



Peter White

Date: 15 July 2024

Pete died last Wednesday in Bathurst. He was 78 years old and leaves behind Christine, his wife, two great kids Nina and Leon and a geological/exploration community that will remember him fondly.

Pete was a Kiwi, born in Auckland and spent his high school years at a prestigious boarding school in Dunedin. During that time (1964) he went to the Beatles concert in the Dunedin town hall.

Pete started out studying biology, chemistry, physics and maths at the University of Auckland and generally disliked all those subjects. He was walking past the geology building one day and decided to look inside. He discovered cabinets full of rocks, fossils and interesting posters which changed his life forever. He switched around subjects and graduated with a degree in geology. One of his first jobs was to peg the now infamous Pike River Coalfield. Those were the days when you had to physically peg the ground. This is West Coast tiger country and Pete did it by himself in three days.

Like many Kiwi geologists, he gravitated to Australia and began looking at copper porphyry projects in the east. At some stage in the early 1970s, he was drawn to Africa and worked in Namibia. He recounts fond memories of working in the Namib Desert. His geological skills clearly impressed someone as he was sent to London to the Imperial College to complete a master's degree in Mineral Exploration, all expenses paid.

After some time in Africa, he decided to go travelling and it was during this time he met Mech a wonderful German lady; his first wife. Those were the days when you could hitchhike and bus your way through Asia for little cost. They spent a year traveling and eventually ended up back in New Zealand where Pete commenced working for BP Minerals in epithermal exploration and where his two kids were born.

In 1989 he joined the Cyprus Gold NZ team that was developing the new Golden Cross epithermal deposit. He worked for Cyprus and the subsequent owner, Coeur Mining Inc, out of Waihi in NZ. During that time there was a stint at the Selwyn Mine in Queensland where Pete undertook a detailed underground mapping project as part of a major exploration push. He was a key part of the team that discovered the 222 orebody.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s Pete worked extensively in eastern Australia for Golden Cross Resources; a company started by the late David Timms. He was renowned for his mapping and prospecting skills. David would always want Pete to go to a new prospect early on in a program because he knew Pete would find mineralisation no matter how inconsequential it was. If Pete said it was “squiffy” (one of his favourite terms) GCR would move on to something else. If you search around in DIGS you will find his reports for a variety of well-known projects; Cargo, Copper Hill, Mt Boppy-Pipeline Ridge. It was during his time with GCR that he met Christine who became his new soulmate, and who accompanied Pete on his many wild field adventures in subsequent years.

Pete had a stint in the NT at Nabarlek for Uranium Equities. He undertook a comprehensive 3 month-long RC drilling program which he liked immensely. He also went to PNG to complete an assessment of magnetite sands, worked in Mongolia for several seasons and completed evaluations for gold in Tanzania. Wild adventures according to Pete.

From 2010 until about 2018 he worked intermittently for Silver City Minerals at Broken Hill. In fact he and Christine set up the Broken Hill office.

His last job was about three years ago on a mapping project for Devex Resources near Tumut in NSW.

Pete was a great observer, an excellent mapper and was prepared to offer views that gave everyone new insights. He was a quietly spoken guy with no axe to grind, no inflated ego and was a great listener. You could put Pete into a field team comprising a huge variety of personalities and he would gain respect from everyone. He was great with farmers and drillers; a respectful and easy guy to get on with.

Pete had a wonderful, dry sense of humour. Many pleasant nights have been spent with colleagues talking about life over a beer or G&T and having a good laugh. He was renowned for developing a system of blame credits. If anything went wrong, he would claim it even if he wasn't to blame. Pete never did use his blame credits preferring to amass as many as he could.

Pete was also a terrible procrastinator and would agonise over small geological details that drove many exploration managers crazy. The work however, once finished, was so good no one complained.

Pete and Christine moved from their much-loved house on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula, North Auckland to Bathurst in NSW about three years ago to be closer to family. It was then that Pete was diagnosed with lung cancer. Typical of Pete he took it in his stride, procrastinated as usual and lasted a lot longer than they said he would.

Vale Peter White.

Note: These comments were made by Chris Torrey who worked with Peter for 35 years and became a close friend. Some parts of his history may be chronologically incorrect, and some details may have been missed. It's a potted history of a good bloke.

Note from Kim Stanton-Cook: Pete was with Glenn Coianiz and I on our October 2008 Mt Isa trip when we headed south to Dajarra and beyond. The geology was, according to Pete, 'squiffy'...





