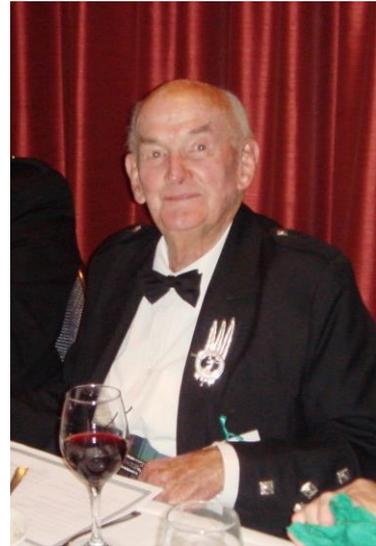


ALISTER GUTHRIE (JOCK) DAVIDSON 1924 - 2014

On behalf of Mary and Jock's family, thank you for interrupting your holidays to attend Jock's funeral. He was usually a lot more considerate than this but unfortunately he didn't have any say in the matter.

Alister Guthrie Davidson, or Jock as most people knew him, was born to proud parents Wendela and Bill Davidson on 27 May 1924. He died very unexpectedly on Boxing Day, 26 December 2014 after a great 90 years and 7 months, 61 of those years shared with the love of his life, Mary. Jock was a loving husband, father and grandfather and a great friend to many.



Reflecting on Jock's life there seemed to be 4 primary themes;

Dargaville

Family

Friendship and

Retirement

In 1921, Bill and Wendela Davidson responded to the call to "Go North" from their comfortable Hawkes Bay base to an isolated farm they purchased next to Bill's brother Jack Davidson at Pukehuia. Jock was born in 1924 followed by his sister Pam in 1926, who tragically died of meningitis in 1933. I think Jock was dissuaded from taking up farming due to witnessing the sheer hard work involved in breaking in land in the 1920s and 30s by his father but it did provide him with the opportunity to develop a special affinity with animals. Jock loved animals. Fluffles was Jock's first pony which he rode 5kms every day, rain hail or shine, to and from school from the age of 5. No-one could catch Fluffles except for Jock who would just whistle her up. Jock boarded at Whangarei Boys High for his secondary schooling exhibiting a love for and a prowess at a variety of sports which he maintained throughout his life. After his school years, Jock commenced an apprenticeship with the Air Force. Due to his age, Gran would only allow him to participate in active service provided he was not on

the “front line” and he served in the Solomon Islands servicing aircraft involved in the Pacific theatre of World War 2.

Dargaville, to which the family moved in 1939, was a major city with the Northern Wairoa river being the highway used to transport people and goods throughout the area. Jock would often reminisce about attending tennis parties throughout the area with pretty significant and novel means of attending these events. Jock told us he took great delight in hunting hawks on the Ruawai straights. This involved slowly approaching a hawk feasting on road kill before accelerating and seeing if he could hit the hawk as it rose to fly away. I think the hawks won most of these encounters! The Gouldings and Davidsons each owned property and shared holidays at Baylys Beach, where Jock developed close friendships particularly with John and Mary Goulding. Baylys Beach has been an important cornerstone of family holidays for 4 generations of the extended families of Davidsons, Gouldings and Biddles and provided a significant influence on all our lives.

In all the years we went to Gran’s bach at Baylys Beach, the beach appeared to hold little attraction for Jock. Jock would spend most of his time cutting the flax, clearing the drains, replacing the malthoid roof on the watertank and attempting to eradicate the frogs from invading the water supply. Once these tasks were completed Jock would tune, as best you could, the radio to the cricket, arm himself with his book, a beer and the fly swat. Through the afternoon Jock took much pride in the swelling numbers of flies he was able to bring down with his skilled fly swat action! That was about as much action as Jock would want to muster during the summer holidays. Lifelong skills taught us by Jock at the beach included all the above tasks plus bottle rolling with a flax stick, flax darts and launchers, playing knick knock and go home stay home. I doubt whether the political correctness of today would have approved of 30 kids aged between 5 and 14 pushing empty quart bottles of beer along the beach with flax sticks in a race, cheered on by their competitive parents, invariably resulting in broken bottles and, more importantly, damaged egos of the child and their father who would promise to help with more practice before next year’s sports day. Dargaville and Baylys Beach were close communities where Jock and the family retained friendships, even with minimal contact, through the years.

