



Meet Allan and Valma Wheeler

Allan was born at Momona (near Mosgiel airport) in May, 1929 into a large family of 7 brothers & 3 sisters whilst his parents were dairy farming and he came in at No 6 in the line of children. Allan recalls hard times as a child helping his parents and the milking was all done by hand. When he was 15, the family moved to Kaitangata & after his father bought a milk run. Allan was enlisted to help with the run which was done with a horse & cart. Allan joked that the horse knew the run better than he did.

After a year, Allan moved to Invercargill to take up a joinery apprenticeship and boarded with a family member. He recalls that one day he was biking home for lunch and saw a young woman biking to work so decided to make contact. That woman, Valma, has now been married to Allan for nearly 64 years. Allan possesses a keen sense of humour and said that after 5 years, he got sick of working inside with all the dust so went building. Years later, he gave up building as he got sick of working outside in the rain! Family holidays were enjoyed in Clyde and they liked the area so much, a move to Cromwell with their 3 children took place where Allan continued work in the building trade.

Their oldest, Kenneth, had completed a farming cadetship and in 1981, the family invested in a small 200 acre sheep farm at Moeraki. Later, the adjoining block was purchased making a total of 600 acres that were farmed. Kenneth is still on the property and nowadays is farming mostly cattle.

In May, 1983 whilst they had their 9 year old niece from Gisborne staying with them, Allan was crossing the main trunk railway line on his farm bike with his niece on the back when they were struck by the Southerner train. Sadly, his niece was killed and Allan badly injured. Both Allan & Val said that this was a dark time for them and their extended family in dealing with the trauma of the incident. His amputation was carried out at Oamaru Hospital whereupon he was transferred to Dunedin for rehabilitation and fitting of a prosthesis. Whilst in Dunedin Hospital, his daughter, Sallyanne, sent a funny pair of glasses to her Dad to cheer him up and Allan still has these glasses, as seen in the photo.

In 1998 whilst contractors were working near their house, a major slip happened which completely cut access to their property. At the time, Allan & Val were en-

route back to NZ from a holiday in South Africa. Over a year of living in a rented property whilst negotiations took place regarding fault, caused them to decide on a move to a warmer climate and in 2000, they looked at Timaru, Temuka, Rangiora & Kaiapoi before settling on a property in Harewood Rd where they still live today.

They have travelled to many places including, South Africa, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Hawaii, Alaska and all around NZ. Allan has worked as a volunteer at Orana Park and for the last 7-8 years he has been a volunteer gardener for the Charity Hospital. Indoor bowls was a sport that he was keenly involved in (with success) but he has given bowls away due to finding it harder and harder to get up and down.

Favourite Food: Everything apart from Pasta.

Favourite Place: Picton & the Sounds.

Favourite Activities: Gardening and volunteering.

Favourite Music: Scottish music and the bagpipes/ Foster & Allen.

Favourite Movie: **All** the James Bond films.

Favourite Books: Drama/Action. Wilbur Smith.

Allan states that although times were hard, he had a fun, happy childhood with such a large family. Both Val & him enjoy visiting their son on the family farm at Moeraki and travelling to Australia to visit their son, Wayne in Perth and Sallyanne in Sydney.

