



VALE
Keith Millard Bishop

28th February 1918 - 19th March 2017

In keeping with the glorious weather that the Island has experienced, it was a magnificent afternoon on Tuesday, 21st March, for relatives and friends to say farewell to the late Keith Millard Bishop who had slipped peacefully from this life, with dignity – and at his home on Sunday, 19th March 2017.

The Service was conducted by the Rev. David Fell and after his words of welcome and comfort the Hymn “Let the Lower Lights” was sung.

There then followed the following Eulogies, the first delivered by Keith’s nephew, Lindsey Bishop who came up from New Zealand for the funeral service. He was accompanied by his wife Kate.

“As a 17-year-old boy, and probably a little wet behind the ears, I first met my uncle Keith in June 1967. After travelling for 4 weeks from England we arrived on a strange and exotic sounding pacific island paradise called Norfolk Island.

My father had always spoken of his elder brother Keith in a slightly hushed and awe inspiring manner. As those of you who know Keith well, he was anything but hushed, but certainly was awe inspiring. Certainly, to the callow youth I was.

Keith immediately took me under his wing, having me assist on various jobs around his property, sorting me out with work at was then Burns Philp and generally looking after the more practical aspects of my education.

Keith was at once competent, caring and resourceful and as I grew to know him better a great raconteur. I am certainly sure that there is not one of us here that have not been regaled by him with one of his many mostly true tales of his exploits.

Keith had a unique talent to entertain, but was also a great listener and rarely thought bad of anybody. He assembled around himself a diverse and an eclectic range of people, and was as comfortable with them as they were with him.

Trish reminded us yesterday of one his stories that so typified Keith.

Keith and his elder brother Theo sat down to share an apple that was cut into unequal halves.

His brother immediately took the larger half.

(continued overleaf)

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Keith Millard Bishop - continued

Keith immediately retorted "if I had chosen first I would have taken smaller half".

To which his brother replied, "that's alright then, because you got the smaller half".

If you could see the joy on his face as he recalled this memory, then you will understand.

He had a special quality that I think is possessed by few. He was truly happy with Jean, but never regretted the short time that he spent with her.

I asked him once why he never married earlier as he enjoyed children very much and I am sure he would have made a wonderful husband and father. His reply to me was that all his life, when he went to bed each night he couldn't wait to wake up in the morning, because he was so excited about the thing he had to do next.

He was like a second father to me, and in forward to the weeks he would spend with us in NZ, listening to his tales, him peeling endless apples with Kate, sitting peacefully in the sunshine, watching Rugby on TV.

Never a dull moment.

It seems terrible to be standing here talking about him in the past tense, because his presence in life was unforgettable and he will live on and shine brightly for many years to come.

If we need to remind ourselves of how bright and colourful Keith was you only have to look at the picture on the front of the order of service. The warmth of the jersey is only matched by the warmth in his face. Only a person as warm and as colourful as Keith could do justice to that wonderful jersey.

Keith, you will be sorely missed by many but your energy and love will live on in our hearts".

The second Eulogy was then given by Trish Magri, who described herself as "Keith's amanuensis - a literary or artistic assistant a scribe, someone who takes notes from dictation, a keeper of records".

"Thank you so much for being here, to celebrate the life of Keith Millard Bishop – the amazing Keith who, just three weeks ago so thoroughly enjoyed his ninety-ninth birthday. The week of his birthday was made even more special because his nephew, Chips, travelled from the UK for the birthday and, together, they set in train the plan for his family to be here for Keith's even bigger birthday next year.

Keith came into my life when he married my Mum, Jean. They'd been friends for 20 years before they married - both of them strong, independent and charismatic – and even though their married life was short, my family and I were gifted with Keith as a treasured part of our lives.

So, how can I encapsulate a remarkable life, so well lived and still be true to Keith - who would never want me to keep you standing for too long? I'm going to try very hard.

Keith called me his Amanuensis. An amanuensis is a literary or artistic assistant, a scribe, someone who takes notes from dictation, a keeper of records.

