



Vale  
**Douglas Ross Clark**

**4th November 1959 - 24th December 2014**

The funeral for the late Douglas Ross Clark Clark was held at the Kingston Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon, 31st December. It being the eve of New Year it was a very sad occasion for Doug's sister Lorraine and her partner Dennis, the members of his family and his many friends who had gathered at the Cemetery.

The service was conducted by Tim Sheridan who said that he had been honoured to have been asked to conduct the service. He then read an anonymous reading entitled "Not how did he die, but how did he live" which finished with the lines "To bring back a smile, to banish a tear? Not what did the sketch in the newspaper say, But how many were sorry when the passed away?"

The following Eulogy for Doug was delivered by his friend Steve (Glover) Mathews:- "Douglas Ross Clark - I always referred to him as Doug when talking about him but I called him Douglas in person- because when I asked him - he told me that was what he preferred.

Doug was Born in Temora Hospital on 4th November 1959.

Doug was the youngest child of the late Joyce and Laurie Clark from Ariaiah Park. brother to Robert (now deceased), Graham, and baby brother to Lorraine. We draw some comfort that his sister Lorraine and her partner Dennis are with us today.

Doug was a loving father to Keelan, Lleyton and Millie, a loved uncle of Gratton, Elloise, Siobhan, Aaron, Brett and Kristie. A giving Godfather to Ali and Becky a surrogate uncle for Mitch, Kobi and Holly.

Doug was raised in Ariaiah Park which is a small town west of Temora in the Riverina - good solid sheep and wheat country. Apparently he was never a problem and got on with everyone who knew him. Although Lorraine remembers being heartbroken when Doug got sent to the Deputy principal for the cane.

Doug's upbringing was reflected in him in a number of ways, he was a handy practical bloke, on first meeting he was quietly spoken, he was careful with his money and if you invited him for roast dinner, lamb was not his favourite.

In 1977 Doug lost his eldest brother Robert in an accident - only 6 weeks later - Doug's good friend

*(continued overleaf)*

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### ***Douglas Ross Clark - continued***

was killed in a car accident. After that Doug found it difficult to stay in the small country town and left to work for the Commonwealth Bank in Canberra.

Doug was transferred to Norfolk in March 1981. He joined Slack, Maxine, Carol, Karen, Gizelle, Gary, Jan, myself and others at work in the Commonwealth Bank.

It was immediately clear Doug wasn't the boofhead, rugby playing banky that was living at Burglar's Lane bank house at the time. He was a country boy - he had travelled around in a Kombi - maybe had some hippy friends. To be polite, he was lean and outwardly gentle. Doug and I gravitated to each other because we were the babies at Burglars at the time.

On Doug's second night on Norfolk, he and I moved out of Burglars Lane and in with Max - in Bet's house out Steele's Point - purely as a house mates. And so it was that three young people from very different backgrounds ended up around Bet's kitchen table solving the problems of the world - discussing - dreaming - and laughing.

Many of you will know that Doug enjoyed a bourbon - that wasn't always the case. Back then each pay-day we would visit the bond - Doug drank scotch, Max drank Bourbon and I drank Southern comfort. Mostly I finished my bottle first, then helped Max finish her bourbon - eventually just before pay-day Max and I would help Doug finish his scotch. One of our earliest household decisions was that we should all drink Bourbon to save the swapping - as you know Doug still drank bourbon.

Another household decision was that there had to be a cooking schedule which mostly worked out until the night Doug dished us up a kikuyu salad. Max always wound Doug up that his salad ruined her intestine with possible internal bleeding.

While living out there Doug started a vegie garden, he and Max did up furniture, and he also built a timber rail fence from the remains of a discarded one at Burglar's Lane. We learnt quickly that Doug was intelligent, thoughtful and most of all loved a good discussion. He loved drilling down on subjects, weighing up thoughts and analysing all sort of things. Doug and I shared a wicked sense of humour and similar working class political ideals. Max learnt that Doug was practical, enjoyed projects and doing stuff - just like her - just how well he fitted into the Norfolk lifestyle.

I guess the most telling insight on the difference between Doug and I back then came when Max and I started to court - Max's Dad - Syd had advice for her "I thought you might be se pick the wrong one Max"

Parties at Bet's were legendary- Max spinning records - dancing and laughter - many, many happy memories.

After Max and I moved out from Bet's house, Doug brought his girlfriend Kerry from Australia to live with him. They grew vegies and tended toward a hippy laid back life. Later Brian Busted came to work in the Bank and moved in with Doug out Steele's Point.

