

John Ogilvy (1928 – 2022)

A life well lived

Growing up, Dad frequently told us that **“a job worth doing is worth doing well”**, and so he lived his life. What a life it was and what an impact it made!

In the 1940s, Dad and his university colleagues would spend their weekends climbing and skiing in the Scottish Highlands, earning their turns by climbing the slopes. On one of these weekend excursions, John met our mother Ann. He found sailing while doing his two year British Army service in Egypt; she found sailing during summers in Europe. Seeking adventure, wide open spaces, and more opportunity to do the things they loved, they emigrated to Canada in 1956. They started out in Edmonton where they soon discovered Jasper and all of its charms. Dad was a prolific photographer, and his earliest pictures of the Whistler ski hill in Jasper were taken in 1957. By 1960 they were in North Vancouver where sailing, hiking and skiing were priorities. We all recall a three week trip on a 20 foot sailboat with 2 adults, four children (our cousin was with us), and a dog.

When invited to assist with plans to construct an aerial tramway up Jasper’s Whistler Mountain, John jumped at the opportunity. In 1964 he arrived in Jasper, with family in tow, tasked with making the Jasper Skyride a reality. Two summers overseeing construction of the tram, became the start of a career engineering lifts for Canada’s nascent ski industry. This time further cemented John’s love of Jasper.

In 1971, opportunity knocked again and John and family headed back to Jasper for a “two year” assignment managing Marmot Basin ski area and building a new chairlift. That began their five decade residence in Jasper. As the ski industry continued to grow, John grew with it, establishing himself as Western Canada’s pre-eminent ski lift engineer. For many years hardly a ski lift was built without his involvement. In fact, he had engineering files on hundreds of lifts when he retired, a word we use loosely when describing John. His tireless work ethic and natural predisposition to finding practical solutions to complex problems was always in high demand. So too was John’s infectious enthusiasm and laughter.

“What can I do for you laddie / lassie”

He always wanted to help people and was known for listening to people’s ideas and focusing on whether that idea could be a success rather than replacing it with his own. This simple appreciation and enablement of the thoughts and dreams of others endeared him to many. He and our mother Ann, taught us through example and expectation that we could take on any challenge and work it through. With 11 year old Douglas he build a small wooden sailboat in the basement. He had Ron change the clutch and grind the valves on our old car before learning to drive at 14, then at 16 helped him rebuild a Fiat Ron bought for \$1 with a blown engine. He had his pre-teen children help shake the roof on the house and build the garage and carport.

Dad lived by and often quoted his own version of the centuries old saying: **“The impossible we can do, miracles will take a little longer”**.

Always up for a challenge, he entered and completed the very first Nanaimo bathtub race in 1967 in a home built tub with a mast and sail and motor driven paddlewheels. As children, we recall holidaying in our camperized van on unused logging roads where we would drive until we found a nice spot by a lake or creek and camp, maybe even sailing our little 6 foot sailboat that Dad designed and built.

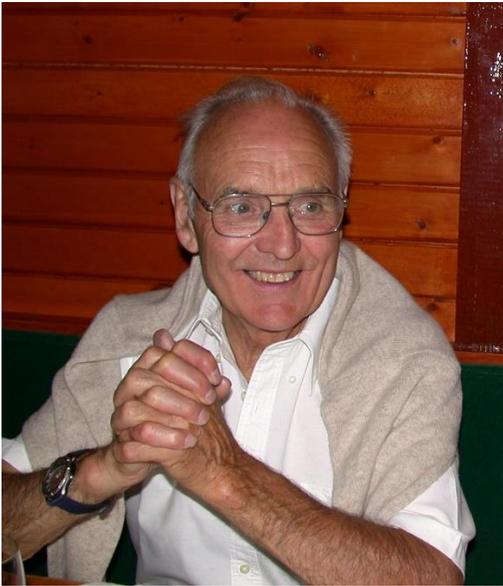
In his 70’s, Dad, with Mum and Karen landed by float plane on a lake in northern Saskatchewan and proceeded to paddle 200 kilometers downstream by canoe to a pickup point on Lake Athabasca. They bought their first canoe for this trip. Into their 80s, he and Mum were still at it. They donned small travel backpacks and headed to Machu Pichu on a few weeks’ notice just because they hadn’t been there and climbed local mountains they didn’t think their dog could ascend. Four

“cruises” to the Canadian Arctic on converted Russian ice breakers were amongst their adventures during Dad’s so called retirement.

