrow Airport, I flung my arms around my daughter, Lisa, and squeezed her tight.

'Have a wonderful time,' I said, trying not to cry.

'Give over, Mum,' she grinned. 'I promise I'll phone and write.'

There was another flurry of hugs and kisses from me and her dad, Clive, 50, then suddenly, Lisa, 21, and her travel companion, Jo Harwood, were off on the adventure of a lifetime.

It was February 2002, and Lisa was flying off to San Francisco, the first stop on a 12-month round-the-world tour.

After graduating from uni in Southampton with a business degree the year before, she'd taken on two jobs and saved like mad to afford her dream trip.

Soon, Clive and I were getting postcards and phonecalls from Lisa.

Sitting in our living room in Salisbury it was like an insight into another world.

Alcatraz prison was

LISA'S DIARY

Sunday 7th April "Bungy"

What a mega mad experience. Today we got up and drove down this steep 4WD track to "The New High Five" A 134m drop from a cable car. We got in the cable car to the pool, suspended above the New River and a huge valley. It's the highest in NZ and I can safely say it's the best of my experience.



We cried, smiled and laughed at Lisa's tales

Among the clothes, we found a notebook, with a picture of a shell on the front, that Lisa had taken with her to keep as a travel diary.

As Clive and I started reading, my eyes blurred with tears.

'It's like she's here with us,' I wept.

We even burst out laughing at one entry.

*Ate a Big Mac today, it was the dog's b*****s.*

Before we left the hostel, one of Lisa's friends appeared.

'Lisa would want you to have these,' she said, handing over two glasses.

They were strawberry vodka jellies Lisa had made. Those jellies were the first things we'd eaten in days. But knowing Lisa had made them, they were like a medicine to us.

Eventually, 10 days on, we were able to fly her body home.

'I'll never get over this,' I wept to Clive.

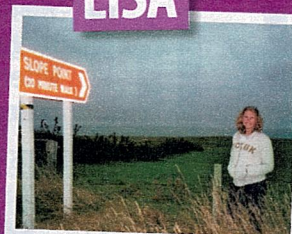
At first, I'd spend hours poring over Lisa's journal and photos, unable to stop crying.

But Clive kept me strong and together, we decided to honour Lisa's memory by starting The Lisa Wilson Scholarship

FOLLOWING IN OUR LISA'S FOOTSTEPS

LISA

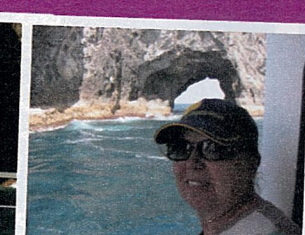
US



Lisa made it all the way to the most southerly point of the South Island. Eight years later, so did we!



Clive repeated history when he jumped from the same bungee platform as Lisa had in Queenstown.



We took a boat ride to the same place Lisa had visited in the Bay of Islands. It was beautiful, just like she'd said.



We couldn't quite muster the courage to do a skydive, but we visited Lake Taupo where Lisa had done hers.

NEXT WEEK

Mike Tomlinson, husband of fundraiser Jane: 'I thought she was superhuman'

Pick Me Up 29

TRISH
WILSON, 61,
Salisbury, Wiltshire

NOW

Lisa's travel
diary is so
precious to us

Fund, a charity that offers financial help to students enrolling at university in Southampton.

As the year passed, raising funds for the charity helped keep me going. As did the journal.

'We really should go to New Zealand one day,' we said whenever we read Lisa's words urging us to.

That push finally came in December 2008, when our house was burgled and Lisa's journal, among other things, was stolen.

Devastated, Clive and I made a desperate appeal in the press.

Thieves take memories of tragic daughter, read the headlines.

Incredibly, the thief had a conscience and returned the journal anonymously.

'Now we really must book that trip,' Clive and I agreed.

So, in March this year, we jetted off to New Zealand for six weeks.

But this wasn't any old break. Using Lisa's journal, we were going to follow her itinerary to the letter and go to every place she'd visited.

Clive even raised £2,500 worth of sponsorship to repeat her bungee jump.

We started by flying to Auckland, North Island.

The first place we went to was the backpackers' hostel where Lisa stayed.

We didn't stay there, mind. 'I'm too old to backpack,' I told Clive.

But it was lovely just standing outside and watching all the youngsters typing on laptops and drinking beer. Some were even sleeping outside.

It's great here, Lisa had written in her journal.

I imagined her sitting there, laughing with new friends, a beer in her hand.

It was bittersweet, knowing she'd have been so excited, but also knowing how little time she had left.

To capture Lisa's spirits, we hired a camper van to tour the islands. We sat in hot springs, just like Lisa had, and went to the sheep shearing farm that she'd visited.

The owner even remembered her. 'She took me out for a beer,' he grinned. 'Lovely girl.'

My heart soared for the first time since her death. In a weird way, this trip was bringing my daughter back to life.

A few weeks later, we went to Lake Taupo where Lisa

had done her spectacular parachute jump.

It was breathtaking.

Although neither of us fancied repeating her skydive, when we made it to Queenstown on the South Island, where Lisa had done her bungee jump, Clive was ready and raring to go.

I watched, mouth open, as he hurled himself off a platform that stood above a 440ft ravine.

As he plummeted, I heard him scream one word: 'Lisa!'

Before her death, mild-mannered Clive would never have dreamed of flinging himself off a gorge, but things were so different now.

After six glorious weeks seeing glaciers, mountains and beaches, I felt at peace.

'She was right,' I told Clive. 'I love this place.'

Now, the recollection of that holiday helps keep the memories of my beautiful daughter alive.

I hope by following in her footsteps, we've made her proud. And as for me? I feel closer to her than ever before. ●