

MEET MATTHEW BRYSON

Matthew Bryson is a current Executive member of the Amputees Federation of NZ and is the Peer Support & Events Coordinator for the NZ Artificial Limb Service.

Matt was one of a set of triplets born in 1984 to his parents who lived in

Edgecumbe but travelled to Auckland for the birth in case of complications. He has a brother and sister who also still live in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Matt attended Edgecumbe Primary before moving on to complete his secondary

schooling at Edgecumbe College. At the age of 17, Matt

travelled to Japan to undertake a yearlong student exchange and totally enjoyed the experience living amongst the Japanese people. Upon returning, he finished his high school year then undertook a 3-year course in

Palmerston North at a private University, International Pacific College, completing a Bachelor of International Studies. His passion for Japanese culture led to him putting this degree to good effect and left NZ once again to take up an English teaching position in the Akita prefecture where he spent the next 2 years totally immersed in the Japanese way of life. Matt said that he was the source of some amusement as he was the only Westerner living in the town of 5,000 people. Whilst there, Matt learnt the art of Japanese drumming, Kagura/Taiko and this interest has continued to this day.

In 2009, Matt returned to Edgecumbe to work on the family farm and grain business but in 2014, he was involved in an horrific farm accident when his leg got caught up in an auger causing massive injuries which lead to him having his lower leg amputated. The next year, 2015, Matt attended his first Amputees Federation conference in Wellington and participated in the GIAG programme for youth.



This sparked his interest in the amputee world and now his entire life is based around “our” community. In late 2019, Matt left the family business to take up a wonderful career opportunity with Peke Waihanga (NZALS) as their Peer

Support & Events Coordinator. Matt said that he feels extremely fortunate to have been provided this wonderful opportunity which he is thoroughly enjoying. NZALS took a “punt” with him by allowing him to perform this role from his home in Edgecumbe and he jokes with his friends that his commute to work is a short

“crawl” from the bedroom to his office.

Matt stated that he can look back to 2014 and thinks that the horrible situation he was involved in has had the most positive and productive outcomes that he could never have envisaged. He loves being involved in the amputee world, doing good for others (and himself) and making a difference in people’s lives. He stated that this involvement has led to him meeting the most incredible group of strong, courageous and giving people that he could ever hope to be involved with. Matt enjoys associating with people who have a good sense of humour, do what they say they will do and who are honest and reliable. Matt is a single man, living in his own home but says that he is “available and keeping his options open”.

FAVOURITE FOOD: KFC wicked wings. Venison back straps wrapped in bacon and cream cheese and pasta bake. He claims to be the creator of a fabulous lemon meringue pie!

FAVOURITE PLACE: Konoura, Japan where he lived for 2 years whilst teaching.

FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES: Japanese drumming, snowboarding, Edgumbe itself and any projects that bring people together, especially in the amputee community.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Keen on the heavy metal band, System of a Down. Also likes the soft rock genre.

FAVOURITE MOVIE: The Fifth Element and Who Framed Roger Rabbit.

FAVOURITE BOOKS: NO TIME FOR READING.

TRAVELS: Japan, Australia, USA, Spain, Italy, England, Switzerland, France, Fiji & Bali.

In 2019, Matt took the biggest risk in his life by travelling half way around the world to meet up with another Matthew Bryson whom he had only ever talked to by video on social media. The meet up in Omaha, Nebraska went spectacularly well and the 2 Matts are now close friends. Spending time with his large group of friends is also an activity that Matt really enjoys but maintaining his large section is a challenge because of all the activities he is involved in.





Matt said he recalls great family times from his childhood playing with his brother and sister, lots of travelling and going to Perth every year to visit with his Mum's family. He said that in general, life was trouble free up until that fateful day in 2014 but through his involvement with the amputee community, he feels he has forged a very positive outlook on life in general and that he can achieve,

or at least have a go at, almost anything he sets his mind to.

Currently, Matt is involved with the following activities;

Peer Support & Events Coordinator, NZALS. President Waikato/Bay of Plenty

Amputee Society. Executive member of the Amputees Federation of NZ. Coordinator

GIAG youth programme. Committee member Amputee & Disability Golf. Treasurer

Edgecumbe Improvement & Development team. Whakatane Sister Cities Committee

member. Group Leader Edgecumbe Taiko Drumming. No wonder Matt can't find the

time to read a book!!!! Matt, we are most appreciative for giving us an insight in to

your life and on behalf of all amputees, thank you for all you do with so much

passion and commitment to make a difference in our lives.