Following the war Jock boarded in Devonport, commencing work with engineering supply firm Kidd Garrett where he worked for the next 40 years. He quickly re-established contact

with and commenced a courtship with Mary, a trainee school teacher actively engaged in hockey, softball, tennis and golf. This seemed to be a match made in heaven and on 24 January 1953 Jock married Mary and moved into 21 Winscombe St where they lived for the next 52 years. 3 children, Kay, Grant and Jeffrey followed in a very orderly process in 1954, 1956 and 1958, although Jock, travelling throughout New Zealand for work, missed each birth until the last.

Growing up at Winscombe St, life followed a predictable pattern and a regular rhythm. The dining room table was where permissions or refusals were determined for social activities, new ideas were floated, political debates initiated and prospective partners reviewed, interviewed and approved, or otherwise. If you couldn't survive the dinner table you would not last. Family members or guests were all treated alike and were subject to the same "rules". Many of our friends would receive the same love, discipline and words of encouragement and advice that we received and I think that created special bonds of love and affection.

Monday to Friday was work and school and every evening Jock's requirement of a meat and 3 vege dinner was served at the table, with good manners a pre-requisite to remaining at the table. Trying to sneak a pre-taste of the meat before you were served invariably resulted in a rap across the knuckles with the flat blade of the carving knife expertly wielded by Jock with lightning reactions.

Poor manners would result in banishment, sometimes with and sometimes without, food. Mum would declare that if you wish to behave like a pig then off you go to the pigsty. Misbehaving in the pigsty, whilst providing humour to the other children, invariably resulted in the strap being expertly wielded by Jock. Whilst Mum tended to be the disciplinarian, Jock was less demonstrable but his gruff exterior and quiet disapproving manner with the raised eyebrows certainly got the message across if not with the same expressionism that Mum would have preferred. Jock's gruff exterior made it very difficult to ever get a picture of Jock smiling and, in spite of active endeavour by everyone over the years, we have very few photos which capture his real smile. Proof is evident in the photos in the Order of Service except for the wonderful cover photograph.

For many years Jock was able to provide a ride into the city for Brian Minogue for work and Geoff Topham, Grant and me so we could catch a bus out to St Kentigern College. He was very reliable on the way to town but not quite as reliable for the return journey following after school sports practices. Grant and I would often have to survive the unwelcome propositions from grubby old men who inhabited the old dilapidated Britomart bus terminal waiting while Jock returned to the city to pick us up, apologising profusely for his forgetfulness.

Saturdays and Sundays were reserved for household chores and sporting endeavours. Jock maintained an excellent vegetable garden delivering prodigious quantities of vegetables to the table and to friends, a hobby he pursued into his life at Northbridge. At Northbridge, several times, he had to retrieve Mary who, bending over to pick vegetables would suffer a dizzy spell and fall, remaining cast and unable to pick herself up until her plaintive cries for assistance were heard by Jock or other gardeners. I believe she shares this trait with her brother, Uncle John.

Grant has inherited Jock's love for gardening and in recent years the competitive streak of both would result in comparisons of tomato size, volumes of beans picked or some new variety resulting in massive or especially tasty crops.

Once the garden was weeded and dug over, the lawns mown and cars cleaned Jock and Mary would invariably play golf at North Shore Golf Club where they both maintained memberships until their late 70s and early 80s. They were both extremely good golfers maintaining single figure handicaps for many years. Jock and Mary both served time as Club Captain and they spent countless hours developing and maintaining new gardens in and around the course. Grant and I would invariably be in tow to be the caddies where we learnt to play the game and, more importantly for Jock, the etiquette of the game. At the end of the round, Mum and Dad would head to the clubhouse for socialising whilst Grant and I would head to the driving range and hit some balls, clean the clubs and deposit them in the pro shop. Jock was not impressed when one time his prized new golf clubs, brought back from overseas, were stolen as Grant had not quite put them into the supposedly secure storage area. It was fortunate for Grant that several other members lost their clubs in similar circumstances which mitigated his error and diminished Jock's dismay.

