

2 MINUTES WITH Wrae Duncan

There are many interesting people in the Tawa community and it is a privilege to be able to hear or read their life stories. This “2 Minutes with” segment really doesn’t do them justice. Because of time commitments, I (the Ed.) am not able to sit down with each interviewee and listen to their stories in the way that I would ideally like to do. However on this occasion I did do just that.



At 10 weeks shy of his 90th birthday, one would be forgiven for mistaking Wrae Duncan for someone 10 years younger. His primary means of transport is his trusty Smart Motion electric bike. When I (the Ed.) interviewed him in person for this profile, he spent a good deal of the time talking about his many interests and hobbies, including occasional tree-felling. Wrae, who lives in Linden, owns two chainsaws and a mean-looking log splitter! If I am anywhere near as active as he is when I near 90 years of age, I will be very pleased with myself! All power to the seniors of Tawa!

Where were you born and where did you grow up? Waimate (South Canterbury)

Where were you educated? Waimate High

How long have you lived in Tawa? 45 years. I lived in Island Bay prior to that.

What do you like about Tawa?

I like the people in Tawa; good access to the north in terms of travel; the climate is good. There are great community services and activities – there’s lots for everybody. “You name it, Tawa’s got it.”

What would you like to see improved in Tawa?

The judder bars in Bing Lucas Drive are a damn nuisance; the foliage on the side of the cycleway between Redwood and Takapu Road stations needs trimming back; egress from Outlet City could be improved. Middleton Road [south of Tawa] is downright dangerous – “I cycle everywhere.” [Council has been asked to address most of these matters, although there won’t be a fix for Middleton Road any time soon – Ed.]

Work experience over the years

40 years in the Post Office Head Office in Wellington. I was in Resource Management, everything to do with staff right throughout New Zealand. When the Post Office split up, I went to PostBank. I ended up as the private secretary to the Assistant Director General. I have now been retired for 32 years.

What are your interests and hobbies?

Tawa Lions Club, crosswords, cycling, gardening, jazz music, snooker, indoor bowls on a Tuesday evening.

Travel – in the past 18 months I have been on 20 tours in both the North and South Islands with Transit NZ. They are an absolutely fabulous company. In March/April this year I did three consecutive tours in

the South Island. They are mostly people travelling on their own, with a preponderance of females! “We go to some very interesting places.”

MenzShed Tawa – I was a foundation member. At the outset I made a workbench for them in my workshop at home, and have been “in charge” of making further ones since. ITM Tawa have been very good in looking after our timber needs.

I have been in lots of bands and orchestras over the years playing clarinet, saxophone and bagpipes. I was in the Army Territorial band at one stage, playing clarinet and sax, and I was in the Tawa Orchestra for quite a few years.



Wrae with his trusty steed

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Musical instrument repairs [*at this point Wrae handed me his business card which describes himself as "Musical Instrument Technician".*] I do repairs for five music shops around Wellington, and about 30 colleges in the region. I get the work by word of mouth.

Repairing things in general – Brian Mexted always referred to me as “Mr Fixit”.

I have been felling trees for many years, and still do so.

Favourite sports team and/or sports person?

Naturally the All Blacks, also the Silver Ferns.

Favourite musical group and/or individual singer?

I'm into the Valley Stompers, a jazz band. I repair some of their instruments!

What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?

Taupo. I had a timeshare up there since 1986, but the whole complex has now been sold.

What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you satisfaction/pride?

Instrument repairs is an interesting pastime because I get to meet lots of interesting people, a good class of people who play instruments or who are encouraging their children to play.

What are one or two things you would like to do before you die?

See as much of New Zealand as possible. I've seen as much as I want to of the rest of the world. One four-and-a-half month overseas tour I went on involved 23 international flights!

(Compiled August 2019)