

Recorded 28.03.24

Interviewer: Jo Wilson

Abstractor: Jo Wilson

File 01

Introduction and recording agreement.

- 1.30 Born in DUNEDIN, 06.01.1952, DUNEDIN PUBLIC HOSPITAL.
- 2.00 Lived there until 1956, VERNON, (father) transferred to ALEXANDRA, as POLICEMAN with local community involvement. Here for 8-10 years.
- 2.43 VERNON established the new ALEXANDRA ROWING CLUB. (Now DUNSTAN ARM ROWING CLUB.) On Clutha River, used a QUANSET HUT for a shed, located ¼ mile up-stream of the bridge.
- 3.30 Instigated new club rooms on LAKE DUNSTAN (Weatherall Creek).
- 3.55 Died before completion, but taken over by DICK MCARTHUR, but named the VERNON GRUBB club rooms.
- 4.30 Had flat water by Alexandra from 1956 with filling of LAKE ROXBURGH. With the silting up of the lake, there is now a significant flow in the river at Alexandra.
- 5.45 There until 1994. CLYDE DAM finished in 1990, and moved to DUNSTAN ARM.
- 6.00 VERNON FOUNDING MEMBER and LIFE MEMBER of local LIONS CLUB.
- 6.08 Started in the first BLOSSOM FESTIVAL, creating some amazing floats.
- 6.15 Retired from Police force and after a few years was MANAGER of the HOTEL ALEXANDRA. Owned by HUGH SPEIGHT, 5-star hotel, burnt down in 1972. (Location of what is now THE FINERY, Tarbert St). Describes notable functions/events/Guests.
- 8.50 Relates story of his mother and a visiting QUEEN.
- 10.00 Has HOTEL GUEST BOOK, and hotel MEMORABILIA to pass onto Museum....
- 10.41 Describes early BLOSSOM FESTIVAL float of a huge swan. Pushed by six men underneath etc. Princess was his sister ELAINE.
- 12.10 Describes another float of the ALEXANDRA BRIDGE. Flowers looked like roses.
- 13.24 Describes 1 year attending OTAGO BOYS HIGH SCHOOL, as parents were managing the EUROPEAN HOTEL in DUNEDIN.
- 14.15 Parents considered move to TWIZEL – for the new rowing course.
- 15.05 Describes his brother, SPENCER GRUBB, killed while truck driving, aged 24 years, in 1967.
- 16.00 Describes his ROWING LIFE. A NATIONAL TITLE in the pairs in Whanganui/WANGANUI in 1972. With JEFF STEEL.
- 17.10 Completed apprenticeship as AUTO ELECTRICIAN. Worked for local business for 12 years.
- 17.20 Then describes contract cartage business for six years, for LANE THOMPSON, soft drink manufacturer. Bought out by COCA COLA.
- 19.15 MARRIED in 1975 to BARBARA ROSE MACKENZIE. Two DAUGHTERS, CAMILLE, 1976, and MAREE 1979. Describes netball trips and achievements, including SILVER FERNS for MAREE.
- 22.38 Nev played RUGBY to OTAGO B level, for the local ALEXANDRA CLUB. Was captain of winning team for the WHITEHORSE CUP in 1976-77, retired 1980 due to medical condition. Described.
- 24.30 Was REFEREE for six years after that, including inter-ref games between Southland and Otago. Describes.
- 24.50 In HARRIERS for four years after refereeing and met future business partner RITCHIE BAILLIE. (He was training for the XEROX CHALLENGE).
- 25.15 Worked as a driller on the Clyde Dam for six months. Then BAILIFF for four months. Then bought mower and chainsaw sharpening business. Describes. Honda/Subaru dealership partnership didn't last more than a year.

