

## **Meet Heather Plows:**

Heather was born in Christchurch in 1941 and spent her early childhood years living in Fendalton. Her father worked as a customs clerk at Mace Engineering for many years and Heather had 2 older brothers, one of whom has since passed away while her remaining brother lives in Kaiapoi. Heather says that she had a very



happy and enjoyable childhood and fondly recalls going on family camping holidays to Leithfield Beach. She attended what was then known as Fendalton Open Air Primary before moving on to Christchurch West (now Hagley High). She left school in 1957 to take up a position with the Post Office as a shorthand typist where she worked for around 5 years before taking up a similar position with British Pavements. She only spent 3 months in this position before deciding to embark on her OE to the United Kingdom where she spent around 18 months living and working in London.

Upon her return to NZ in 1964, she was able to return to her old position at British Pavements and worked there up until 1968. At work, Heather met Brian Plows and they married in 1966, son Phillip was born in 1969 and daughter Kathryn in 1971, Phillip now lives in Brisbane and Kathryn in Melbourne but Heather enjoys travelling over to Australia to see both families. After marrying Brian, they rented in Papanui, Sherborne St then built the family home in Bishopdale where they lived for a few years. Brian was transferred to Auckland where they lived for 4 years before returning to Christchurch to live in Avonhead. They then bought a "spec" unit in Kintyre Drive, Broomfield 25 years ago and Heather still lives there although she is finding the grounds hard to manage and has her name down for a unit at Summerset Retirement Village in Wigram. Brian sadly passed away in 2011 and he was an active member of the society alongside Heather being on the committee for many years as well as holding the position of President for about 5 years. Heather was made a Life Member of the Canterbury/Westland Society around 20 years ago and still attends most committee meetings. It is only recently that Heather has ceased her visiting of new amputees to offer her support.

In 1985, Heather started experiencing problems with a "lump" in her foot which turned out to be a fibrous sarcoma. At the urging of her family, she went for tests and the "lump" turned out to be cancerous and she was given less than 24 hours' notice by the surgeon that she would have to have her leg removed below knee which took place in June that year when she was aged 44 years old.

Heather stated that she had wonderful support from her family and also said that Brian "spoilt her rotten" so she feels very lucky to have had such a wonderful family. She still attends her church on a regular basis and has made many very close friendships as a result.

Heather recalls the hard times of trying to deal with her amputation at a reasonably early age (44) but the surgery opened up new opportunities within the amputee community which she feels has made her a better person. She also said that having a happy childhood, a wonderful husband and such a supportive family are very special to her.

**FAVOURITE FOOD:** Roast lamb and mint sauce.

FAVOURITE PLACE: London and Mt Somers (where she used to go and stay with an Aunt at her guest house when she was a child)

HOBBIES/ACTIVITIES: Walking & exercise group. Used to play the electronic organ and was in an entertainment group for 15 years going around retirement villages.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Easy listening & classical. Loved The Beatles who came to prominence while she was living in London in 1964.

FAVOURITE MOVIE: Red Joan starring Dame Judy Dench.

FAVOURITE BOOK: Heather said she isn't a big reader but does enjoy James Patterson novels.

Heather admitted that the greatest risk she ever took in her life was to embark on her OE to the UK as she had never travelled overseas prior to this. Obviously, she has been to the UK and on the way there she visited Fiji, Tahiti and Sri Lanka but with Brian they also visited Europe, USA and Australia.

As she gets older, Heather admits that gardening and household chores are becoming more difficult hence having her name down for the unit at Summerset. Heather had surgery in May this year and although she says she is managing okay on crutches, she is definitely looking forward to getting up and about again on her prosthesis.

*Thank you Heather for many years of wonderful service to the amputee community and it is always a pleasure to be in your company.*