Doug brought a property on Poverty Row and began building a house there -which he and Busty later moved

into. Doug was immediately at home in the working class community of Poverty Row. It's fair to say that Doug and Busty continued with some partying. Busty rang me from Lord Howe Island this week - reminding me of how important Doug and those years were to him.

Kerry Nick started in the bank with Doug and Busty. Nick and Doug grew close enjoying life and bourbon. They later travelled to Hawaii and America together. Doug would rub up that as Nick was not yet 21, their social activities in the States couldn't include going out for a drink. Still they had a great trip and were great mates.

In the mid 80's Doug left the bank and approached Jack Huckstep for a job as a painter. Doug quickly turned his hand to the trade. They began calling each other Jackie boy and Dougie Boy. A strong friendship grew and Doug became a close part of the Huckstep family on Poverty Row.

After several years learning from Jack, Doug announced he was going out on his own . This never tested their friendship, but Dougie Boy and Jackie Boy soon went back to Doug and Jack. Marg and John Huckstep have told me this week how much they valued Doug and were devastated by his passing.

In the early 90's - nearly 10 years after their first romance - Doug rekindled his relationship with Pip and they were married. We remember Pip came up with a sketch for a pool - unfortunately it was right where Doug had just poured his new concrete drive. Pip did get her pool - a wading pool out the back of the kitchen - we called it Pips puddle - Doug ensured that it was well engineered with surrounding deck. Doug was like that - he would do anything for the missus - a pool - a horse paddock anything - but the driveway was worth more money than the pool.

Doug formed a special bond with Pip's dad - Bruce Griffiths. Doug saw in Bruce a man like himself - a man with ideas who loved projects - a man who loved a discussion - loved analysing and experimenting. It was this relationship which saw their first nursery established up on Bruce and Aileen's property. Doug and Bruce talked ideas and methods - shade cloth installs - seed bed construction - soil mix - temperatures - it was all under constant experimentation - evolution, evaluation and most of all discussion.

*(continued overleaf)*

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**Douglas Ross Clark - continued**

The nursery on Poverty Row today - is an international producer of world class palm and pine seedlings and more recently first class strawberries for the local market. Doug eventually sold his nursery to his partner Rob from Holland. Rob's family had a long association with Norfolk and strong interest in palms and pines. The sale saw Doug continue on as Manager, but also gave the nursery the opportunity to grow. Through their 20 year partnership, Rob and Doug became close friends, Rob has passed on his sorrows for Doug, his family and friends. He has expressed his commitment to continue Doug's legacy. The nursery is a testament to Doug's hard work, his methods, his partnership with Rob - but it also had its conception and gestation back in those years with Bruce Griffiths.

In the mid 90's, the girls in the Commonwealth Bank had after work drinks. Doug was one of the few people they knew who had a fax machine, the ladies each climbed onto the photocopier and certain body parts were faxed to Doug. Doug's reply identified one of those faxes saying "would this girl like to come to America with me". So began Sara and Doug's relationship.

Doug and Sara had three beautiful children Keelan in 1997, then Lleyton in 1999 and then Millie in 2001. They were loving parents and gave their children a stable supportive family. When it became apparent that Lleyton had special needs, Sara and Doug founded NIS-E-DU becoming pioneers for developing of

special needs programs and advocates for assisting all children with special needs on Norfolk. An Australia Day award last year recognised those efforts.

Doug followed Lleyton's development working with him at Banyan Park, volunteer reading and assistance at school and helping on school sports days. Doug more recently served on the Education Review and the school board.

Doug always spoke fondly of his children. He used to love playing chess with Keelan on this flashy marble chess set. Well up until Millie accidentally broke a few pieces. He recently spoke to us of his pride about how tall Keelan was and how well he is doing away at school. Although he was concerned he may need shares in NZ Telecom to cover Keelan's texting bill.

Doug spoke proudly of Lleyton's recent year 10 formal and Lleyton's progress at archery. He was excited about Lleyton's work experience and had hopes for Lleyton's transition to the workforce. It's fair to say that Lleyton also inherited Doug's careful attitude to money. We reckon Lleyton still has is lunch money from kindergarten.

Doug spoke to us about how helpful Millie had become in the house, he reckoned her cooking abilities were surpassing his skills, taking after her Sara, Connie and Arthur. There were plans for Millie's further education and also for her travelling to Holland to expand her life experiences. Although there is some debate about how old Millie would be when she went.

*(continued overleaf)*

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### ***Douglas Ross Clark - continued***

Even after they separated Doug continued to hold Sara in high regard, outwardly concentrating more on the welfare of the children than issues of the heart.

