

ALASTAIR SINCLAIR 1930 – 2019

Alastair was a member of the Ramblers for 50 years from 1964 thru 2014. He was very active and probably coordinated more than 1000 trips for the Ramblers. He also served on the Executive of the club for a few years.



Alastair on Pocaterra Ridge

Following are some of the testimonials that were read at his funeral.

Funeral tribute by Brian Westcott:

In the early 2000's, I asked Alastair how many trips he had led since he had become a coordinator. After some discussion, we decided that, at that time, it was well over 900, so that means that, by the time he was no longer able to hike, he had led over 1000 trips. That's a very significant achievement, but hardly describes the contribution that he has made to the club over the last 54 years.

When I joined Ramblers in 1976, Alastair had been a member for about 12 years. Although I had been on many hikes with him, I never really got to know him until we both signed up for a trip to Soviet Central Asia in 1980 to study agriculture (the only way to enter these areas then was as a part of an "educational" tour). On June 18, 1980, we celebrated Alastair's 50th birthday in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, with a glass of Romanian wine on the fire escape of our hotel. We shared a few other adventures on that trip: a midnight impromptu tour of Tamerlane's tomb in Samarkand and an attempt to visit (also late at night) every one of the stops on Moscow's metro to see the famous architecture.

For twenty years or so, every Labor Day, Alastair took a group of Ramblers down to Glacier National Park for three days of hiking. As if this wasn't good enough on its own, we stayed in The Many Glacier Hotel, where all of the summer staff were music students. Each evening after dinner, we would get a drink from the bar and settle into the cavernous lobby to enjoy the evening's musical presentation. Of course, once we were feeling mellow and ready for bed, Alastair would rouse us all for a "short walk before bedtime".

Alastair also led many car camps, where we would drive to a campground and stay for a couple of days, hiking each day. There are rumors, not evidenced by me, that he used his Scottish charm to convince the females on the trip to set up and brush out his tent! After each day's hike we would have a group dinner with lots of good food and conversation. Of course, once we were feeling mellow and ready for bed, Alastair would rouse us all for a "short walk before bedtime".

Hiking with Alastair was more than just hiking – it was a social occasion. We would stop for coffee and a muffin before the hike to enable those along for the hike to chat. This was also a good way for newcomers to get to know their fellow hikers. Lunch stops were always leisurely with lots of time for a nap or to examine flowers. When we returned to town after the hike, those who had no pressing commitments would go to someone's house for a potluck dinner or to a restaurant. I was hiking with Alastair for many years before I realized the degree of planning that took place for these post hike meals. If we arrived back in town too early or too late, then everyone would just go home. By keeping an eye on the clock, Alastair would know when to speed the group up or stop to see another view or bring out his magnifier to examine some flowers in order to slow the group down.

Over the years, he brought a lot of pleasure into my life and to the lives of the many people with whom he interacted. What better legacy can a person leave than that?

Marianne Flanagan read the following tributes:

Alastair always seemed like a big brother.....to me and many others in the Ramblers. Maybe it was only the women he ordered around, but I suspect he helped a lot of the men as well. Alastair was there for our first hike, our first back pack and our first ski trip. I always felt more confident that I would arrive home again at the end if he was on the trip.

Alastair came to Calgary in 1964

Helga Pattison: I joined the Rocky Mtn. Ramblers in **1968** after having worked in Lk. Louise the first year, arriving from Europe in 1966. I learned very fast that it was not a good idea to explore

the Mountains by myself. I certainly fell in love with them. The bears knew where to come for breakfast every morning, before the garbage was taken to the dump.

My **first Backpack** was with Alastair to Cougar Mtn. in the Kananaskis up the Elbow Rd. In the evening we picked a camp site close to a creek and we went straight to HAPPY hour. Alastair pulled out a bottle of wine and his goblet. I went to the creek to fetch water for the spaghetti, brought out a pound of hamburger meat, started rolling many little balls for the sauce in my palms. And suddenly Alastair asked: "Helga, have you washed your hands?" I was a little short for words. I grabbed the bottle and said to Alastair: "Here, have another glass and relax." We all enjoyed a home cooked meal later. In the early days it was the girls, who planned, shopped and cooked, that is breakfast, sandwiches for lunch and supper, and as Wally told me, the total could not be more than \$ 2.00. We were 4 guys plus me. Guess who got stuck for the food. Next morning we climbed Cougar Mtn. It was fantastic. I felt so happy and good. I knew I had found new friends. Alastair took many more BPs, day hikes in the foothills and high country. His annual car camping and Motel trips to Waterton, Jasper and Glacier were very popular with the ladies. He took so much care of everybody on his trips. I liked Alastair very much. We became friends for life, 51 YEARS. We will always think of the "good times" we had together.

Kay Kittle **1964** I think for quite a few Ramblers, a hike co-ordinated by him was their introduction to the club and perhaps to hiking. I think it was in **1964 that** I first met him at the club. He had just a short time before moved from Edmonton to Calgary - I think perhaps to be closer to the mountains. Fairly soon he became a co-ordinator and over the years led a countless number of trips, from easy jaunts in the foothills in the spring and fall and then to higher ranges in the summer. Over the years, he also arranged a lot of enjoyable weekend camping trips in various areas from Jasper through to Waterton. Up to the time of his 'retirement' from hiking he had helped many of us to have a lot of enjoyable days in the mountains. Yes, he will be missed.

