

My brother Peter Davidson – not Peter Ellis Davidson – the Ellis being added by him later – was born in 1931, when my parents were living in Ronald Street. He was delivered by Dr Oldham at Murray House.

He attended Dandenong West Primary School and Dandenong High School. He was not academically oriented but later on would be remembered for his outstanding organising abilities. He worked as a salesman at both Hattams and Partons in Dandenong and then at the Myer store in Melbourne.

He had a gift in his relationships with people, and had a wide circle of friends. He decided to broaden his horizons and travelled to New Zealand for a working holiday.

After eighteen months he decided that the grass wasn't any greener and returned home.

Returning to Myer, and then Mutual Stores, a friend suggested he would do well in a Bank. Peter applied and was accepted as a teller at the ANZ Bank in Dandenong.

At about this time he had met and married Molly Exell, and moved into a new house in High Street, Dandenong.

A chance meeting between Winston Sutton and Stan Edwards Senior saw the Dandenong Rotary Club support the establishment of the Dandenong Apex Club. Peter became a foundation member. He was a committed member and involved himself in all its activities, and was given the task of establishing the Hawthorn Apex Club. This was done most successfully.

Peter and Molly's first daughter Jennifer Ruth was born in 1957, and soon after he applied for a transfer as senior teller at the ANZ Bank at Rosedale.

He immediately noticed that there was no Apex Club in Rosedale and so he saw to it that one existed within the next year.

A promotion to accountant at the Wedderburn branch became available, so they moved there, and as you may guess – no Apex Club. As you can imagine one was chartered there in a very short time.

Somehow he got the idea that newsagencies were a good thing, and before anyone knew it he had bought the newsagency at North Balwyn.

He, Molly, Jenny and by now Cathy rented a house in Maud Street nearby and Peter set about creating a super newsagency.

He achieved this within a couple of years. The shop was doubled in size and turnover, and, of course, the Apex Club of North Balwyn had come into existence.

But Peter was a man who thrived on challenges.

A newsagency had become available in Nagambie.

And it wasn't long before Peter, Molly, Jenny, Cathy and by now Michael packed their car and travelled there.

Here was a beautiful country town in a lovely setting. Vineyards, lakes etc. What more could they want.

Well, it turned out that the locals didn't want an Apex Club. This wasn't good enough for Peter so he cast his eyes about and realised there was at least one thing missing in Nagambie.

On the Lake.

A Yacht Club.

So, he arranged for a meeting to be called, and the townsfolk attending agreed with the idea.

The Nagambie Yacht Club was formed and Commodore Peter Davidson led it through its critical first year.

Then the football club came to his notice. Peter was never a footballer. But he ended up as their President, and one of the selectors.

We were both very good rifle shots. Dad had spent a lot of time drilling into us the importance of shooting etiquette. This was something Peter could do well.

He began duck hunting. With a group of friends from all classes the Duck Club was formed. They met only a few times each year but it was a source of great pleasure to both Peter and his son Michael.

Never a handyman, he built a magnificent punt, and used it all over the rivers and lakes of Northern Victoria.

And then it seemed that Nagambie and newsagencies had lost their appeal.

The City Mutual Insurance company was looking for an Area Manager to supervise the various agents in North Central Victoria from Shepparton. This appealed to Peter and he applied for and got the job.

It meant travelling the length and breadth of the Central wine growing area, which didn't bother him at all. Always interested in good food and wine he became an expert.

On arriving in Shepparton, he found he had no interest in Apex, Rotary, Lions or any other service club. But there was a Beefsteak and Burgundy Club. He thought he'd join. No, they said. We have a limit of twenty couples, and a twenty year waiting list.

Disappointed, Peter thought long and hard for a while and decided to start his own food and wine club.

And so SWAS – the Shepparton Wine and Food Society came into being. He organised monthly dinners at various locations, and arranged for wines to be supplied by the various winemakers. He could arrange menus and match food with wine expertly.

Within a couple years Beefsteak and Burgundy Club members were asking to join, and were finding that there was a waiting list for membership of the Shepparton Wine and Food Society. As far as I know, SWAS is still thriving.

Peter had never had the best of health. He was a bad asthmatic and when he was about fifteen our Doctor recommended he take up smoking. This was the conventional wisdom at the time. But he did happen upon an asthma easing drug called Aspaxadrine which never left his side.

But by the time he was in his late forties Emphysema had set in, and he needed to slow down a bit.

Unfortunately, this was also about the time that his marriage ended.

Molly decided to remain in Shepparton with Jenny and Michael, and Peter and Cathy moved to the North Balwyn/Box Hill area.

He worked for a while at Myer, and then decided to open a food shop. This was to be a takeaway shop unlike any other. Delicious food mostly of his own creation, specialising in evening meals.

He called the business Willsmere Fine Food, and his partners were his daughter Jenny, and her husband Bruce.

And during this time, he met and married Judy Findlay.

They bought a lovely small house in Box Hill North, where they worked on their hobby of growing orchids. It was a good match.

Happy as the marriage was, Peter's condition worsened and he was soon diagnosed with a lung disease called Scleroderma; a thickening of the walls of the lungs which inhibited oxygen intake.

Willsmere Fine Food had to be closed, and Peter took up another love again; dog training. He'd always trained his gun dogs, but now his dog – a black Labrador called Poacher was purely his pet.

He died in 1987, a year after his Mother.

He had very much led his own life, following the challenge whatever and wherever it was, collecting good friends along the way.

He left too soon.