

By Bruce McLaren

Hi Gayle.

My heart sinks. I last saw John playing at the Richmond RSL and that must have been 10 to 15 years ago. We had actually met 20 years earlier not far away, on the turf-farms of The Lowlands. My first days on the farm were a bit daunting but when I met John I instantly felt reassurance. He emanated nothing but goodness. If he was going out on a job and we were in the same crew I knew the day would be a good day. John was intelligent and would ask intelligent questions and talk about history and religion and so on. He showed me that it doesn't matter if you are thrown in the deep end with a bunch of rough blokes. It is okay to be your true self. I knew that all the other workers there respected him. There was never a bad word. One really hot day we were working afternoon out near the river. We weren't aloud to just leave the job but everyone was instantly in on it. As I leapt off the bank into the water I have an image of John doing a forward tucked somersault beside me, beaming with delight at how wonderful such a moment is.

My heart goes out to you and is with you and I feel the loss too in the depths of my heart.

Bruce McLaren. x