

## **Meet Ed Nichols:**

Ed was born in Knutsford, Cheshire, about 30 miles from Manchester, in 1923. He had an older sister and his mother was a butcher but Ed stated that he never knew his father. Ed has been married to his wife Shirley for what he describes as, 65 fantastic years and they had one girl then four boys. As a young boy Ed remembers having to help his mother by selling eggs outside the butchers shop on market day in Eccles near Manchester, a job he did not like.

His mothers' shop supplied meat to ships sailing to Scandinavia and Ed clearly recalls making the round trips to Norway with a Captain Everson when he was only 8-9 years old. It was on one of these trips that he saw a yacht in a Norwegian Fjord and made a promise to himself that one day, he would have his own yacht.

Ed left school at 14 and although he wanted to become a joiner, his mother decreed that he had to assist in the butchers' shop where he worked until he was around 22 years old. When he was 17, he was involved in a serious motorcycle accident and when he "came to" after almost a week, he was told that his left leg had been amputated below the knee. Ed's first thought was, "I will never be able to skate again." While he lay there, he realised that people skate on stilts so he must be able to skate on a fixed ankle. He went on to enjoy skating throughout his life and considers this as his greatest achievement.

He was able to buy his own butchers shop which he ran for 3-4 years when one day he saw a poster advertising Canterbury lamb and he thought NZ would be a great place to live. Around this time, Ed had his drivers' licence suspended due to speeding on his motorcycle and the thought of not being able to drive was very disconcerting so he applied to NZ House to become a "10 pound pom" when he saw an advert seeking butchers to emigrate to NZ. Due to his amputation, he was declined but made a decision to pay his own way to NZ and in the time before he left the UK, he spent three months cycling around Scandinavia.

He boarded a ship from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia, train to Montreal, Chicago then San Francisco before boarding a plane, which had to land twice on coral atolls to refuel, to Auckland landing in 1949. Ed had planned to visit the 4 main centres to see which city he liked the best. "I didn't like Auckland and after travelling to Wellington by train, I found it very small and pokey so made my way to Lyttelton by ship. I liked Christchurch so much, I have never left". Ed rented a small house opposite the main gates to Lancaster Park for 15 shillings a week and obtained work in a butchers' shop close by in Ferry Rd. Three months

after arriving, his worldly possessions, motorcycle, bicycle, spare legs and tools arrived by ship.

In 1950, Ed and Shirley met for the first time and although Ed was away working as the caretaker at Lake Ida for the winter, they continued their relationship and in December 1950, they were married when Ed's mother was here in NZ visiting them. Ed & Shirley owned their own butchers shop in Papanui and stayed in the profession all their lives owning seven shops as well as working for CFM (Canterbury Frozen Meat) managing stores as far south as Timaru. Ed is indebted to Shirley & the children for assisting in the shops throughout this time.

When Ed arrived in NZ in 1949, he joined the Mt Cheeseman Ski Club and remains a member to this day. His passion for winter sports led him to being selected to represent NZ in skiing at the second World Handicap Games in Norway in 1980, an achievement which he is extremely proud of. He also continued to pursue his passion for ice-skating throughout his life and lived his life by the motto "Anything I wanted to do, I would do it and not let the loss of my limb stop me"

In 1974, Ed achieved his lifelong dream of owning an ocean going yacht when "Solveig", a 43 foot kauri cutter (with 6 ton of lead in the keel) was built & launched. Countless hours have been spent sailing this yacht to places near & far including a 12 month long trip where Ed & Shirley attempted to sail around Cape Horn (but turned back), Australia, Chatham Islands, Bay of Islands, New Caledonia, Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu. This yacht remains in family ownership to this day. When Ed was 75, he and Shirley crewed a yacht which sailed from St Lucia in the Caribbean, down the Panama Canal to Tahiti.

Favourite place: Wainui.

Favourite music: Classical

Favourite food: "I am butcher..MEAT and love bacon & eggs"

Favourite activities: Ice-skating, skiing, sailing, canoeing, smoking salmon and making things from scratch in his workshop

Ed says that his hardest challenge is to once and for all empty his garage and getting old! He says the best thing that has ever happened to him was meeting Shirley, to which Shirley replied she felt the same way about meeting Ed. Shirley added that Ed's greatest love was for his family and sharing all his activities with them. "He is so very proud of them "

Ed & Shirley have lived at Wainui since 2000 when they built a house there and only travel back to their ChCh property when the need arises. They both thoroughly enjoy their lifestyle on the Peninsula and living close to the water fulfils their lifelong love of the sea.

*Editor: What a fantastic & interesting life Ed & Shirley have lived.*