

MEET NOEL LANG:

Noel was born at Riccarton in 1946 and was the 4th born child to his parents. He has 3 brothers and one sister, all of whom are still alive. His father was a traction engine driver and spent a good deal of his life working for Bowmans transporting threshing machines around the rural areas of Canterbury. Later, Noel's father worked for the Riccarton Borough Council driving the steam roller and Noel recalls his dad coming home for lunch on the machine and being taken for a short ride behind the steering wheel. His Mum was a stay-at-home housewife but sadly she passed away at the early age of 38 when Noel was only 7 years old. His Dad remarried a few years later and Noel has fond memories of the family going to Waikuku every year for the Xmas holidays. The family had moved from Riccarton to St Martins and after his father remarried, they moved to Waltham, living right across the road from the Waltham Pool. It wasn't until this move happened that Noel's father bought a car so before that, a bicycle was the only form of transport and Noel can recall being put on the bike seat and his father riding to Riccarton to get supplies.



Noel didn't start school at Beckenham Primary until he was 6 due to ill health and then moved on to ChCh South Intermediate. His secondary schooling was at the ChCh Technical Institute but Noel couldn't wait to leave school. As soon as he turned 15, he left school and obtained a farm labourers job for the Broughton family at Waireka, near Darfield where for the next 2 years he did all forms of farm work including driving machinery. After this, he moved to another farm at Killinchy near Leeston for another year before moving back in to town to, in Noel's words, "chase the girls". For the next 2 years Noel worked for the ChCh City Council on the rubbish collection trucks, a job which he loved and kept him very fit. He was living in a boarding house and became friendly with a chap who hailed from Hokitika. His friend invited Noel to join his family for the Xmas holidays and it was there that Noel met his friend's sister, Rea. Noel and Rea started dating and over the next few months Noel recalls making many trips over to Hokitika to spend time with Rea and he decided to give up his CCC job to move to Hokitika permanently where he obtained a job with the NZ Forestry Service that involved clear felling and planting. Noel and Rea married in 1966 their first child, Toko, was born in 1967. Shane was born a year later in 1968, Fiona in 1969, Gary 1971 and lastly, Jacqueline in 1972. All the boys still live in Hokitika while the two girls reside in Napier. Around 1972, Noel and the family moved back to ChCh where he took truck driving jobs and then worked for the NZ Railways based at Springfield. In 1977, the family moved back to Hokitika where Noel worked for the next 5 years at the Fletchers mill at Ruatapu, a private sawmill at Three Mile for the next 5 years before another 5-year stint on the gold dredge at Kumara before being made redundant from this position.

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The marriage broke down after this so Noel moved back to ChCh where he worked for many years for the Municipal Electricity Department (MED) as an underground cabler. In 2005, he contracted an infection on the back of his right hand which Noel states was mis-treated by the medical authorities ultimately leading to amputation of his right arm at the shoulder in 2007.

Noel has been retired for a number of years now and has lived for the last 9 years at a camp ground at Ouruhia (near Chaney's Corner) in his very well set up caravan. Noel said that he thoroughly enjoys his current life and works part-time for numerous racing clubs as an attendant. Noel is an avid sports fan and his favourite sport to watch is rugby league.



FAVOURITE FOOD: "I eat anything and everything"

FAVOURITE PLACES: Napier, Kaikoura & Singapore.

FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES: Cycling, watching all sports but especially rugby league.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: All modern music. Favourite artist is Celine Dion.

FAVOURITE BOOKS: Non-fiction & history.

Noel cherishes the close relationship he has with all his children and grandchildren and said that they get along as they are all fun orientated. He stated that the breakdown of his marriage was a particularly hard time of his life and he regretted having to leave Hokitika. Noel said that the greatest risk he ever took was re-marrying in 2010 but sadly, his wife Sylvia passed away in 2015. Travel to Singapore, Thailand, Australia and many parts of NZ remain as wonderful experiences for Noel. *When asked the question, "When are you most happy"? Noel laughed and said he is happy **ALL** the time. The author can readily confirm this. Noel has a bubbly, friendly nature and is an avid supporter of the society.*

