

# Remembering Ray



Ray Divilienne Wornall  
1916-2011

## REMEMBERING RAY

Ray loved everyone,  
So naturally, everyone loved Ray!



Ray Vivienne Malcolm was born in Gisborne on the 30th of October 1916.

Her father George, a surveyor and auctioneer, and her mother Muriel, were theosophists.

This meant that although not religious they encouraged free spiritual thinking and enquired seriously into the nature of reality.

The children; Ray's two elder brothers, John and Kingwell, and her younger sister Yvonne, were educated in Montessori schooling. This encouraged independence and promoted each child's natural skills and attributes.

All led exemplary careers in their fields.

Although fourth generation Kiwi, Ray's Scottish roots were strong and with her sister, she enjoyed Sword Dancing wearing the green Malcolm tartan.

In adult life she showed a canny sense for business and thrift which may well have reflected this heritage.

When Ray was seven, the family moved to New Plymouth for a year and then moved again to settle in Napier.

The Malcolm family suffered tremendous upheaval in 1931 when the Napier earthquake struck.

The resulting destruction was even more severe than that of the current Christchurch disaster. In Napier, fire broke out from broken gas mains and the inner city was razed to the ground.

Shortly afterwards, father George's auctioneering business was lost in a fire. The family lost everything and father George separated from them and left permanently for Australia.

The children bonded strongly in the face of adversity.

Eventually life settled for the family, and in Napier Ray trained as a teacher. In her early twenties when graduated, she taught at Nelson Park School in Napier, and then remedial reading in a very rural area south of Napier. Her old school house still stands, now a rustic café and she remembered well travelling around on horseback.

At 24 she decided to study art, and with her mother moved to Christchurch where they took a flat in Bealey Ave.

Ray studied at the Christchurch College of Arts and became a popular member of the school made well known by Bill Sutton.

After graduation she taught art at West High [now Hagley High], and pursued her passion, painting prolifically. She enjoyed landscapes and seascapes and spent many enjoyable days camping with her mother in South Canterbury where she set up her easel and canvas.





In 1950, at the age of 32, she travelled by passenger liner to England, where she took possession of a brand new Hunter Hawke motorcar on behalf of her brother John, who was by then a successful pilot. She drove for a year in Europe, painting, and enjoying the artwork she had studied at University.

She witnessed much of the destruction in post war Europe, and developed a lifelong appetite for travel. She spend some of this time with an Austrian travel companion, Rudy, with whom she has remained in friendly contact with for her whole life.

Returning to Christchurch and while attending the alternative Liberal Catholic Church she met a young man... Murray Kowai Wornall. They fell in love and married on "V Day" May 8 1954.

Murray was an architect and builder with 5 acres of hillside land lying in semi rural Bowenvale Valley in Christchurch. They set about building a wooden 2 storey home surrounded by market gardens.

Ray became pregnant and insisted on working atop the house's structure 60 feet off the ground with a swollen belly. Murray had to demand that she desisted and return to ground.

On June 28 1955 she gave birth to her only child, Christopher John, who she adored.

Murray was a prolific and excellent house designer and builder. Working as a dedicated team the couple progressed, building new houses and modifying old villas into multiple flats, which Ray managed.

They developed a deep interest in an Indian philosopher, J. Krishnamurti, who had broken from the theosophist structure to become an independent teacher espousing the principles of love, freedom from fear, and personal spiritual revolution.

They promoted his literature in NZ and became part of a small group who joined for intelligent and deep discussions at their and other's homes.

Both had a mutual love of classical music, recorded and live, and they enjoyed as a family, orchestras and visiting highlights such as the Vienna Boys Choir.

As Christopher grew, the family spent much time camping, where Ray was very content painting landscapes and enjoying the outdoor life that she loved.



Murray developed a passion for yachts, and the years saw him crafting a succession of ever larger boats which the family sailed off in every weekend to enjoy the peace of Banks Peninsula.

Ray became an accomplished sailor, and she and Murray would enjoy this exciting activity together for many years.

Many friends will remember Ray... towelling hat, sunglasses and red parka, standing firm at the helm under full sail, spray flying, while Murray scampered about the deck adjusting sails and ropes.

In the late 1970s, Ray and Murray, now successful in their building and business as landlords, travelled extensively in Europe and the States. Several of their visits were coordinated to hear talks by Krishnamurti at Brockwood in England and Gstaad in Switzerland. They both maintained a great interest in his philosophies.

In 1978, searching for a warmer climate they discovered and fell in love with Te Kouma in Coromandel, where they set about designing and handbuilding their second beautiful home, in Kowhai Drive.

Murray moored his yacht in the harbour and they continued their passions of sailing and gardening.

Ray abandoned painting due to eye cataracts, and although these were removed and she regained full vision, she never painted again.

At Kowhai Drive, Murray built his penultimate yacht... a Kauri hulled masterpiece named Bel Canto which they delighted in sailing together.

In 1980 Christopher was tragically struck down with paralytic Polio while travelling in remote India.

With Chris close to death, Ray flew to India, and with Frances, Chris' girlfriend, set about the seemingly impossible task of keeping Chris alive for 3 months and returning him to NZ, where he recovered to be independent although using a wheelchair.

Ray's boundless spirit doubtless saw Chris through this demanding time.

She displayed the strength and drive that all her friends know so well, and was rewarded with a surviving son who loved her completely and provided her with much pride and pleasure at his exploits.

Ray's later life was one of extreme happiness, enjoying Croquet and Mah-jong with her many friends in Coromandel, her settled life with Murray and the yacht, and attending her property at Te Kouma. She devoted much time

to handicraft classes which she ran at Coromandel hospital for elderly folk, and assisted Murray with the development of the Coromandel library.

She and Murray continued to make regular trips abroad to Europe, which they both loved, and made regular extended driving tours down memory lane to the South Island and to visit Chris.

In 2010 at 94 years of age, Ray unexpectedly was diagnosed with cancer, despite a life of healthy living.

An operation gave her 6 months of delight and freedom, continuing to drive her little white Toyota, play croquet and mahjong, and enjoy her friends.

Sadly, despite a good prognosis, the cancer returned.

She succumbed peacefully after a typically spirited battle at 1.40am Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

We all loved Ray, a humble yet strong willed gentlewoman who offered her love and respect to everyone she met.

We miss you Ray.  
Bless you and goodbye Ray.

