

Family Tributes to Trevor Flint on his 90th Birthday (28 Feb 2015)

From Judy Sargent:

For those who I have not met before, I am Judy Sargent (nee Flint), niece of Trevor. Our birthdays are 1 day apart and this weekend we will be sharing our 68th joint birthday. Uncle Trevor is my godfather and on my christening day he gave me a note quoting "may your future destiny be a happy and successful one"- this I feel is a reflection on how he views life for all. I would like to share some of my personal memories of life with Uncle Trevor.

On his return from overseas Trevor and my parents Gordon and Lorraine bought a General Store at Oxford in 1954. Let me draw you some little pictures of life in the shop---his bedroom was also the storeroom and office--His bed was screened off with gorgeous orange curtains. Planks under the bed, supported by wooden banana boxes full of docket books, invoices and ring binder files helped to make sleep more comfortable. His bedmates could have been anything from a box of nails, seasonal allocation of canned tropical fruit to a game of monopoly, or a pile of unsold magazines waiting to be returned. The uniform of the time was collar and tie, grey dustcoat, white starched apron (which Mum had to launder) and the mandatory pencil behind the ear just like the 4 square man.

The shop became a source of training for young locals, and employment if they met the TRD Flint standard. The better ones progressed to serving behind the counter. The work involved prepacking bulk dried foodstuffs, broken biscuits (sometimes with some chocolate treats to be found), soaking and preparing the stinky cheese rounds and weighing up stock foods. Many a story can be told of those days, I even had some boyfriends amongst them, one or maybe more did write articles in school magazines of their experiences in the shop.

Uncle Trevor was a hard task master on myself and my brother John when it came to monthly customer a/c preparation. Every customer had their own carbon papered docket book stored in alphabetical order under the counter in recycled wooden fruit boxes. At the end of the month the mammoth task began, all the family on deck— John and myself became very good at doing sums in our head, no calculators or computers then! Uncle Trevor built up a rapport with a lot of the local customers, many a joke and laugh and many had pet names too---like Myrtle or Murgatroyd! UT found it necessary to keep a keen eye out on the magazine stands for those who may overstay their reading time or feel like stuffing one up the jumper!

Even with the busy schedule the shop demanded UT still found time to follow his passion for TT and Tennis. Up and down that long straight boring Tram Road he travelled into ChCh on a regular basis, combining his sporting activities with buying trips to wholesale merchants. (and socialising too I guess!) He always showed an interest in my and Johns schooling and hobbies and made the time to coach us at Tennis at the local courts and TT at the Oxford Town Hall, and took John to higher levels in TT in Canterbury. Many of my cousins perhaps will remember family Sunday afternoon visits to the Oxford shop, weren't they fun!, lots of lolly jars, hide n seek in Uncle Trevors bedroom/storeroom and acrobatics down the wide hallway where customer orders were stacked. In 1965 the business was sold at what turned out to be the start of the supermarket era. The family moved back to ChCh to pursue new ventures and careers. The store survived under new ownership for some years but eventually became Jo Seagers Cafe and Cooking School.

And now to his life in ChCh, where he moved into our family home, sharing a bedroom with my brother, John. UT and dad became rental property owners, about seventeen I believe. They bought run down houses and renovated them from top to bottom, including the sections and gardens. Of course UT was a good labourer and rent collector. Many of the completed, newly painted green and white homes were rented by family members over the years, a good start in life. These properties were all sold after my father's death in 1979.

While UT was still living with my parents, sadly my brother John and his friend Kevin Ward, were drowned at Motanau Beach during a family holiday. This had a devastating effect on our family, we had lost a son, brother, nephew and friend. UT also coached him and Kevin at TT. Both had blossoming talents under his tutoring. On one occasion when UT was not in his bedroom my friend Pam decided to play a prank on him. His slippers were neatly positioned beside the bed, but she could not get her feet into them - a roll of bank notes occupied the toes- does he still use his slippers as his bank?, maybe not as one pair in later years were put in the oven to dry and a kitchen fire resulted!

