

So let me tell you the story of Andrew Maclean,

Or to give his full name, Andrew, Ronald, Macgavin, MFI, Dad, Grandpa, Grandpère, Androo! Maclean. (I'll try and give justice to all those names and all of you who have come to celebrate him)

When Dad, and his wife Liz set up their monumental party to celebrate the millenium at Sennybridge, they made a series of coffee cups (as you do)which had a picture of a fly (the millenium bug- such a poor pun)

And a little text.

For what is past thanks

For what is to come yes!

Now you may think it's a bit Yoko Ono or Eric Cantona, but it was so him.

Dad was a free spirit, he took life as he found it, and hung onto the best of it.

He was born in Glasgow on 22nd October 1940.

As - some might be aware after hearing his rendition of the music hall song "I belong to glasgee" at the end of a long evening..

His beginning was not easy.

He lost his father before he was born, when his minesweeper, the HMS Firefly blew up. And tragically his Mother also died when he was seven. But somehow this "Orphan spirit" didn't isolate him, on the contrary, it meant that he was always very good attaching himself to tribes and forming his own.

His mother gone, his Mother and his Father's families had a council. And he had the great luck to be taken on by the O'nians tribe. His Mother's sister Auntie Bee and her husband Uncle Arthur took him in, his cousin Ronnie a couple of years younger, was brought up as his brother, and the ten years older brother Mike was also close, and later chose Dad to be his daughter Nikki's godfather.

His Uncle Arthur initiated him into Fly fishing, and apparently he used to say that Dad was such a good fisherman, that if he fell in the river he would probably come out with a salmon in his mouth.

He went to the same school as his late father in Scotland, (Dad often claimed that going to a rugby playing school was a sporting tragedy, because at his prep school he had been scouted by the Arsenal football manager, but this is unverifiable.)

And then he read Commerce at Liverpool University, (frequenting the Cavern club to see the Beatles live).

He then trained as an articled clerk to qualify as a chartered accountant. He described this as the most boring experience of his life, he finished his work in the morning spent the afternoon playing dominoes with the other clerks. As soon as he got his letters he vowed never to practice accountancy ever again.

But it was not all boredom, he drove around the country in a white convertible MGB, (we have some very posed photographs of him, very much the playboy)

and one time, he gate-crashed a party in Winchester and met a pretty student nurse, Geraldine Toole-Mackson. and very quickly they decided to get married....and well, by the time he was 31 he had 3 children.

For his first big job after qualifying, he joined his Uncle Billy's textile company "lindustries", and was sent to the Belfast subsidiary just before the troubles. There he learnt about business and management first-hand, but soon became fed up of being "the man from Uncle "- and moved onto the aerospace industry and then entered the world of finance, his real playground.

He discovered that he was rather good as a Fund manager, was taken on by a Canadian Bank and brought his young family (of 4, I hadn't entered the picture) across to Canada for period which he greatly enjoyed.

Returning to the London market he decided to move to Bookham, visiting our Mum's cousins here, he thought it a good place to bring up a young family.

In fact, we used to live at the Hermitage, the old house just the other side of the road from this Church. A busy road, he used to tell us to look both ways and run like hell to cross on a Sunday morning.

He worked for Kempgee, a stockbroker, and then took the unusual step of joining an insurance company as their investment manager.

At Municipal Mutual Insurance, he was spotted as a rising talent by the chairman, Lord Marshall of Leeds. (it has to be said he did a rather good job of managing his personal portfolio on the side). And he rose to become CEO of a company that at one time insured, I think 11% of the UK economy.

It's funny that our Dad had a high powered career, and yet as kids we had absolutely no idea what he did for a day job. The only time work influenced his home life was when he found urgent business in Glasgow in August so that he could extend his holiday in the Highlands for an extra week.

He was just the Dad that we could tease and, who put a lot of energy into playing stupid games "someone go and play with Daddy!" was the cry on holiday. The dad who took us on long hikes and picnics in the countryside or in the highlands where we would normally get lost and we certainly got caught in wind and rain. And even snow, he was very proud that he drove his jag through a blizzard without snow chains, and was the last car through the pyrenean pass to Andorra. It required us taking in turns to walk in front of the car so he knew where the road was.