Golf brought Jock and Mary into contact with many of their best friends for exercise, sport and social activity resulting in the formation of "The Big Eight". Betty and Alan Topham, Lorna and David Perry and Reg and Mary Jones would join Jock and Mary for golfing holidays which necessitated a number of planning sessions, generally conducted over dinner, to formulate the range of competitions, the pairings, the dress ups and the prizes to be competed for. Prizes included; not having to cook dinner, not doing the dishes and, the most sought after prize, being able to lay claim to the double bed for the night! Jock was a highly sought after playing partner due to him being the best and most consistent golfer and also for him being a patient teacher/coach and the tips he was able to provide to his playing partner. These events covered a vast number of golf courses in New Zealand over the 24 years The Big Eight enjoyed these occasions and the friendships are maintained to this day.

Jock was an avid handman and DIY was something to look forward to. He assisted all of us when we purchased properties requiring painting and upgrading. Mary and Jock were great babysitters for children and pets and this enabled Kay and Rob, Grant and Brenda and Nicky and I to take time out without the children. The grandchildren looked forward to having Mary and Jock come to stay. Mum was the nurturer whilst Dad wanted to instil discipline and obedience. In spite of Jock's gruff exterior he was as soft as a marshmallow underneath and all the grandchildren had their own way of wheedling in and getting into the soft interior. For the girls it was easy but the boys found that a little irreverence, at the right time, could achieve the same result. The failure of the gruff exterior was epitomised one time when Jock and Mary were looking after Kim, Chris and Jonny. There was much hilarity around the dinner table and everyone was laughing. Jock decided that order needed to be restored and he instructed everyone to be quiet. Mary and Kim dutifully did so but Chris and Jonny continued on. Jock swiftly grabbed each of them by their long flowing hair and marched them off to their room declaring that they needed to do what they were told and perhaps 10 minutes reflecting on this would teach them a lesson. After 5 minutes Mary told Jock to bring the boys back in, which he did. After their return to the table Jock asked "So tell me what did you learn from that"? To which Chris replied "I learnt that I'm going to get a haircut before you next come to stay". This of course, brought Jock to his knees laughing and he was completely disarmed. As Jock spent less time at work Kay could usually be relied on to find Jock some gardening or odd jobs to keep him busy and allow him to spend time

with and pass on his thoughts to Kim, Chris and Jonny regarding their various sporting exploits. He took great pride in the achievements of his children and especially his grandchildren.

Jock continued working on a part time basis following his formal retirement which coincided with the determination, in 1997, that his cousin, Duncan Davidson was Clan Chief of the Davidson clan worldwide. Duncan held his title for 1 year until his death, resulting in Jock, being his nearest living relative taking up the title and the responsibilities that came with it. Following considerable work by Max Rawnsley and the encouragement of Clan Davidson Society in Australia, Clan Davidson Society in New Zealand was formed in 1998. Jock and Mary travelled to a variety of clan events in Australia, the USA and the United Kingdom and they have taken a keen interest in the clan both in New Zealand and worldwide. The involvement in Clan affairs provided a focus and interest for Jock in his later years and he was a very visible and popular attendee at many Highland Games, Scottish Clans Association events and he maintained Clan Davidson presence at many functions. Grant stands ready to take on this role and continue the work Jock took much pride in. Long live the new Chief!

Jock was not perfect by any stretch. For years he maintained he was smoke-free when we were all aware he sneaky smoked. He would volunteer to get the ice cream from the garden shed freezer, put the milk bottles out, check for mail or check the underfloor heating taking way longer than it should take and come back sucking on a mint and smelling of smoke. Mum let this ride as anything that reduced his smoking was good and ultimately he did become smoke free.

Jock and Mary shared an incredible life together. When Mum was hospitalised in 2012, necessitating their separation, Jock and Kay became constant companions for Mum, as much as can be achieved in the circumstances. The death of their beloved daughter Kay last year was a devastating blow which only served to bring Mum and Dad even closer.

The last month has been a wonderful and busy time for Jock and the family as we celebrated Mum's 88th birthday at the end of November with a wonderful family occasion at Kim and Ryan's, a visit by Jock to old friends Peter and Eileen Hosking in Whangarei, lunch with Ann and Graeme Cox and catching up with John and Jane Goulding just last Sunday, breakfast with Jonny on Tuesday, a Christmas morning call with Chris Biddles and Christmas

Eve and Christmas with my and Grant's family. We will all miss dropping in to see Jock and finding him in his usual spot by the window of his apartment watching the comings and goings at Northbridge with Sky Sport and the crossword his constant companions.

We cannot be sad, but rather celebrate the full life, the marvellous friends and the extended family Jock loved and was loved by. Bye Dad.