Dad’s passing leaves a great void for his three children and spouses, Karen, Ron (Lynda) and Douglas (Heidi), four grandchildren, and so many others he touched.

We will miss his enthusiasm, his smile, his wink, his can-do attitude and most of all his infectious laughter.

So this is one final **“Toodeloo!”** from John.



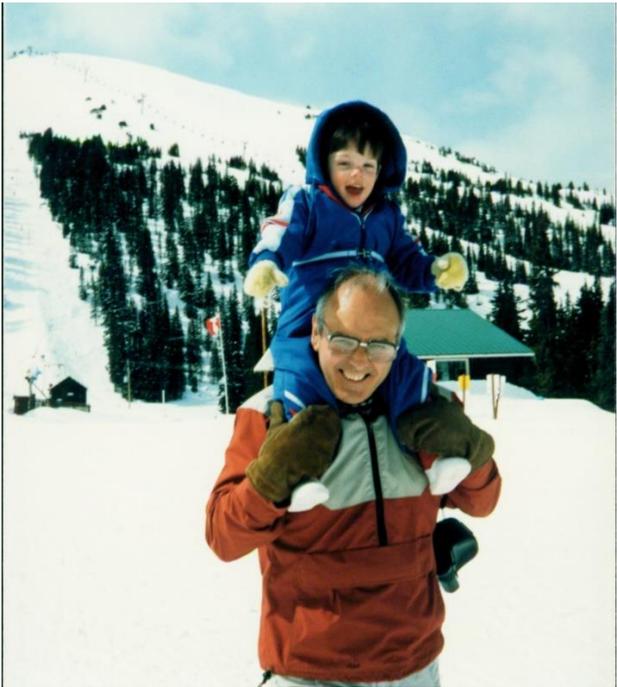
Ann and John with their Morris Minor in Jasper in 1958



John and Karen



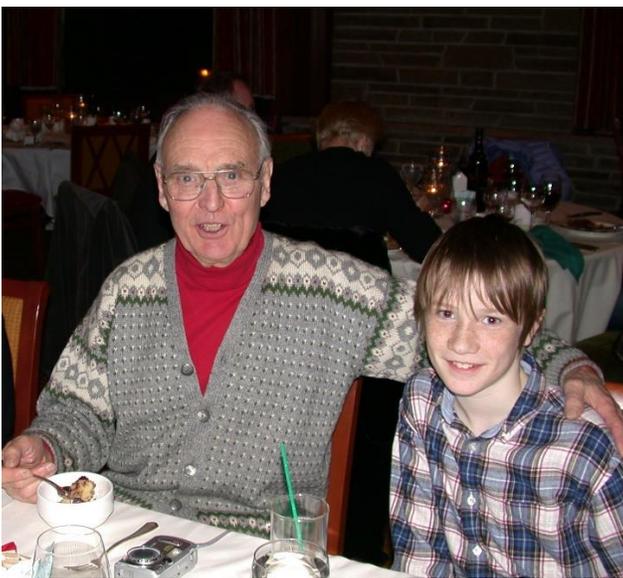
Ann, John and Douglas



John and grandson Rob in 1986



John with grandsons Rob and Andy



John with grandson Andy



John with grandson Cameron



Ann and John at Douglas and Heidi's wedding Karen, Douglas, Ron, Teresa and John at Karen's house for his 93rd



A beer on the deck last summer at his 93rd birthday (Digger in the background)