

Arch Morrison

Arch was born in 1938 in a small Scottish village near Stirling Castle, where John Damian flung himself off in 1507, sporting a pair of feathered wings, in an attempt to fly. He landed on a dung heap, breaking his thigh.

Luckily, in contrast, Arch seems to always land on his feet, He grew up on a 5-acre market garden property, on which he and his older brother had to work after school, before dinner and homework. When his brother went off to school at age 5, Arch would scramble over the wall to join him, as they lived right next door. The teacher let him stay in his brother's class and Arch did so well that he became dux of the school. At 16 he achieved his University Entrance qualifications.



As a lad, Arch had always wanted to be an RAF pilot, but straight after school was too young for their entry requirement of 16 and $\frac{3}{4}$. So he got a job in a laboratory for a year, before attending Glasgow University, under government funding. He graduated in 1960 with a BSc in Maths and Natural Philosophy (Physics), but not without delay, as tragically, his mother died from Multiple Sclerosis during these years. He also came off a motorbike and took on a dry-stone wall with his head, sans crash-helmet! Although this only resulted in a short hospital stay, it lit the hungry savagery of Pneumococcal Meningitis, that surfaced 6 months later, while Arch was in Glasgow at his aunt's house, after missing the bus home. He was found in an unconscious coma and rushed to a nearby specialist hospital, luckily being treated within the ticking timeframe available before the onset of mental damage or death. So saved by the bus!

Meanwhile, Arch had been called up for National Service in the Royal Corp of Signals. However the 3 months of hospital treatment and mandatory recuperation, resulted in *121 days leave without pay* and Arch assessed as *permanently unfit for military service*.

He celebrated this good news by proposing to his bonny high-school sweetheart Jan, in the grounds of Edinburgh Observatory. They married in August 1960 and settled in Coventry, England. For 7 years Jan worked as a pharmacist and Arch designed telecommunication circuits for *GEC*, before immigrating to Australia, at the behest of the Australian Public Service, for a job with NASA's tracking stations. From Apollo 12 to Apollo 16, Arch was NASA's PR man, explaining these missions to the baying press and TV hounds, his greatest memento from this time being a medallion containing small traces of metal, which had been to the moon and back as part of Apollo 11, the first to land on the moon in 1969. This was at the height of the Cold War, distinguished by 007 espionage, defections and your basic everyday bids for world dominance, where space was on centre stage. It would have been a heady time!

From 1972 Arch placed and monitored Government contracts for technology-development in industry, until the establishment of the Australian Space Office in 1985. He stayed there until his retirement in 1993, then Arch and Jan hit the road, caravanning around Australia annually for 9 years, fossicking for various spoils – Sapphires in Rubyvale, Topaz in Mount Surprise, Zircon in the Harts Ranges – that Arch subsequently facets into gemstones and sets in bespoke silverwork. They moved from Coffs Harbour to the Sunshine Coast in 2000, as their daughter and family were here.

Arch didn't start playing serious bridge until 1969, after which he became an annual force in the *Festival of Bridge*. He and his partner Fred Witsenhuysen even won a South Pacific Sitmar Cruise in the weekend *Blue Ribbon Pairs* in 1980! In the slipstream, he was on countless bridge club committees and directed for 37 years in Canberra, Coffs Harbour and the SCBC.

Arch still plays croquet and snooker on Fridays, this being more to do with the quality of the repartee, rather than the quality of the snooker. He believes that *old age*, like Godot, never comes. We just mature into classics, like a fine wine.

Certainly Arch is one of our most-endearing classics here at the SCBC. We look forward to seeing his cheeky smile across the table for many more years to come.