



Mackay

ON MONEY

(AND OTHER THINGS)

BY AUTHORISED FINANCIAL ADVISER CHRIS MACKAY

My mother hated Guy Fawkes day. History buffs will recall that Guy Fawkes was a member of a group of Roman Catholic conspirators who plotted to blow up the Protestant King James VI of Scotland and I of England – along with English MPs in both houses – during the State opening of Parliament on November 5, 1605. King James was Henry VII's great great grandson and succeeded Queen Elizabeth I.

Guy Fawkes, with 10 years of military experience was in charge of the explosives, some 36 barrels of gunpowder. A bad choice by the baddies because after an anonymous tip off, it was all found during a search of the

House of Lords. That fire power would have been enough to blow the buildings and all inside to smithereens. It didn't end up well for poor old Guy and his fellow conspirators; they got themselves hanged, drawn and quartered. Not a great way to go if you can recall the last scene in "Braveheart".

My mother, Helen Dell Williamson (Dell) was born on November 5, 1922. Guy Fawkes day.

On one of her early birthdays, some little toe rag threw a cracker at her or down the front of her dress and not surprisingly it soured her feelings for the date. Another birthday while out asking the neighbours for some money or sweets and chanting the

particularly gruesome "Guy Fawkes Guy, stick him up high, put him on a lamppost and there let him die...If you haven't got a penny, a halfpenny will do, if you haven't got a halfpenny, God bless you" rhyme thing that I also remember doing as a kid, some dipstick tossed a pail of water over her. These events left her disenchanted with Guy Fawkes day.

Having said this, over the years we have celebrated her birthday on November 5 for as long as I can remember along with an inhouse pyrotechnic display of sparklers, Mount Vesuvius fireworks, sky rockets and Golden Rains.

In her last few years, mother suffered from memory loss but when prompted, could remember her birthday and then she would reel off this quote:

"Remember, remember, the 5th of November

The Gunpowder Treason and Plot;
I know of no reason why the Gunpowder Treason

Should ever be forgot."

Mother was born in Seatoun, Wellington, the second daughter of Archie and Jean Williamson. Arch as he was known had a very successful career in the Public Service and was transferred over the years to various parts of New Zealand. He finished his career as Chief Clerk of the Ministry of Works in Nelson. As a 19-year-old, on June 5, 1915, he had enlisted for overseas service during World War One. Arch trained at Trentham Camp, sailed to Cairo via West Australia, then on to Marseilles, Armentieres, the Battle of the Somme, Messines, got wounded and evacuated to Walton on Thames, back to France and then was with the Army of Occupation in Cologne until he arrived back in NZ in June 1919. He married his long-term sweetheart Jeanette Christensen in October that year. My Auntie Glynn was born in 1921 and a year later my mother was born.

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Pa's job took the family from Wellington to Dunedin, Alexandra, back to Wellington, then Whangarei, and back to Wellington in 1938, living in Waterloo. Dell enjoyed 18 months at Art School in Wellington at this time.

She had a Christmas job at Whitcombe and Tombs and then a fulltime job at the Wellington Museum at 30 shillings a week. That's three dollars, folks! She moved back to be with her parents in Nelson where Pa had been relocated after the Second World War started in 1939 and Dell ended up as a dental assistant taking a pay cut to 16 bob a week (\$1.60). She got head hunted by another dentist and soared back to 30 shillings a week.

My father, Gavin Charles Stewart MacKay meanwhile had enlisted in the NZ Army Dental Corps while working at Christchurch Hospital after finishing his dental degree. The army didn't need him immediately but instead required him to go to Nelson to look after another dentist's practice, a bloke who had already been called up to active duty. Dad met Dell at a tennis party and concurrently as luck would have it, the old girl who had been the practice's dental assistant had just resigned. Dad offered Dell a job, at slightly more than 30 bob a week and Dell accepted.

In 1943, Gavin was asked by his sister June's husband, John Kennedy-Good, (later Mayor of Lower Hutt and subsequently "Sir John") to join him as his business partner in his Lower Hutt dental practice situated above the Self Help shop in High Street, near where the Baptist Church/pop up movie theatre is today. Uncle Ken as we called him, had recently bought the practice from a dentist who had become the pastor for the local British Israelite/Commonwealth Covenant Church.

Mother followed Dad over the Cook Strait and boarded with the Beck family in Penrose Street and now engaged, again worked as Dad's assistant until the Royal New Zealand Dental Corps told him to report for duty at Trentham Army Camp. Soldiers had to be made "dentally fit" before they could travel overseas. Having soldiers with toothache didn't augur well for a successful battle.

