

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES DUDLEY MCNAUGHTON

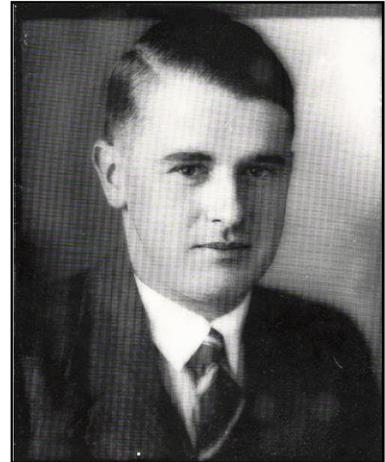
My father became sick when I was twelve months old and died when I was three. I have no memories of him but have written several essays based on memorabilia [1-5]. Here are some interviews with members of my family who did remember him. Fathers are often absent—because of work, divorce, war, desertion or emotional distance for example. Mine died of a brain tumor.

**Dudley at his prime, a company officer at the Trustees
Executors and newly married to my mother.**

LYNDA JEAN CAYZER

Dudley's first cousin Lynda Jean Cayzer was born the same year he was, on 9 March 1908. She remained very alert and wrote to me in December 2004 at the age of 96 and didn't die until she was 103.

“Charles [Robert] McNaughton, eldest son of John and Catherine McNaughton of Richmond, was one of three sons and one daughter—Lily. I am Lynda Clarke, second daughter of Lily who married Charles Pelham Cayzer. I was born at Leongatha. Early in 1913, when I was nearly five years old, my family moved to Melbourne. My father was looking for work in northeast Victoria. My mother, with [daughter] Marion, nearly seven, and baby Ruby, three months of age, stayed with John and Catherine at Erin Street, Richmond. I stayed with Uncle Charlie and Auntie Annie in Punt Road, Richmond. Their sons were Dudley, four years of age, and Ian, about two years old. I had very few clothes so I often wore Dudley's short rompers. When my father obtained work in Kyvalley, Auntie Annie wanted to keep me, but my mother would not agree. My family lived in Kyvalley until my father enlisted for War Service in December 1917.”



“I was nearly ten when the family moved to St. Kilda. I saw Dudley again from time to time and remember him as a student at Scotch College. I was working as a milliner's apprentice at Snows in Glenferrie and decided to hold a party one Saturday evening at my home in Station Street, Camberwell. I invited a few of the girls from Snows and one had a boy friend. My two sisters and brother Jack and one of his friends and Dudley were also invited. Dudley was about 17 and a fine looking young man. All the girls had eyes on him. It was a get-together party for no special occasion. One girl, Voyley, lived not far from Dudley in Glenferrie, so he took her home. At work on Monday it was the talk of the town but nothing more came of it.”

“Uncle Charlie was a bookmaker on the flat at Flemington. He gave my father five shillings a day to go to the races with him. His job was to walk around the flat and see what prices the other bookies would give for bets. Dudley was a member of the Independent Order of Rechabites [part of the temperance movement]. Dudley met and married a beautiful girl, Lilian Besant, at the Presbyterian Church in Glenferrie Road. Dudley and Lilian lived close to the Burwood Station. Shortly after, I married Bill Clarke, in March 1936. Dudley was an usher at the wedding and Dudley and Lilian were guests. Bill and I lived in Renwick Street, Glen Iris, just near the shops in Toorak Road, Hartwell. I lost touch for a while due to the

Polio outbreak in the early 1940's. I seldom went out as my son, Neville, was young. When Dudley became ill Ken was about three years old. I often saw Lilian with Ken, taking Dudley for a short walk. I was living at Hartwell when I heard that Dudley died. Dudley's mother, Annie, was not happy when Lilian decided to re-marry, as she did not want anyone to take Dudley's place and said 'Don't ever expect me to enter your house again.' I don't know if she ever did."



LILIAN MAY BESANT

I taped an interview with my mother on 8 January 1986 when she was almost 73. While she was living at Black Rock with her family she was jumped over pre-Intermediate to Intermediate but contracted shingles and missed the last three months of school. Consequently she was sent to Stott's Business College in Russell Street. In November 1929, a month before she finished the course, she was sent with two other girls for an interview with the Trustees Executors, who wanted 'an older girl.' Lilian, who was to turn 17 in March, was told at Stott's to say she was 17, so when the Executors asked if she would turn 18 in March, she said "Yes." She got the job at the Trustees, starting as a junior and taking dictation, typing and relieving the switchboard.

Lilian as a young woman who found the right man.

