

Sketch of a West Pointer – David McMurdo



David was born in Yorkshire, England in early January '43 and attended a local grammar school for boys. It was founded in 1612, had high standards, and a particularly good reputation. From there it was on to the University of Durham, the third - oldest university in England (incorporated by royal charter in 1837), where he earned his B.Sc. Geology. Durham's colleges are situated on a peninsula formed by a meander in the River Wear, beside the 11th century Norman Cathedral and Castle which have now been designated a World Heritage Site.

David's career began in 1965 with Cominco UK, working on mineral exploration programs in northern England and Wales. He left England when he was 24, going to northern Spain to supervise a drilling program. David admits that he had never

seen a diamond drill, nor did he speak Spanish! However, the program was successful in outlining sufficient Zn Pb ore to warrant a detailed underground exploration program. And that's how he got into mining.

During his 7 years in Spain, David met his wife Consuelo, who was a teacher in a village within the mining concession. They were married in 1971 in Lugo, the capital city of the province of the same name, and their first two daughters were born there. A third daughter was born in England and their son in Kimberley. All children currently reside nearby, Sarah and Ian in North Van while Helena and Anna live in Vancouver.

Next it was on to Yellowknife, NWT, to work as Chief Geologist in the Con Gold Mine. The family arrived to minus 40 degree C temperatures in January 1975 but enjoyed beautiful summers and stayed for 9 years, giving David more exposure to mining as part of the team. In 1980, the outlook for geologists was bleak and he was ready for a move – but was offered the position of Mine Superintendent. “No hesitation and no looking back,” he recalls.

Following their years in the far north, the family moved to Kimberley for David's employment at the Sullivan Mine which produced Zn Pb Ag (zinc, lead, silver), initially managing technical services, Mine Engineering and Geology, and later as Mine Manager. After 9 years in the Kootenay Rockies, the McMurdos ventured south to Chile in 1993, leaving the 3 girls behind at UBC. They resided in Santiago and David traveled to the high altitude Quebrada Blanca Mine every second week where he was Manager of Operations and then later General Manager of the company. The product was cathode copper, 99.99% pure, and sold around the world. David retired from Cominco in 2001, shortly after returning to Vancouver from Chile.

When asked about golf, David reports that he was a member of a club in Santiago, played only two rounds in 9 years in Yellowknife and was a member of Kimberley G.C. for several years. David joined West Point in 2012, as part of a large group of new members. He was invited to join the Captain's Table in 2015 and has served very capably in that position on a regular basis through 2020. At the 2020 AGM, David was elected to our Board as Membership Director. Over the years he has won many events, from his 2013 Flight B Championship to the Captain's Challenge in 2020.

David's father was a golfer and inspired him to take up the game as a young teenager. His annual dues at a local club as a student member were 13s6p. From the time he left high school David did not play again for about 25 years and didn't settle down to steady golf until retirement. His lowest handicap is 17 and hopes he might be able to shoot his age in about 10 years! Although a hole-in-one has eluded him, he has come within 3 and 9 inches on two occasions. He also watched his tee shot on the 200-yard 14th hole at Belmont roll across the green and be deflected by the hole. Favourite courses include Kimberley's Trickle Creek (a strategic course where you need to think about the risk-reward), Langara (with a good variety of well laid-out holes and its challenging greens), Northview's Canal Course, Fairview Mountain in Osoyoos and Golden G.C. In reaction to one of my questions, "Which golfers do you most admire and why?" – David's response was, "Not to mention any names, but I have to wonder why Northern Ireland with such a small population base can produce so many good young golfers. Something to ponder."

David was fascinated by pipe music from an early age and after a slow start eventually became a piper. He played with both the NWT and Kimberley Pipe Bands, and while in Santiago piped for the Saint Andrew's Society on a regular basis. He met several would-be pipers who had no way of making it but eventually encountered two who had the basics. David coached them a little and gives them full credit for forming a successful band.

Among several hobbies, landscaping is a favourite. David developed a building lot in Spain, another in Yellowknife, a very steep back yard in Kimberley and their current lot in North Vancouver. He says it is hard work, but the end product is worth the effort. He has always been an enthusiastic woodworker and recently helped his son Ian rebuild a 34 foot wooden-hulled Fraser River gill netter – every weekend for four years! The finished product has been featured in several nautical magazines. David always enjoys returning to Europe, Scotland, Ireland, Spain and France, but says his trip to Machu Pichu is hard to beat! In closing, David reflects on how fortunate he has been, being in the right place at the right time, attending the schools he did, and receiving support from parents and family. "It all seems to have worked out rather well."

*Material submitted by David to Lorne - December 2020
Published June 1, 2021*