He dragged us to run on the Surrey Hash House Harriers (a club where they sing, drink beer and run in that order of priority). The Hash christened him MFI. My understanding is that he made a spy-themed trail with a runner called Burgess (Burgess and Maclean- see). And because as well as his city job, he had a weekend business in DIY - someone said that he was more MFI than MI5.

That weekend DIY business was a family enterprise, all his children and their friends were employed to package bathroom fittings in a massive barn with no heating on Saturday mornings. In fact if he visited a school event, it was usually a recruitment drive for Melanda Ironworks.

And then a big change. One by one the kids were leaving and our parents found they didn't have so much in common, and as can happen they grew apart and split. He moved closer to London and lived for the first time in 20 years as a bachelor.

He then had the great luck then to meet a certain entrepreneur called Liz Walsh at a reception in the city, they left early to dine at the Bleeding Heart restaurant in the city.

They found that they enjoyed the same things and were as crazy as each other, one thing lead to another. They bought a lovely terraced house in Bonner Road Hackney (before it was fashionable) and Liz taught Dad to really enjoy London properly. Appropriately enough, they married in true bohemian style in Mombassa, on the beach.

At the same time, his Corporate life took another turn, Municipal Mutual was bought by Zurich and he was not part of the new organization. After being a very ambitious man, at 53 he was set aside. I think Dad had some initial trouble leaving corporate life, the lunching and deal-making with the great and good.

But thanks to a good pension (he had managed the company fund himself), he and his new wife Liz realized that it was a fabulous opportunity to be free to live the life they wanted. Over- the next 10,951 days they visited 5 Continents, of the 7 Continents together. In total he spent 30 years of retirement doing what the hell he wanted (something he was very proud of).

He smuggled fossils in his underpants in Brazil, rode Camels in Egypt, took legendary train journeys in India, and visited a lot of archaeological sites for Liz's sake which he pretended to enjoy (he wasn't good at museums either).

He also fly fished with the footballer, Jack Charlton in the Arctic Circle. He always said Jack Charlton was a tight Geordie so and so, but never explained why. He even found himself in company with Eric Clapton with whom he had a lively discussion about fishing without the faintest idea of who he was (Liz was aghast).

Always the entrepreneur, he made a business from his passion with "Just Fish"-, originally selling technical stuff for fisherman, he soon found that there was a valuable niche in fishing gifts ("gifts for the fisherman in your life", meaning solving the husband gift issue).

He opened shops in Covent Garden and Brick Lane, sold mugs, plates, in fact anything that could be printed with a fish. At the end of the 90s he

was partly responsible for the success of “Big Mouth Billy the Bass” (a wall mounted, talking and singing fish, perhaps the most annoying bestselling gift ever). Every Christmas present we got from then on, had a fish on it, sometimes with the words “sample only, not for sale” written somewhere on it.

After a while Dad and Liz got itchy feet, with a desire to leave London for the countryside. They started looking at the West Country, but thanks to Ronnie and Myfanwy were drawn to Wales to be close to them. Ron spotted a house for sale in the Brecon beacons, with outbuildings (for the Just Fish mail order business), and a salmon river. It was a big rambling house that needed work and was quite similar to his Maclean grandfather’s house, Milndavie in Strathblane which held fond memories.

Glanwysc was the perfect place for open-ended parties and country weekends for friends, as well as being close to the lively community in Sennybridge, where they made some wonderful friends, and the cultural hub in Brecon where there was a theatre and music festivals and of course some keen bridge players.

- Bernie and Pete celebrated their wedding there, as did David and Jamie.
- It always hosted a houseful for the annual Brecon jazz festival and for successive Hash Weekends in the Brecon beacons.
- It was the scene of a massive Millenium party of 30 plus people where the local army camp provided fireworks that lit up the sky, and defied health and safety regulations.
- And the arrival of Grandchildren led to the invention of another annual ritual. The Goose Dinner, a pre-christmas weekend which gathered Macleans, Husseys, Onians and Walshes and friends to a three day party with Christmas songs as well as a lot of eating and drinking - where his six young grandchildren plus the children of Gavin and Jamie Onians and other little ones could run riot.

But often they were not at home. Because they were always on holiday, leaving Steve to run the business, and field the occasional strategic phone call from them.

