

VALE

The untimely (to us), sudden and tragic death of one of our very popular residents left us bewildered last weekend.

Pat Patterson (John Douglas) was merrily clearing land up in Selwyn Pine Road on Sunday. It was flat land. His son-in-law Andy took a photo of Pat on his tractor (of which he was very proud), turned away to put the camera back in his car and in that time the tractor overturned and Pat was no longer with us - as quickly as that, we hear.

It was a dreadful shock not only to his immediate family, but to the whole community. We are still asking "why did it have to happen to such a good, God-fearing fellow as Pat Patterson?"

Pat was born on October 8th, 1924 at Wellington, New Zealand. On leaving school he was apprenticed to the building trade, qualifying as a carpenter.

He enlisted in the Royal New Zealand Air Force during World War II and was sent to Norfolk in 1945, serving in the Works Maintenance Unit. After discharge in New Zealand he returned to Norfolk, working as a carpenter, building houses and renovating others. All who knew him in those days will remember Pat and his old truck, a Willys which, when the fan belt wore out, sported a leather shoe lace - and certainly I never saw it with its bonnet on! He travelled merrily along the then dirt roads of Norfolk, the radiator quite often steaming, always giving a cheery smile and a friendly handwave.

In June 1952 he married Emily Vina Quintal. Vina pre-deceased Pat in December 1979. They had three children - Maureen, Marilyn and Allan (who was in England at the time of his father's death but who was able to fly back in time for the funeral last Tuesday).

Although a carpenter, Pat loved the land and he and Vina did a lot of farming - growing beans, maize and other crops over the years. When the Whaling Station became operative again, he worked for the Station for a number of seasons.

Interested in community affairs, he served 3 years on the Advisory Council from 1957 to 1960. In December of 1960 he was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist faith and became a very active member giving many hours of voluntary labour in the construction of the present very beautiful Church and the big hall adjoining. Only the week before his death he had given 5 days helping to re-roof the church school building behind the church.

Pat never forgot any little service rendered to him - and I am only one of many, who treasure a little memento, given so gratefully in thanks.

As Ralph Weslake said in the Church Service "Pat was a good man. If debates and discussions went against him he would accept the verdict, co-operate and do his share".

Perhaps no better commendation of the man is the particular verse which Pastor Neil Smith said was heavily underscored in Pat's Bible: from Ecclesiastes, Chapter 9, verse 10: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest".

Pat is survived by his three children, Maureen (and her husband Andy); Marilyn (and her husband Mark) and only son Allan - three grandchildren, Justin, Michella and Rebecca, three sisters - Margaret, Patricia and Isobel and two brothers - Ross and Jim.

To you all - to other members of the families and his many, many, friends, our deepest sympathies in this sudden taking away of a very much loved man.

THANK YOU.

The family and relations of the late Pat Patterson would like to convey sincere thanks to everyone for the concern and the kindnesses shown to them all. A special Thank you to those who were so quickly on the spot after the accident - not forgetting the very much appreciated efforts of Lisle Snell in organising the quick return of Allan from overseas.

....Just a little added note of sadness for the family was the fact that on the way to the funeral, one of Norfolk's time-honoured customs was broken - a vehicle coming from the Administration offices in the opposite direction to the funeral cortege, failed to stop while the hearse passed.

We would like to remind those people who have recently come to the island, to please make enquiry as to some of the customs always observed on the island. Respect to the dead and to the bereaved is a very important part of Norfolk's lifestyle - even Government House flies the flag at half-mast on these occasions. A death in the community is a bereavement for all the people of the island.