In the last few years Doug formed a relationship with Marie, firstly here on Norfolk then travelling to New Zealand to see her.

Doug's birthday was around Melbourne Cup time and every year we had a syndicate for the Calcutta night. Doug although not normally a better, was a follower of form and odds for us. He would let us know how high we could go in the bidding. Occasionally he would suddenly buy a horse that nobody had mentioned. We did have the odd winner. It's fair to say we rubbed up about the year Doug spread his bets by joining his Poverty Row connections - they had a winner and we got nothing.

Over the years Doug played different sports - Doug played football for Reds -he could recognise a dirty Blue from 20 paces. More importantly Doug took on committee and organising roles for the Reds - raffles, trophies, barbecues what ever was needed.

One particular grog raffle; we were selling tickets for a few weeks. As Reds Treasurer, Doug had possession of the prize. To his dismay bottles were being borrowed and the prize was getting smaller. Doug had to keep digging in his own pocket to replenish the prize. In the end Doug had to sit down a couple of Ladies and lecture them on responsible behaviour. We won't mention names will we Pip and Shell.

Later Doug and I played "crack of dawn" squash - we broke lots of rackets and left bruises on each other - after nearly coughing up a lung one morning - we gave that up - Lets try Golf - after a few disastrous rounds - mainly for others on the course - we stuck with backgammon, chess or cards.

In the last few years Doug found archery and threw himself into that. Doug loved his archery but gave more of his time on working bees, encouraging juniors and organising international shoots than actually shooting arrows. He became President and driving force behind the club. He also formed strong friendships with local and overseas archers organising various hunting trips with Cowboy, Michael Graham and Niggle from Kiwi.

Douglas was the steward at the A & H show - he told me this year was the first he had missed in over 30 years - he was off island.

Over the years Doug employed many workers, among them Lance, Khan, Brett, Try, Clint, Dave, Marls, Rosa and many more - due to the type of bloke Doug was - close friendships were formed. Many of them told me how they actually looked forward to going to work with Doug. He was always happy to pass on his knowledge to them, if he did not know - he was happy to listen to their advice. If neither knew - then the discussing and analysing begun. As always with Doug these discussions were wide ranging, insightful, humorous, with nothing sacred or off limits.

Doug was a handy bugger. He painted - he planted. He built furniture for himself and friends. There were a couple of dining room tables which would have been at home on the showroom floor. He worked on

extending his deck and extensions to his house. His paperwork and book keeping were neat and accurate. He was a perfectionist and his own harshest critic.

For Max and I - Doug was part of our relationship - before we had one ourselves - he was family, I know he was part of Meg and Slack's family - but I have been blown away this week by just how many people have said to me - he was a part of our family. A true measure of the man.

Doug was a doer, a helper, a real giver of his time, his skills, his knowledge and most of all his friendship. I am racked by guilt that I never thanked Doug quite enough for how much he gave.

I am convinced if we all could give to others even half of what Doug gave of himself - this world would be a better place. Thank you Douglas. We gwen miss you mate- Rest in peace with your beloved Mum, Dad and brother Robert.

To finish off -An article appeared in the Guardian of 27 December 2014 I'd like to share the first few paragraphs with you.

"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear."

With his first line, CS Lewis's 'A Grief Observed' reacquaints his reader with the physiology of mourning; he brings into each mouth the common taste of private and personal loss. "I know something of this," you think. Even if you have not experienced a "front line" bereavement, such as the loss of partner, parent or child, you have certainly lost something you value: a marriage or a job, an internal organ or some aspect of mind or body that defines who you are.

Perhaps you have just lost yourself on your way through life, lost your chances or your reputation or your integrity, or chosen to lose bad memories by pushing them into a personal and portable tomb. Perhaps you have merely wasted time, and seethe with frustration because you can't recall it. The pattern of all losses mirrors the pattern of the gravest losses. Disbelief is followed by numbness, numbness by distraction, despair, exhaustion. Your former life still seems to exist, but you can't get back to it; there is a glimpse in dreams of those peacock lawns and fountains, but you're fenced out, and each morning you wake up to the loss over again.

Grief is like fear in the way it gnaws the gut. Your mind is on a short tether, turning round and round. You fear to focus on your grief but cannot concentrate on anything else. You look incredulously at those going about their ordinary lives. There is a gulf between you and them, as if you had been stranded on an island."

After the Eulogy, family tributes were given by Keelan and Millie Clark and a tribute to "the Mayor of Poverty Row" by David McCowan.

The service for Doug concluded with The Lord's Prayer, the placing of Floral Tributes, the Committal and the singing of the "Pitcairn Anthem" led by Terence Grube.

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