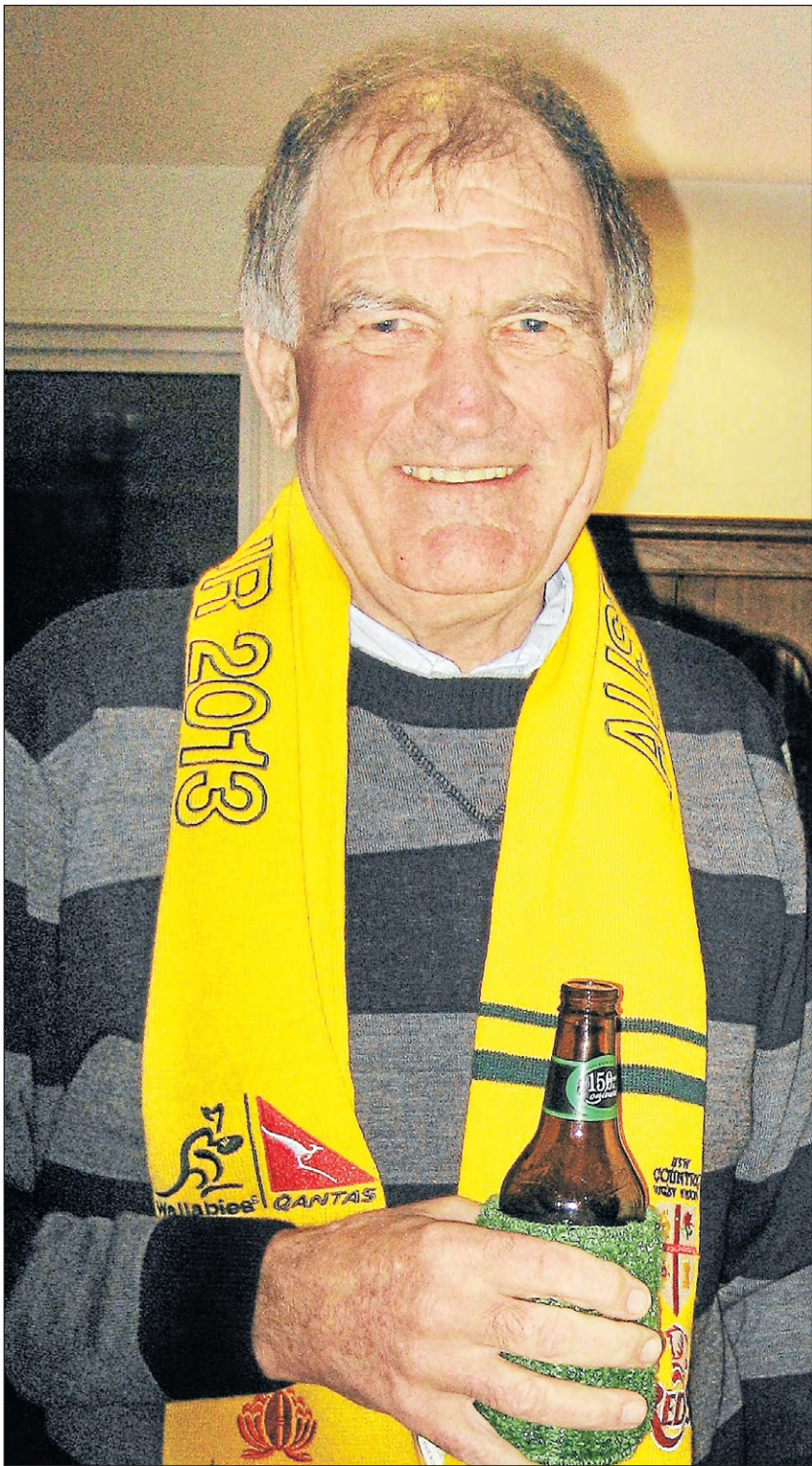


Mentor and mate led from the front, on-field and off



GOOD SPORT: John Deane-Butcher was a keen sportsman across many spheres, but most notably as a successful rugby coach and player. He died on Monday after battling cancer.

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By **BRUCE CAMERON**

BATHURST has lost one of its favourite sons. John Deane-Butcher passed away on Monday after battling cancer.

His funeral service will be held at the Cathedral of St Michael and St John from 11am on Friday.

John Deane-Butcher was born on April 14 in Warwick, Queensland.

He was in the first conscript group sent to Vietnam in 1966-1967 and was second lieutenant of his platoon, the 5th Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR), but it was not until after he went to the 40-year reunion of the formation of the 5RAR in 2005 that he started to acknowledge his Vietnam time and began marching in local Anzac Day parades.

On completion of his deployment, John returned to Brisbane and finished his matriculation.

His father was a doctor in Warwick and John did his schooling at Churchie in Brisbane (finishing in 1961), having been regimental sergeant major (RSM) of his cadet unit.

He did a year at the University of Queensland, studying veterinary science, but it was hard to settle down.

This study was not for him, as he played too much rugby representing Queensland under 19s and GPS Old Boys.

John then became a travelling salesman for a stock feed company that brought him to Orange.

He enrolled as a mature age student at Mitchell College of Advanced Education (now CSU) in 1972 to start two of his long-time partnerships.

At college John was a keen rugby man, captain of first grade, premiership winner, and recognised by his award of a College Blue.

He coached the rugby side from 1972-74 and it was here that he became besotted by the head girl of the cheer squad, Jo Forbes, an effervescent

young (10 years his junior) and energetic beauty.

They celebrated their 36th wedding anniversary a week before John died, but none who were at the wedding in 1977 could ever forget it.

Jo set the date months ahead only to learn later it was grand final day – and the first grade side coached by John was playing.

On the day of the wedding, John gave his team their instructions before heading off to be married. It was the only game he lost in two years of coaching.

John loved rugby, as a player and coach, and also completed stints in charge of teams at The Scots School and All Saints' College.

He was one of the most successful coaches the Bathurst Bulldogs have had and, in 2005, he was named coach of the Bulldogs' best XV of the past quarter of a century.

On finishing college, John joined a local accounting practice and, on January 1, 1979, started the second of his long partnerships.

Through a merger of practices, John and I became partners, along with Ian Hooper. JDB was the "D" of the CDH for 30 of the 40 years of his professional accounting life.

He also loved cricket and was a keen wicket-keeper and batsman for the Rugby Club, winning a second grade premiership in 1972/73 and 1976.

With Dr Peter Douse and Angus McKibbin, John started the Ba-thirst Runners Club and they set off and finished at the Family Hotel each Thursday.

This group is still meeting today.

Bushwalking and gardening were two other passions.

John was a wonderful companion, sociable and outgoing, tactful and helpful.

He was a loyal friend, a true officer and gentleman. We have lost a great mate.

☐ JOHN Deane-Butcher was a true family man.

He had three sisters – J, Meg and Bun – who he grew up with in Warwick.

He adored them all and their families.

Jo and John had four wonderful children in Belinda, James, Felicity and William.

They loved them dearly and always supported them.

In more recent years, John welcomed the addition of Alan, Chris and Bex to the family and his granddaughter Isabella.