They married at Nelson Cathedral in 1944 and bought their first home at 35 Whites Line West back in Lower Hutt. We're not sure whether Dad caught the train to Trentham every day or just came home in the weekends.

The Director of Defence Dental Services appears to have been a mean critter with the impressive moniker of Colonel Bertram Sibbald Finn. If he found that a wife was

living at a town nearby to an army base that her husband was stationed at, it seemed he would have that dentist posted a long way away. When Finn found that Dell was living close to Trentham, he posted Dad to Linton Camp. On one occasion, while Dad was back home for a few days leave, it happened to coincide with Victory in Japan Day (V-J Day) at the end of August 1945. Rather than allowing a celebratory weekend, Colonel Finn ordered Captain MacKay to immediately catch the train back to Linton Camp. The whole country would have been in huge party mode. The war was over after six long hard years. Close friends and relations lay dead in Europe, Africa and the Pacific. The Allied forces had beaten the Nazis and now had cleaned up the Japanese. In retrospect, Dad should have told him to "stick it", but maybe he would have got shot for insubordination, so, he followed the triple D's (dumb dickhead dictator) orders and boarded the train for Palmerston North.

Dell's Aunty Mae lived in Palmerston

"My mother, Helen Dell Williamson (Dell) was born on November 5, 1922. Guy Fawkes day."

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North and so Dell moved in with her up there with my newly born older brother Stewart, to be near Dad at Linton. Finn discovered this and in true triple D fashion, posted Dad to Waiouru Military Camp. Dell and my brother Stewart finally admitted defeat and moved back to Nelson to be with Nana and Pa.

Despite an apparently distinguished Army career, legend has it that Finn was so despised by every dental surgeon who had come into contact with him, that not one dentist could be persuaded to speak at his funeral.

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Dad finally got discharged from the army in 1946, after which they sold Whites Line West and bought their house at 27 Matai Street where they added Mary, Jane and yours truly to the family. Mother lived there for 55 years.

She was a model citizen being involved in the Anglican Mother's Union at St James, delivering for Meals on Wheels and doing charity work for the Red Cross.

Now in her 40s, with Dad's dental assistant resigning, Dell was lured back into the practice which, years before had moved as inaugural tenants into the Post Office Building in High Street. Eventually she became Practice Manager, a position she held for over 25 years. Dad retired at 79. Dell was 72.

In her retirement, Dell who had been in her youth, a very talented artist, took up painting again after a 50-year hiatus. She was also a keen gardener and in latter years, travelled to America and Europe with family. Dell had a strong faith and had a great love of the Lord. She had a keen sense of humour and always had a lovely welcoming smile, even at the very end. When you asked how she was, she would invariably reply "all the better for seeing you".

Dad died a couple of years after he retired and mother stayed in the family home until she moved to Woburn Road to be next door to us. They had been married 53 years. Mother loved the Hutt Valley and all her houses had great views of either the Western or Eastern Hills.

Dell enjoyed a close relationship with and loved and was much loved by her four children, 12 grand children and 25 great grandchildren. Her youngest, Juliette Dell MacKay was born five months ago.

Dell lived independently at Woburn Road until her early 90s. She resided at Bob Scott Retirement Village for the last three years of her life, where the nursing staff took excellent care of her. She was almost 97 when she died there, peacefully in her sleep. My mother had a great life!



Helen Dell MacKay

November 5, 1922 – September 7, 2019.

*"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."*

Psalm 121

These are generalised and occasional tongue in cheek comments only and should not be taken as personalised advice. Disclosure Statements are available on request and free of charge.

YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO!

Children, big and small, will enjoy the latest addition to the Upper Hutt City Centre artworks. A large, colourful hopscotch, a game played in many countries and which has been around since Roman times, has appeared on the footpath between Russell and Geange Streets.

A collaboration between the Upper Hutt City Council and local artist Kerrie Kubisch of Urban Owl Studio in Pinehaven, the hopscotch features birds, fish and butterfly all found in the Upper Hutt area.

Kerrie and her family have called Upper Hutt home for the past 14 years and her passion for the natural beauty of the Upper Hutt and Wellington area is clearly apparent in Kerrie's work. "It's important to me our community is aware how great the area they live in is and that we all take care of it," she says. "We have a paradise which we take a little for granted and need to look after."

"We hope the hopscotch will provide some free entertainment over the coming summer months and allow children, and adults, to have a little fun as they explore our city centre," says Upper Hutt City Council Chief Executive Peter Kelly.

Go on, you know you want to, release that inner child!