Together, Keith and I gathered many of his recollection, created albums and collated photographs with appropriate captions and filmed many of his stories. After one of Keith's many magnificently dramatic medical crises, when Keith could not read or write, but his mind was so sharp that he could rehearse what he wanted to say, his friend

John Anderson recorded hours of his stories digitally and they've been shared, far and wide. They are priceless treasures. From our conversations and John's recordings, some of the things I learned about Keith's remarkable life are:-

He was born in Bombay, India, on February 28, 1918;

He was the second son of Arthur Bishop and Matilda (nee Millard)

His brothers were Theophilus (known as Tim) and Edward (known as Mick)

He attended boarding schools in England. Keith studied at Oxford University, where he also decided that an academic life was not for him.

Keith enjoyed sketching. His love of animals was very evident, with beautiful illustrations he made of his pet bulldog, Dinah.

His father was a successful business man working with the loading and unloading of ships in Bombay.

His mother's Millard family were engineers involved in the construction of railways in India.

Before he was 20, Keith set sail from India to travel to New Zealand via Australia with only 100 pounds in his pocket (which his father insisted he take).

Some of the first people Keith met in New Zealand were Mr and Mrs McNeil – a Scots couple who unofficially "adopted" Keith. Mr McNeil was a paint manufacturer who taught Keith many practical skills including the use of diesel to clean and care for paint brushes. Mrs McNeil – Agatha - rode motorbikes. She was a woman ahead of her time – and after her husband's death, she and Keith shared many adventures.

Mr McNeill introduced Keith to Herbert Hinds and it was on his farm that Keith worked and learned about farming. His work on the farm commenced in 1938 and continued after the War. Herbert and his wife had two small sons, Arthur and Phillip, who are both now, grandfathers. Keith has kept in touch and visited them often.

This is what Artthur wrote this week: "I have very early memories of Keith from about 5 years old - I'm 70 now - and it was always special to us when he came to visit as he told us wonderful stories at night, in some cases he made them up as he went but there was always a basis of fact in them and he kept us spellbound. Various building projects were always attended to when he was here as he was an amazing worker with an immense range of skills. What really stood out even in those early days, well before it was fashionable to eat healthy food, was the way Keith insisted on things like porridge, salads and fruit and all in moderation.

In more recent times, again we always thoroughly enjoyed his visits, me, because I found it a wonderful link to the memories of my parents and Diane, because she adored Keith because of him being the person he was. He also endeared himself to us because of his interest in our farm and our family. He first worked on this farm in 1938 and was able to relate to us some of the interesting things that occurred here in those early days. I can still hear his voice saying "by Jove Arthur, those were amazing times!"

Keith served in the New Zealand Army then transferred to the Air Force and served in Guadalcanal.

After the War, he returned to the Hinds' farm then worked with a Surveyor in Auckland.

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Keith Millard Bishop - continued

He and his Surveyor friend purchased land, subdivided and developed roads for house blocks to meet the needs of post-War New Zealand.

In the early 1960s Keith came to Norfolk Island to work and decided to stay. Mrs McNeill came too.

He purchased his first Norfolk property, Torrie Glen, where he established low-cost accommodation for local and visitor rental – and he began his building and renovations business. His constant companion was his dog, Arrow.

In the late 1960s Keith began renovations on the kitchen at Aunt Ems – and, in the evenings, washed dishes in exchange for his evening meal. Perhaps that's when he fell in love with my Mother's beautiful cooking.

He established The Tree Farm in Peter's Highway, planting over 1000 palm trees in a park-like setting that he fully irrigated.

Keith's love of words and reading and his ability to recite poems and passages of text, was phenomenal. He was fascinated with science, in awe of technology and simply loved the power of the Internet.

Keith's energy was boundless, his enthusiasm for life and for the work he did was inspirational, he cherished friendships – and his love of people and dinner parties and telling stories is well known – as was his love of Norfolk Island and its people.

Keith cherished the fact that he could remain at home, living his life at the pace he wanted to live it, doing the things he wanted to do – how and when he wanted to. We thanks his Carer, Judith, for make that possible, especially over the past months when Mike and I have been away so much.

