



REMEMBERING **John Gibson**

August 1, 1915 - May 3, 2015



After 99 3/4 years, John Sumner Townsend Gibson left us on Sunday May 3, 2015. His final illness lasted only a week. He is survived by Mary, his wife of over 70 years, son Peter (Beverly), grandson Ian (Rachel) and had been looking forward to the birth of his first great-grandchild. John was one of a kind - gentle, kind, inquisitive and full of knowledge. He was a scholar, WW II flying instructor, biologist, fisherman, mountaineer and wonderful husband, father, grandfather and father-in-law. He participated in the Oxford University Exploration Club 1936 expedition to Greenland. His mountaineering experiences, starting as a youth, included treks in the British Isles, Europe, B.C., the Yukon (Centennial Expedition) and his beloved Vancouver Island. John kept written and pictorial records of his climbs which were often sought out for publication. One of his proudest moments was celebrating his 80th birthday climbing Merry Widow Peak near Port Alice with his son and grandson. During World War II, as a member of the RAF Commonwealth Air Training Program, he was stationed in Alberta and climbed regularly in the Rockies. With the Alpine Club of Canada he gave instruction to Canadian Army conscripts being taught basic mountaineering. Returning to England in 1944 he married Mary and they immigrated to Canada three years later, with infant son Peter. John worked first at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, but was then seduced by the independent lifestyle of commercial fishing. He trolled from Kyuquot on Vancouver Island's west coast until retiring in 1967. For much of that time he was on the board of the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-op and its predecessor. In 1967 he and Mary bought property in Cowichan Station where they lived until 2005. As well as John's continuing climbing and hiking on Vancouver Island, they did much travelling, often towing a tiny trailer behind his Land Rover. An active member of the Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club of Canada, John climbed, often with his friend Syd Watts, many of the peaks of Vancouver

Island, including several first recorded ascents. (A fuller mountaineering biography can be found at http://beyondnootka.com/biographies/j_gibson.html .) John was an active environmentalist, and enjoyed using his pen in support of his causes. His accurate pen-and-ink sketches of Vancouver Island mountains have been used in guide books, and his oil paintings can be found on many walls. All who knew John will miss him very much, but we know he was looking forward to learning what was on 'the other side' and to reuniting with his mother and sister and meeting his father who was killed at Gaza in WWI when John was an infant. He was an active member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). A Friends Memorial Meeting will be held at a later date. Donations to the charity of your choice in John's memory would be appreciated.

