

Friends and family mourn an adventurous traveller

BY JEFF STEPHENSON - *'South Coast Register'* 2 Mar, 2011

A CREATIVE man full of depth, compassion and honour is how friends have described Riche Du Plessis, who died suddenly in India last week.

The Nowra travel agent, 70, was travelling with his wife Gaillyn Cooper on a business trip.

He suffered a heart attack last Thursday and died later of complications.

Friends described him yesterday as a man of energy, who was passionate about everything he undertook.

"His death has come as a real shock," colleague and friend Chris Mansell said yesterday.

"He will be missed by many people from many different backgrounds."

Ms Mansell worked with Mr Du Plessis at his Nowra travel agency for 10 years and the two of them were responsible for launching the Shoalhaven Poetry Festival.

She described her colleague as a man of incredible energy, who also possessed a great calm.

"He was talented in so many fields.

He was a creative writer who had short stories published and was a talented poet.

He lived in a lot of different places and had a great knowledge, yet he was a very modest man.

People wouldn't know the half of what he achieved."

She thought the first work he had published and which was well received was 'A guide to all the toilets in the UK', a witty journal written during one of his early travelling adventures.

"He was a very quirky guy. You know he married Gaillyn in a traditional Bedouin ceremony in Jordan. Can you imagine the difficulties there would have been in arranging that?" she said.

Another friend and colleague, Mr Patrick De Gabriele, described Mr Du Plessis as "a remarkable man with energy and enthusiasm".

He said he was a creative writer and "full of hidden depths. He was well known for his involvement in philosophy groups and he taught photography," Mr De Gabriele said.

"It was only recently that I learned he had a passion for vintage and veteran cars.

He had a Karmann Ghia shipped out from the US recently and it's still undergoing restoration work.

He was passionate, caring, talented and energetic. His death has come as a great shock to everyone who knew him," Mr De Gabriele said.

Mr Du Plessis, who was born in South Africa, is survived by his wife Gaillyn, son Nic and daughter Soleil.