Dee O'Brien! I arrived in Calgary and Ramblers from Grande Prairie in **1987** and soon was going out on wonderful hikes with Alastair. It was so great stopping for coffees and suppers and such comradery. I'm so grateful for all the times he drove us to the mountains and led us on wonderful walks all accompanied by his British good humour. Yes, we miss you Alistair.

Marianne: We all have stories of how Alastair took care of us Ramblers.....as individuals who were new to the club.... and as part of the group that had spent the day hiking or skiing together. One of the first after-the-hike dinners I went to

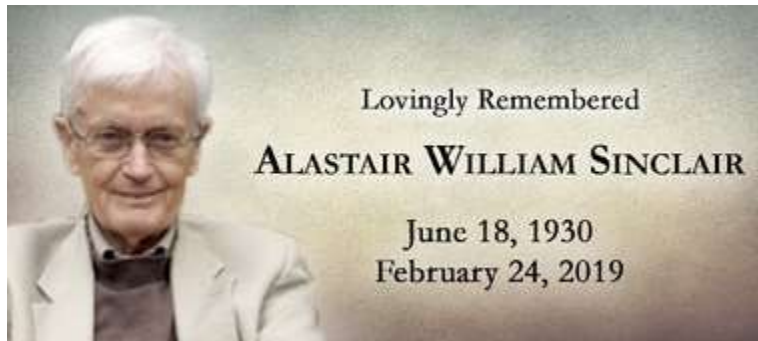
was in Alastair's apartment on the West edge of eighth or Seventh Ave downtown, probably November of 1970..or 71. We all crowded into his place on a cold, muddy Sunday after a very wintery hiking trip somewhere up in the Forestry. Many cans of things went into the mélange on his stove, and I have to say it tasted good at the end of that hike. I imagine he had to spend some time cleaning up after we all went home, but we were always invited to come back again wherever he lived.

Everyone was invited. Alastair took care of us all day on the hike, and then made sure we all had a glass of wine and some hot food at the end of the day. He was like our BIG BROTHER, ordering us around- especially the women who were to make the meals- but I suspect the men were told what they should be doing as far as the tents and camping set up was concerned. We all knew Alastair was taking care of us all, and all would be well, so we didn't complain.

Alastair was also a skier with the Seniors Alpine Ski Club, along with many of the people here today. The Ramblers on these ski trips would usually get together in someone's hotel room for a group dinner when we went on these trips as well. We all became family for each other, who like Alastair, was without his family here. If we liked something in his garden, Al would send us home with a piece to plant in our own gardens. If we were having a pot-luck, he would bring a dish he cooked for the occasion. He knew where we were on a hike, even if we didn't.

He was our big brother, and we will all miss him.

Obituary from the Calgary Herald



SINCLAIR, Alastair William

June 18, 1930 Carlisle, England

February 24, 2019 Calgary, Alberta

Alastair William Sinclair of Calgary passed away calmly and peacefully on Sunday, February 24, 2019, at the Bow View Manor, at the age of 88 years.

Alastair was born in Carlisle, England to Eire Winifred Sinclair (nee Carlyle) and William Alexander Sinclair. He graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering from Edinburgh University, and worked in Scotland on various hydro projects, before immigrating to Edmonton in 1957. He was employed by an engineering consultancy company Haddon, Davis and Brown until he transferred to Calgary. While in Edmonton Alastair was an active member of Y'd Horizons a YMCA hiking club. Soon after coming to Calgary in 1964, he started working for the City of Calgary as a civil engineer in the Road Engineering Department, and remained with the city until his retirement. An outdoors man who loved mountains, Alastair was a real asset to the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association, where he became a coordinator and led innumerable trips from easy jaunts in the foothills to higher ranges in the summer. He enjoyed weekend camping trips to various areas from Jasper to Waterton Glacier. He also gained a multitude of friends within the Ramblers, who will always remember his trips. Alastair was also part of the Seniors Alpine Ski Club, the Scottish Dancing with Calgary Scottish Country Dance Society, St. Barnabas Church, and the Schiehallion Scottish Study Group and the Unitarian Church. Alastair also loved gardening and music, as well as travelling. He often spent Christmas with his late brother Neil Sinclair and his wife Brenda, and his niece and nephews. He had a love of Scotland and all things Scottish and kept with him a strong sense of his Scottish roots. He was fascinated by genealogy and compiled a family history which now resides in England.

He will always be missed by his many good friends here in Canada and his friends

and family in England, niece Lis Sinclair, nephew John Sinclair and their families.

Funeral Services will be held at Unitarian Church of Calgary (1703 - 1st Street NW, Calgary, AB), where Alastair has been a member since 1976, on Friday, March 8, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. Reception to follow at the Church. Condolences may be forwarded through www.mcinnisandholloway.com. Friends and family would like to thank the staff at Staywell Manor and Bow View Manor, as well as the staff at Rocky View General Hospital.

In living memory of Alastair Sinclair, a tree will be planted at Fish Creek Provincial Park.

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