- 28.25 In late 1980s, was keen to buy into a BIKE SHOP. Then bought the sharpening business's building in SHANNON ST. RITCHIE had six bikes to rent, explains his change of location. Was given work in Nev's workshop.
- 32.45 Keen to purchase bikes from manufacturers. Describes.
- 33.35 Went to TIMARU to see CYCLE MAKERS to get bikes to resell from BRIAN JACKSON.
- 34.25 Ritchie did the cycle assembly and servicing. Plus, KAYAK equipment as he was a WHITEWATER KAYAKER, and INSTRUCTOR.
- 35.45 Kayak display on new mezzanine floor. Started stocking gear now. (Beginning of Multisport with the COAST-TO-COAST EVENT starting in 1983). Mentions various suppliers.
- 36.15 Location in SHANNON ST, now occupied by MITRE 10.
- 37.00 Both travelled regularly to local MULTISPORT events. (Not involved with rowing since in the shop). Learned to KAYAK reasonably well.
- 39.38 MOUNTAINS TO SEA race – describes. Two years team event, then was cancelled. Selecting correct kayak! Completed C TO C in 1996 and '97.
- 41.30 1997 describes initial planning for their GOLDRUSH MULTISPORT event.
- 42.40 Describes their foray into MOUNTAIN BIKE EVENTS.
- 44.20 Mentions PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN FRIDD up on top of the OLD MAN RANGE. Advice from JOHN BREEN and others regarding safety.
- 45.50 Ran KAYAK RACE to Roxburgh Dam and got feedback for 3-day event.
- 47.00 Started up the GOLDRUSH event from mid-1996.
- 48.20 175 competitors, in 1997, for first event.
- 48.50 Promotional trip to market the race, to the main centres in NZ. 12 presentations in 14 days. Describes.
- 51.15 6-7 years reached limit of 500 competitors (including teams). Describes on-line registrations.
- 54.00 Didn't ever get a major sponsor but had lots of smaller supporters and cost-price purchases. Ran GOLDRUSH for 15 years, with huge number of local supporters. Describes at length.
- 56.50 Three functions per year for the volunteers; very loyal and capable and local community support. Describes.
- 59.00 Nicknames to both NEVILLE and RITCHIE. DAVE BEADLE from SGHS school teams. Now too hard to run it again.
- 61.45 Managed to compete once TIM PEARSON took it over. Discusses the event.
- 63.30 RAIL TRAIL opened up around 2000 and took over from MULTISPORT.
- 65.20 Mentions notable competitors now living locally.
- 66.20 Organised THE OBELISK 3-Day EVENT. Describes. And planned another event, which didn't get going due to lack of permissions.

End of File 01

File 02

- 00.0 In February 2000 the Otago Central Rail Trail opened fully. First in the country, and an unknown entity. In 1998-99, they saw an opportunity for bike hire business, under the shop name KAYAK AND OUTDOOR. More for tramping-type clients.
- 2.35 First to provide a full service – bikes, accommodation and transport. Describes.
- 4.23 Got more involved and changed focus. Sold mower and bike shop and operated from a container to service bikes and RAIL TRAIL.
- 5.35 Took over goods shed at the CLYDE RAIL HEAD. Explains. Dept of Conservation and CODC.
- 7.07 Finally got permission to take over the shed in 2000. Worked to turn it into their purpose. Contained DoC-owned patterns for dredge wheels etc. Evicted the birds. Spent \$250K updating it. Up to 500 hire bikes over five years.
- 9.35 Tourism was not catered for, local pubs were run down and/or closing. Explains.
- 10.55 Learned how the tourism industry worked. Accommodation gradually improved. E.G. WEDDERBURN COTTAGES AND HYDE businesses.

- 13.25 Govt 'think tank' came up with the attraction of CYCLE TRAILS, and now seen throughout the country. Thrived during COVID-related restrictions.
- 14.55 TRAIL JOURNEYS, (2004), and Ritchie pulled out of the partnership around then.
- 16.10 Brought in partners in the business – describes the sharing of the business.
- 17.40 Started similar business in Nelson in partnership with another local. Based in MAPUA. Didn't enjoy it and sold his share. Sold his share of TRAIL JOURNEYS to an Australian company, WORLD EXPEDITIONS. Made contact with them, and they bought it over two years. (Owned by NICK COSTAS), Melbourne. Explains extent of the company.
- 21.40 All their other companies got 'trashed' during COVID, but TRAIL JOURNEYS did really well. It is still going well, and a nice legacy to see flourishing.
- 23.10 Increase in E-bikes in use. Discusses.
- 24.30 TRAIL JOURNEYS was in it for 15 years. Still wanted some input while SHANE, (son-in-law), ran it.
- 26.00 Shareholders in TIMBER TRAIL LODGE. Describes.
- 28.35 End of Interview.