This is where she met Dudley, who was in the Real Estate Department. "We'd meet in the Filing Room. He'd come pretending to look something up. Then he started to date me. Once that started he sort of took over and I was prohibited from going out with all my other men friends. He was a bit possessive I think. He made sure that every Saturday night was booked and one night a week. So there was no time for anyone else. And I wanted to be with him."

"We'd go to a film in those days. There was a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan. We would dress up. I would put on a long frock. We would go into Row E, about five rows from the front, the best row. He would take me out to very nice things—lots of musicals, like "White Horse Inn." I don't think we had any arguments or rows we had to patch up. I possibly conformed and didn't do anything that annoyed him. Except someone asked me to a 21st party and didn't ask him and he was annoyed. We were engaged when I was 21. We were walking along the beach at Dromana one night. His mother used to go to the boarding houses there and we went for the day or to stay over. He thought we should marry. We just drifted into it actually. We had been going out together and I think we knew all along we'd get married. There wasn't anything to discuss. I just agreed. It wasn't really a big event. We were engaged for about 18 months."

"He used to dabble in the stock market to get extra money and did quite well with the little we had. No one had a lot of money during the Depression. But there came a boom in gold and metals. Shares would come on the market at a shilling each or less. We would buy up and sell when they got to five or six. It was a quick turnover. Dudley had an uncle who was a stockbroker, Percy Carver. He had access to other brokers too, through the Trustees. It was a common activity because of the gold boom. I bought some Golden Plateau and made some money."

Lilian and Dudley were married on 7 December 1935 when he was 27 and she was 22. “We had a nice Reception at Darling Street, which was a very select place in those days. I was very grateful to Frank and Tilly for giving me a Reception there. It could have been 7/6 a head [less than \$1 AU]. We moved into Adrian Street after the wedding. We had started building after we were engaged. There were not many young people who could afford to do that. Dudley was a very good provider, a planner. We wanted comfort. We had everything we needed. There were no refrigerators or washing machines but we had wall-to-wall carpets and furnishings. Everything was ready to walk into after the honeymoon. We didn’t immediately think of having children. We had some good times. I didn’t work. Women wouldn’t have been allowed to work. That would have been a slight on the men. I played tennis and had friends. It was really very nice. I had the garden to look after. Eril just happened. We were always careful. The rhythm method. Two children was what we all thought we could afford.”

Ken: “Was Dudley interested in naming me?”

Lilian: “Oh yes. It was ‘Ken.’ It had to be Ken. He wouldn’t have anything of those names like Eril that you had to explain. He chose Kenneth John.”

Ken: “Was he pleased to have a son?”

Lilian: “Oh yes. But at a year old he wouldn’t have had a lot to do with you. He wasn’t that type—to change nappies and so on. That was a woman’s work.”

Ken: “I don’t remember how he related to me.”

Lilian: “Well, very little, I suppose. He was getting ill.”

Ken: “What were the first indications?”

Lilian: “His eyes were worrying him. I suppose they were blurred. He went to an optician, who sent him to a neurologist. He just told him straight up what he had—‘You’ve got a tumor.’ The optician would have known—they can tell by looking at the back of the eye—there’s pressure there. I think he was in the Mercy Hospital the next day. He was there for a few days. We had a very good surgeon—Mr. Trumble—who would only operate at the Alfred because he had his own theater. The morning of the operation I rang him at his house to tell him to do his very best.”

“Dorothy [Grieve, a neighbor friend] came with me and bought coffee while we sat and waited. The neurologist was there. It took 2-3 hours. They told me he would never work again. That was shocking. It left him paralyzed on his left side—his arm and leg. I don’t know what sort of a tumor it was. It was just there, on the right side of the brain that controlled the left side. That’s why I always just said he’d had a stroke. I thought that was a nicer thing to have than a tumor. He was paralyzed for quite some time but that finally came back. He had wonderful will. He did work for a while. They were very good to him. They didn’t pressurize him. He could make his own hours if he wanted to. And that worked for a while.”

“[The doctors] told me they couldn’t get it all away. He used to sit out in the garden at home. He was around. He didn’t do a lot with you. He might have read. When it started to grow he would take these turns, which was frightening, and which I always tried to hide from you children. One morning you children were sleeping in your room and I got up to make a cup of tea. No sooner had I given it to him than he threw it and went into this spasm. The thing was growing and disturbing the brain. I was terrified. And they didn’t warn me. I came out and shut the door. I thought he had gone off his head and rang the local doctor who came in his pajamas right away. When he took those turns, that

would leave him paralyzed and that would take a while to wear off again. We'd go for another few months. I would never know when it was going to happen. It could happen anywhere. It happened in Camberwell Station one time. In time he was bed-ridden. I kept him at home as long as I could. He lost consciousness and the doctor said 'You can't take care of him any longer' and he put him into a private hospital—Ayton in Wattle Valley Road. He was only there a few days and died on Easter Friday. He never regained consciousness. I went out and sat with him on Thursday afternoon and came home. They rang me that night and said he had gone. Good Friday 7 April [1944]. He was buried on Eril's birthday [Saturday] because of the Easter holidays."

