

MEET RICHARD TAYLOR:

Richard was the third born child in his family in Southport, near Liverpool in 1959. His parents had the 3 children in England and another 4 children once they had emigrated to NZ when Richard was only 6 months old. The family left England on the last of the ships carrying what was known at that time as "The 10-pound Poms". After a 3-week voyage via The Panama Canal, there was a stopover in Tahiti before the ship arrived in Auckland. Richard's father had obtained a welding job with the Ministry of Works on the Waitaki Hydro Scheme project and they immediately boarded a train in Auckland and arrived at their destination, Oamaru, some 3 days later. Richard's mother told him that she used to place him in the overhead mesh luggage racks for his sleeps on the train journey.

The family stayed in Oamaru until Richard was 5 and then moved to Linwood, ChCh as his father had obtained a new welding position. Richard attended Linwood Ave Primary before the family moved to Templeton and he went to Templeton School then Lincoln High School where he used to bus to and from school. During this time, Richard recalls his dad being away for months on end working on the Tiwai Point Aluminium smelter near Bluff. The rest of his siblings had been born by this stage and Richard recalls how busy his Mum was running the household as well as being the Postmistress at Templeton at the same time. While at Lincoln High, Richard was involved in an Art production called, "The Lincoln County Incident" that was picked up by the NZ Arts Council who, after adding colour and audio, released the film at the Cannes Film Festival. Richard was a very capable footballer and made his school's First XI side while he was in the 3rd form and captained the team in his 4th form year. Richard left school at the end of his 4th form year to become an apprentice jockey for a Riccarton trainer, Kelvin Quayle. In two and a half years, Richard had 46 race day rides but never got that elusive first win. Around this time, Richard was cutting lucerne one day on the work property when his Swandri jacket got caught in the teeth of the cutter dragging his left arm in to the machine and resulting in his arm being so badly damaged that amputation was the only option.



(Jumping Cutts Brush at Riccarton Racecourse)

Obviously, race riding was no longer a possibility but only 3 weeks after the accident, he took 2 horses down to Dunedin to race. He became a Groundsman at Riccarton Racecourse from 1977-82 before transferring to Paeroa (near Thames) to become the youngest racecourse caretaker in NZ. Richard had met his first wife, Catherine, in ChCh and their first born (son) was born at Thames Hospital in 1984. The family moved back to Ch Ch where Richard worked for Toyota at the Sockburn factory as a yardman then cleaning supervisor for

the next few years before a move to a supervisory role at the ChCh Town Hall for 3 years and during this time, his daughter was born in 1987. Richard is an accomplished singer and started his own business in 1990 called, "Captain Hooks Karaoke" which he ran until 2000. His marriage had ended in 1994 but in 1997, he met Angela before they moved to the UK in 2000 and they were married in

RICHARD TAYLOR CONT :

2003 while living/working in London. He was the foreman for a property maintenance company from 2001-06 before landing the role of school caretaker at a Hackney (South London) School until 2014 when he and Angela returned to NZ. Richard obtained a role with Lighting Direct as a trade consultant in 2016 and is still in that role today.

For many years, Richard wore a "hook" prosthesis but in 2017 he received a Taska robotic hand which he said has changed his life although he still wears the hook if he has to lift something heavy. He took up golf in 1978 following his amputation and is still playing regularly to this day.

Richard is extremely proud of his 1987 achievement of completing a hole-in-one at the Harewood Golf Club, a feat that many able-bodied golfers never achieve. Being an avid singer/performer, Richard competed in the 1978 Golden Guitar Awards in Gore and performed either side of Suzanne Prentice & Brendan Duggan, two famous NZ Country singers. While on holiday in Las Vegas, he was invited to perform with a live band at the iconic MGM Grand Hotel.

FAVOURITE FOOD: Fish & Chips.

FAVOURITE PLACE: Las Vegas and the engineering of The Panama Canal.

FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES: Gardening, golf, watching sport, Karaoke.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Country, Neil Diamond & Garth Brooks.

FAVOURITE BOOKS: Not a reader, waits for the movie to come out!

Richard said the early days after the accident were hard in dealing with the pain but his lifelong motto has been, "Just get on with life" and he enjoys being independent. He and Angela have been to Las Vegas 12 times and have taken 15 cruises around the Pacific, Baltic, Atlantic, Asia & the Mediterranean where sailing in to Venice is a very special memory for them both.