He used to Sail in Antigua (with someone who knew what they were doing), and with little physical preparation, Dad Skied twice a year- once

with the Hash, and then with the 3 of us and his 6 grandchildren, often in Megève (where he still remembered fondly by the ski guides he après-skied with in the town square). Though it must be said that the proportion of time lunching and skiing was inversed over time. Often he would put on his ski gear just to lunch up the mountain.

Fortunately for Brigitte and I, Liz and Dad came to Paris a lot. They had a pied a terre in Montmartre and followed a calendar of events in France or came across by whim. The Clan Maclean association event during the France Ecosse rugby weekend, the wine festival at Montmartre, the garden party in Fontainebleau where Dad poured champagne and talked to absolutely everyone.

There was something about Dad that meant he was adopted by everyone's set of friends and families. He will be missed by Brigitte's siblings and their families and our dearest friends- they even held a mass for him in the Cathedral at Vence.

And Dad was very good at holidays, not because he was very organized, he wasn't, but because when something went wrong, he really didn't care, in fact he rather enjoyed minor disasters.

We had some delightfully chaotic tribal holidays when we all went up to Mull for the Maclean gatherings and a big gathering of our own on the Dalmatian coast. Where Dad was convinced he could go water skiing but didn't.

The last chapter of his life, the last 4 years, is the most difficult to talk about.

He lost Liz, the wife he loved so dearly in 2020 at the start of Covid (and we could not even commemorate her properly). It was a sudden tragedy for many of us here. 3 months before they were hosting a "Goose Dinner" and we had a long lakeside walk, and then she was gone. And in addition it became apparent that Dad had the early stages of dementia.

Angus, Snjezana and the girls spent lock down with him at Glanwysc, that perhaps softened the immediate blow, but he was certain that he needed to move on, and he had the strength to do it.

Fortunately, Angus found a delightful house for sale in Ashtead in Westfield, a very special place with great neighbors and close to Jamie

and David's house. So he could come back to Surrey and be closer to his family and some longstanding friends- such as David George and the Haines who took him out walking and golfing as soon as he came back, which helped him settle in.

Again his life revolved around his family with quite a busy routine. Mondays with Jamie and David, and a lot of quality time with Smallsy the dog, Curry night on a Thursday with Angus and anyone available often Ned (a good trencherman like his Grandpa), Fridays with Snjezana, Sundays in Fulham with Angus, Snjez and the girls, and 2 or 3 holidays in France every year, with Brigitte, Alec and I. He loved France, where he enjoyed complicated sea food, the occasional farandole de fromage and good wine, in either Paris and Fontainebleau or Provence. Though his French was never as good as he said it was- it was- *comment vous dire?*
Menu French

He also kept up his activities with the Worshipful Company of Cardmakers, where they celebrated his 50 years as a Liveryman, and always attended the Burns Night of the Clan Maclean association at the Caledonian Club in London, a chance to wear his Maclean tartan finery.

It is a measure of the man that despite the long shadow of dementia and the darkest shadow of the loss of Liz who he adored, he was able to find and share sunbeams of happiness.

Later he needed more help and company, we were fortunate that Jamie found Julie, who was a real companion to him along with her husband Steve, her main job was to take to lunch with him 4 days a week, but did so much more. And we can safely say that there is no restaurant in Ashted and its surroundings that has not been graced by their presence. And of course he had regular jaunts to the Ashted post office which were apparently pure comedy gold.

Julie took him to the elders exercise class "move it or lose it" twice a week which he would complain about bitterly, even if he secretly enjoyed it.

In the end he had a few people looking after him, it was not easy, but although he was sometimes anxious, we were blessed that he stayed true to his sunny disposition to the end and all the carers helped him do that.

And well.... he left us in his own house surrounded by his tribe, his children, their spouses and his carer Julie who was so dear to him.

Though talking was difficult in the last few days, he always managed a big smile, for those he clearly recognized and loved. He even laughed at Angus' jokes, someone has to.

His last words were, "I'm not dying" and in some ways he never will.

Because when we see a table of food laid out before, and you hear his voice "what a feast". When Sunday lunch extends to the afternoon and moves onto match of the day.

Whenever a simple excursion becomes a mine field of mishaps, or meteorological disasters. He will be with us.

And beyond the frolics and fun he left some words of wisdom. "Never miss your appointment with Luck" as he said to Angus.

And three of us certainly had an appointment with luck booked from the start with a dad like that.