Dudley's brother Russell Norman wrote me on 16 June 2008 at the age of 85 to say he re-read a diary he kept whilst still living with his parents in Power Street, aged 19. He said that Dudley's operation took place at the Hamilton Russell Ward of the Alfred Hospital from 9:00 a.m. until 1:15 p.m. on Wednesday 23rd July 1941—the day after my first birthday.

ERIL MARGARET MCNAUGHTON

My father's death was traumatic for our family. My sister was six. I asked her in 2008 when she was almost 70 if she would send me her recollections and this is what she wrote: "My childhood memories of Dudley are fragmented episodes. Sitting at one end of the kitchen table, Dudley at the other. We had boiled eggs for lunch. I put my upturned empty eggshell into his egg cup when he was not looking and when he came back he tried to crack it and made a big fuss about the trick I had played. He got up, went to the hall cupboard, put on his hat and walked out the front door, pretending to leave home! But of course he returned."

Lilian 70, Ken 43 and Eril 45 at Dudley's grave.

"I have a memory of him wearing a brown hat when going to work. It was not unusual to put the rug under the big poplar tree in the shade and share some time together there. I remember that I tried to cover him with the fallen autumn leaves. This was a game for us. Another time he was resting on a borrowed cane lounge and tried to show me how he could get up and down from it but he fell and was unable to get back on the lounge and I had to run inside to get Lilian. This was at a time when he was really unwell. We went to Portsea sometimes and stayed at the cliff-top home of some Hawthorn friends. Their dining room overlooked Port Phillip Bay and had a wonderful view of the ships entering and leaving through the Heads."



"I remember walking to Ashlyn with my parents to have a look at the school where I was to start in 1943. On April 8, 1944, my birthday was postponed because of Dudley's funeral. I don't know where I was. I remember nothing of that day. On April 9, however, I received my presents while still in bed in the front room [the master bedroom]. Lilian had dressed a doll for me in bridal array. We went for a drive to Port Melbourne with Nana and Grandpa McNaughton and Joan [Dudley's sister]. You must have been home with Gran and Pop. Certainly you were not in

the car. I was in the front seat and while parked near the pier a policeman came to Grandpa's window and told him that one of the car's tyres was flat. Lilian and Nana were in tears in the back seat and I thought it was a strange thing to cry about. Joan had dressed a doll in knitted blue clothes, which she gave me. I was very happy with my dolls. I was told absolutely nothing of my father's death. Joan also gave me a small New Testament ('it's what she wanted' I heard her tell someone later at Adrian Street). I treasured that little book; it was always in my bedside table."

"Some days later I was playing after school at the home of a friend in Celia Street and she said 'Your Daddy's dead.' I felt sick and ran home. Lilian was in the bedroom getting something out of the wardrobe. It was obvious that she had been crying and I clearly remember saying to her 'Daddy's not dead, is he?' I could not understand how someone outside the family could know such a thing if I did not. She said 'Who told you?' and that is all I recall. I do not remember any explanation or consolation."

"What I do remember is how much I enjoyed the trips Lilian and I made to the Burwood Cemetery. We would walk to the Trent Street shops, catch the tram to the Terminus, walk down the hill to the florist and buy a bunch of flowers. Then we would continue to the cemetery and walk to the grave and remove the dead flowers. Then I would go to the nearby tap, fill the vase with water and carry it back for the fresh flowers. I used to like to read the inscription on the headstone. I remember experiencing a feeling of comfort and closeness from these visits."

"I always found it difficult to believe that my father had died. He just seemed to disappear and I was 'guilty' for a long time of thinking it had all been a mistake and that I would just go to the door one day and he would be there—a rather sad and forlorn hope. These days children are given a chance to grieve and everyone is big on 'closure.' If anything things have gone the other way with counseling for absolutely everything. I was always so upset on Remembrance Day at Ashburton State School when the children of fathers who had died during the war were allowed to place flowers on the memorial—I felt it was really unfair that I was not able to do this, too."

