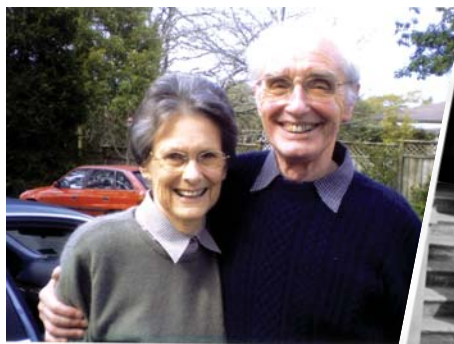


# 2009 Valentine's Couple



## Elizabeth and John Ronaldson

It was a classic love story – young House Surgeon falls in love with Theatre Sister over the operating table. This Valentine's Day that doctor and his nurse, John and Elizabeth Ronaldson, will celebrate 50 years of happily married life at their Pukekohe home.

"We met at Cook Hospital in Gisborne, standing side by side in the operating theatre for seven months before John popped the question," recalls Elizabeth. "We had got very friendly but hadn't been out much together when we went to the Chateau with a crowd of friends and John proposed. I accepted and John went to speak to my father as soon as he could."

A dainty ceramic shoe adorned their wedding cake, the same shoe that had decorated Elizabeth's parents' cake and which was to appear on the wedding cakes of all Elizabeth and John's children. The couple moved to Pukekohe where John joined a medical practice, then went into practice for himself, serving the district for 35 years. Elizabeth worked alongside him again, as practice nurse.

"Pukekohe was very different then, a lot of the roads were dirt roads. Many of the Maori women had babies at home and some of them had up to 17 children. They lived in homes with dirt floors and were holding onto the old ways, even though there was a hospital to have their babies in. Those were the days when the doctor went to people in their homes and was on call all the time," says John.

When asked what attracted her to John, Elizabeth laughed and said "John hasn't got a romantic bone in his body, but my father always said to invite boyfriends home and see how they fit into the family – and he was right."

"It was my car that attracted her to me," quipped John. "I had a new Humber imported from England and they were quite rare."

Throughout their marriage, the couple have been the best of friends and still do most things together, including Lions, three Probus clubs, the local Anglican church group, delivering Meals on Wheels, playing croquet golf and walking every day.

The couple had three children and are now the proud grandparents of four grandchildren. "Our family is very good to us and everyone gets on so well together. They arranged a big surprise 45th wedding anniversary for us – it was a marvellous day."

This anniversary will be another wonderful day, including a cake decorated by a small ceramic slipper.



## Mark and Darlene Davie

Matchmaking brought Mark Davie and his wife Darlene together, 12 years ago this February.

Mark: I was working at AMI at Papakura in 1994 – I remember it because the Springboks were touring – I have always been right into my sport. One of the girls I worked with was one of Darlene's clients and thought we would make a good match. I had been doing some modelling and had some good photos, so we exchanged photos. Darlene had won Miss Friendship at Miss Counties in 1994. We went on a blind date with my work mate in tow. We were meant to meet at Denny's but it was booked out, so went to Georgie Pie. I spent \$1, so thought, 'if this doesn't work out, it hasn't cost anything,' but we got on really well. A week later, I invited Darlene to my work do and when I took her home, we sat in the car and talked until 6 o'clock in the morning. I was playing rugby and asked her to come to a game – I was captain and really wanted to impress her. I could see my dad and brothers checking her out. They gave me a 'thumbs up' while I was playing. My brothers played a part in our engagement a couple of years later, laying out a blanket and a fruit bowl on the sand at Eastern Beach. I told Darlene I wanted to go there at sunrise to try out my new camera, and when we got there, I proposed. We were married a year later at Waiuku – it was a really good day, I remember it like it was yesterday. She had asked me not to play any sport on our wedding day, but as we met in the aisle, I had to tell her we had won our game of touch. In fact, I had played golf and two touch games! We now have two children, six year old Boston and Madelyn who is two, and to keep romance alive, we always try to have a date night at least once a month – time to ourselves. We try to not take each other for granted and respect each other and each other's opinions. Our Christian faith plays a large part in our marriage. The little things are important, like me changing the toilet rolls! Of course, we have our differences but I remember what my grandfather, a good old wise man said to me, 'Never let the sun go down on your wrath.'