He loved the nurses at the Norfolk Island hospital who patched him and repaired him and tended to his unbelievable succession of wounds and injuries with such kindness and a bit of "cheek".

Keith had great respect and appreciation for Dr. Zerby, his care and understanding.

Keith had a very high threshold for pain. A couple of days ago, a friend from away, who is also a nurse, wrote: 'Spent a long time going over the wonderful times spent in Keith's company. In Sydney when Keith visited Pam, and when he had some legal business to attend, also when he came to have his knee replacements, and we went up the coast to Kempsey to visit. I have never seen a stronger man. He had both knees done at the same time and was not complaining one iota, amazing. I KNOW how painful that operation is. Then there was the time I was over visiting, when he was stung by all those bees! My God, it would have killed a lesser man, and all Keith said was "It doesn't hurt too much if I don't move". I nearly died when I saw his legs. He refused to let us take him to the hospital".

Regrets? Keith told me, on a number of occasions, that his one regret in life was that he did not have children of his own. He did, however, have a wonderful rapport with young people and loved his nieces and nephews and their families as his own.

Dramas? hmmm .. there have been a few: Bee attacks. Falls – lots of falls – some from very high trees! Bleeds in his head, which meant that he could not read, write, walk or speak. Mike took him to New Zealand for specialist attention that was given quickly, the doctors amazed that he survived the flight! Emergency resulted in the venue for surgery changing and whilst Mike and Lindsey drove

almost the length of New Zealand to be with Keith. Keith was being transported in comfort by helicopter. He emerged from surgery with firm handshakes for Mike and Lindsey, a strong voice – and very shortly after that, demonstrated that he could write his name with a strong hand.

Then, there was the time, not so long ago, when he speared his face on a stake. Shanelle Buffett spotted him lying in the grass, bleeding profusely. Without Shanelle, we might not have found him in the long grass.

And the time his early morning return flight from New Zealand was delayed and we lost Keith at Auckland Airport!!! We knew he never carried cash and did not own a credit card. It was only after search parties were initiated by Lindsey and CCTV footage was scrutinised, that Keith was located that evening, in the Airport Novotel – absolutely famished!

Optimism? Last Friday, Keith asked me to take his passport and find out what I needed to do to renew it, because "it expires in July".

On Sunday, Keith slipped peacefully from this life, with dignity – and at home! He could not have wished for better. He has left our lives richer for knowing and loving him.

They say that we live until the last person speaks our name. Just maybe - with the documentation and recording of so many aspects of Keith's life and the sharing with family and friends around the world – the name Keith Millard Bishop will be on someone's lips forever.

God bless, dear Keith".

After the Eulogies, the service continued with Prayers and during the singing of the Hymn "In the Garden" floral tributes were placed on the Coffin, the Lord's Prayer, the Committal and the singing of "Come Ye Blessed" led by Shane McCoy.

Thank You

The family of the late Keith Millard Bishop wish to thank:

- Rev David Fell for his compassion and love and for delivering Keith's Service
- Dr Zerby, Dr Carl and all the amazing, wonderful nurses at the Norfolk Island Hospital
- Bob, Bekki and Dale from St John's Ambulance
- Ladies at "The Usual Place" for the beautiful wreaths
- The guys at the Works Depot for making the coffin
- The Grave Diggers and Shane for his support in preparing the site of Keith's grave
- Jodie for the Order of Service and her artistry
- Tardy for driving the Hearse
- Simone for the music
- Chris and the Norfolk Island Lions Club for the sound system
- Arki and Ivy for distributing the Order of Service
- Greenways Press for all that they do for this Community
- Radio Norfolk for their broadcasts
- Louise at Advance Hire Cars for Lindsey and Kate's car

For the compassion and kindnesses that have been showered upon us, for the gifts of food, beautiful flowers, cards and the sharing of Keith's final farewell, we thank everyone, sincerely. Norfolk Island truly is a very special community.

With love – Trish, Lindsey and families