ALAN GRIEVE CHAMBERS

Two years after Dudley's death my mother married Alan. I taped an interview with him on 8 January 1986 when he was 82. He got a job with the Trustees Executors soon after he arrived in Melbourne from Hobart and became a Chartered Accountant in 1931 when he was 28 or 29. Dudley had joined in 1925 as a Junior in the Real Property Department. He left and went to work for his father but hated it like poison so eventually came back, about six or nine months before Alan joined. "We used to meet up at lunchtime and go for walks; we did that every day," Alan told me. "I was a Trust Officer and if I wanted something in the Real Property Department I would send him down a note 'Would you please get a few estimates of value, etc.' I liked him very, very much. All the time. No matter what happened. He was a hell of a good bloke. He was reasonably quiet with an intense sense of humor. You had to realize what was coming out and what wasn't. Fortunately I knew."

Ken: "What did you like about him?"

Alan: "Basically his quietness."

Ken: "Was he a leg puller? Did he pull tricks on the company?"

Alan: "No, not on the company. On some of the people."

About the same time as Lilian married Dudley, Alan married Rosali DeGabriel. It was not a happy marriage and she left him ten years later, about the time that Dudley died. Alan was staying with his parents in Sydney when he heard and wrote a letter to Lilian, whom he had known since she joined the Trustees, aged 16. Alan was living about a mile away in Hilltop Avenue, Glen Iris, and often used to have dinner with John Hancock, who also worked at the Trustees. John's wife Roma said to Alan one night, "I think I know someone you ought to marry," and Alan guessed right. When World War II broke out there were about 220 on the staff at the Trustees but the men volunteered quickly. Alan wanted to volunteer but Sydney Jones, a powerful manager, wouldn't let him go. He said "We'll need you here when they get back." I asked Alan what was the best time of his life and he said when we children were growing up, until I left Adrian Street in 1963.

JOAN NANCYE MCNAUGHTON

Dudley's sister Joan was born on 22 September 1926, when Dudley was 18 and had started his working career. In response to my request, Joan sent me some memories and photos on 12 March 2008 when she was 81. She says "I think he met Lil[ian] after Ron was born [their brother Ronald Auburn McNaughton was born 19 October 1930]. By that time I was four and here was Dudley introducing his then girlfriend to his family—three brothers aged 17, 8 & 1 and a sister 4!! I can remember being very excited when Lil and Dudley were married and I was the flower girl aged, I would say, about seven [actually nine]. I know I had lost my two front teeth and so wasn't allowed to smile at the photo session! I remember the lovely picnics we would go on after they moved to Burwood and we would go pick them up, as neither Lil or Dudley ever drove the car. Quite often we would all travel out to Alphington and visit the Carver Family—Myrtle, Norman & Norma. I have a wedding photo in front of me now and I can vividly remember what a handsome brother I had—tall & very good looking and always had time to spend with his little sister. I had just finished school when Dudley got ill and was away at a Camp the Easter he died, and can remember being very upset when I heard the news. I returned home that day and I can still remember it as if it were yesterday. Your father was a lovely, handsome & caring man & loved by everyone."

CLOSURE

Lilian told us two children that Dudley died of a stroke, but when I was in my early twenties and living in London I pressed her over the phone and she admitted it was a brain tumor. On my next visit to Australia, I invited her and Eril to the Burwood Cemetery, which I had never visited. As we sat on Dudley's grave on 31 August 1983 I asked Lilian to tell Eril what Dudley really died of and Lilian admitted it was a brain tumor. Eril was taken aback, having been told that his death was the result of a stroke, but I wanted to make sure she heard it from Lilian, rather than have me tell her after Lilian had gone.

As I was preparing this story I explained to a stranger why I felt it was important—"I feel sad that my father never had a chance to make his mark." She looked me straight in the face, smiled, and said very directly, "Oh, but he did!" This encouraged me to put this story together in an attempt to understand the father I never knew. I didn't realize until 2016 that I originated all five stories about him in March—2008, 2009, 2014, 2015 and 2016—the month in which both my father and mother were born. Writing these stories is not the same as remembering interactions with a father but, under the circumstances, it was the best I could do. As a result I know a bit more about his life and death and what he was like.

REFERENCES

1. McNaughton, Ken, *The Boisdale News*, 20 March 2008, awaiting publication.
2. McNaughton, Ken, "Writings of Charles Dudley McNaughton," *Ancestor*, March 2009, **29**, 5, 13-16, Genealogical Society of Victoria.
3. McNaughton, Ken, "Echoes of Burwood," 23 August 2014, awaiting publication.
4. McNaughton, Ken, "Collins's Men," 5 March 2015, awaiting publication.
5. McNaughton, Ken, "My Father's Books," 26 March 2016, awaiting publication.

COPYRIGHT

This work is copyrighted and may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any medium without written permission from Ken McNaughton, 3778 College Avenue, Ellicott City, MD 21043; phone/fax: 410-418-9340; kjmcn@comcast.net (26 March 2008). High resolution photos are available on request. If you are having trouble viewing the artwork, please feel free to request a PDF.