Holidays and Cruises were an attraction for UT, He met his wife Joy (from Sydney) on one or more of these trips. They subsequently got married from my parents home in 1968 and moved into Francis Ave where they set up home and where UT still resides today. Life was full and many a happy event, personal and family were shared, with more holidays around Australia, NZ and beyond. Joy's daughter, Judy came to settle in ChCh where she gave birth to Tristan and Rebecca. Aunty Joy and UT cherished being grandparents and now UT is great grandfather to Charlie, Louis and baby Monet, how good is that for him?

UT was still heavily involved with TT playing and coaching, and travelled a lot to tournaments all over NZ. John and myself were taken on some of these trips. Joy enjoyed TT and joined him on many trips, including to China in 1974 and she was involved with Canterbury TT committee and cafeteria duties. There are so many awards and facets of

TRD Flint Mr, TT, that I hope he will inform us more of them as I can not begin to list them. The TTNZ Hall of Fame website is well worth a visit, to read more of those accolades.

UT and Aunt Joy bought a gift and book shop in Greenhaven, Burwood. This, they ran like clockwork, with the help of a few loyal staff, and they certainly had a great rapport with the local community. I remember stocktakes were a mission, every little matchbox car, school exercise book, novelty rubber, board game, vase, ornament and magazine methodically counted. Of course UT was already well experienced in buying and the variety was overwhelming for the size of the shop. I do recall each day his car would pull up, radio volume turned up. He would listen to the 12.20 p.m. stockmarket report before bringing in the buys of the day for pricing and get the paperwork sorted from out of that brown leather case that probably is still in existence. Then it was time to check on the till takings for the morning. This was a very successful business for UT and Aunt Joy. She retired from the shop and was able to spend more time with her grandchildren, before her death in 1991.

Golf was another of his passions, playing at Windsor course regularly. I understand 3 Holes-in-One are to his credit too. Unfortunately, only in recent years, with his knee problems he was forced to stop playing his beloved game of golf. Sport of any creed has always been a strong interest to UT, his TV is of good use and of course the daily newspaper is read from cover to cover to keep abreast of results, reports etc.

Coming from a large family, UT had many parties, picnics, weddings and birthdays to attend. He always enjoys joining in with the festivities, dancing and singing, also talking to all the nieces and nephews to find out about their schooling, activities, careers and having a joke or two with them. His sisters used to host a xmas party, lots of fun, food and present giving. Now that the next generation of nieces and nephews were on the scene, the Flint family was overflowing the home venues for functions, so the outings were held at local parks and halls.

UT was always generous with gift giving and even now comes armed with maybe, a banana, lollies, a tin of baked beans or neatly wrapped Ernest Adams goodies. He has been very loyal to his sisters, Joyce and Natley, whom he regularly visits in their resthomes. My mother was in care for 20 years and visited her regularly too, I do appreciate this support he gave.

He has also had many friends in care and finds time to visit them. UT is a people person, concern and interest for all, this surely is indicated today with so many people here today to celebrate with him his 90th birthday.

And now UT has Judy Donnelly, sister of Ron Duffield his long time TT friend, in his life. They have had a lot of fun together, travelled round NZ and Australia for holidays, movie and live show nights etc, great company for each other. In October 2012 UT and Judy travelled by bus to stay with us in Nelson. What an eventful trip over the Whangamoia Saddle, brake failure and how that lady driver got them to destination safely, a little late but OK. We enjoyed our time with them and I have not been let to forget the visit to Isele Historic House where a mannequin in a wardrobe shocked a piercing scream from me. UT has been included in the Donnelly family activities too, I must thank them and particularly Judy and her daughter Tina for all their help with UT, especially since we moved from Christchurch to Nelson.

Today I am a very proud niece to see my UT reaching 90, and for all he has achieved in his life.

My proudest moment was when he was awarded the NZ Order of Merit in 2001 and I was privileged to attend the ceremony at Government House in Wellington with Claude, Judy Donnelly and Ari, our son. It was a memorable day indeed!

May you have many more years of happiness and good health, UT you have conquered many hurdles and battles in you life, personally and healthwise, you have done yourself proud indeed. Enjoy this celebration today with your many friends and family.

From Claude Sargent:

Hello, my name is Claude, and I have been involved with the Flint family since I met and married Judith, Trevor's niece, nigh on 50 years ago.

I have been asked to welcome you here today, so....
Welcome.....Welcome.....Haere mai.....

Thank you for making the effort to be here today to acknowledge Trevor Flint's 90th birthday, and to celebrate it with him.

Special thanks go out to those who have contributed to making this day run smoothly, and to those who have travelled some distance to join us.

....Later, after a bit of speechmaking, I will propose a toast to Trevor.
Then we can all sing "For he's a jolly good fellow", with meaning,
because that's exactly what he is.

What is today all about?

It's about a milestone in the life of T R D Flint NZOM.

Trevor Richard Duncan Flint, member of the Order Of New Zealand for services to Table Tennis.

So today is not just a birthday do, it's a celebrity birthday do.

Sometimes when the honours lists are published, heavily populated with politicians, soldiers and police,
some people shake their heads and think "How come?"

This is their day job, and they are well paid for doing it."

There is no such confusion with Trevor.

He is a caring, unselfish and humble person who has given untold, unpaid years of service to the sport he loves,
and to the people he believes he can help to enjoy the sport to the best of their ability.

Trevor, your honour was well deserved.

How did I first meet Trevor? Following the sale of the Oxford shop, the whole family moved into a home in
Mairehau, with Trevor as a boarder. At this stage I was also spending time at the house courting Judy. It was quite
a social hub, where I came to meet the Flint relatives, and also Lorraine's Ahlfeld family. Some of the other family
functions happened at the original Flint home in Springfield Rd where Trevor and his 10 siblings were raised. I was
stunned that such a large family got by in such a tiny home. Of 11 children, only his 2 younger sisters and Trevor
have survived, with him being the last male of this Flint bloodline.

After several years of long hours and hard work in the shop, Trevor had earned some R&R, and decided on ship
cruises as an appropriate outlet.

On one such cruise, Trevor met up with Joy, her twin sister Jean and their friend May.

Further meetings ensued, and Trevor persuaded Joy to cross the Tasman to transform him from bachelor to an
extremely happily married man.

Good choice Trevor, of such a fun companion,

and such a loss to you and the rest of us on her passing.

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In 1993 Trevor was diagnosed with a heart condition serious enough to warrant multiple bypass surgery, arranged
to happen at Mercy Hospital in Auckland. Judy and I took the opportunity to be in Auckland with Trevor for his
operation, which was a great success. Trevor spent a few weeks convalescing with us before returning home. He is
now 22 years into an operation with a 15 year expectancy. Good stuff Trevor!

You have chosen to stay on in your matrimonial home, and the pride you always showered on your home
continues. Keeping your property well maintained is a credit to you.

Who knew of the terms "liquifaction" and "Flockton Basin" before 2010?

Both these terms will now be forever engraved in your mind, as will the effect the quakes had on your property and
your health. Kia kaha Trevor.

There is a certain sense of deju vu about today.

20 years ago we hosted a joint celebration for your 70th and our daughter Melanie's 21st birthday.

10 years ago we hosted your 80th birthday, which turned out to be an opportunity for the family to meet Judy
Donnelly.

Today we are pleased to be hosting an extended celebration to allow family and friends from earlier times, and the
Donnelly family to share in this day.

It really is an achievement for a ninety year old, who lived through the great depression, still lives in his own home,
still drives, still has a great sense of humour and still has a full bag of marbles. We are all so happy and proud to be
with you today. We hope you can feel the love.