

MEET MARK A'COURT:

Mark A'Court was the first-born child to his parents in early 1956 in Milton, South Otago where his father worked as a linesman for the Otago Electric Power Board. His mother had previously been a nurse working at Burwood Hospital in Christchurch. When Mark was only 6 months old, his father accepted a new position with the company and the young family moved south to be based in Balclutha. Three younger brothers followed while the family lived in Balclutha and his brothers now live in Ranfurly, Dunedin and Christchurch.

Mark attended Rosebank Primary School before moving on to his secondary schooling at South Otago High School. Mark recalls his childhood as a fun time and doing all the "normal" things that young boys did in the 60's & 70's. Riding bikes, swimming, playing sport and generally making their own fun..all without anything electronic! Mark admitted that he was not overly academic and at the age of 16, he left school to take up a diesel mechanic's apprenticeship with a tractor dealership in Balclutha which took 4 1/2 years and 9000 hours to complete. He said that he has thoroughly enjoyed the only vocation he has been involved with and being in and around tractors all his life is the reason why he has had a lifelong passion for anything "tractor". After completing his apprenticeship, he had year-long stints with another tractor company then South Otago Transport in Balclutha before moving on to work for a local garage at Tuapeka Mouth, some 20 miles from Balclutha. During this time, Mark had met Andrenna, whose brothers were at High School with him, in 1976 through social gatherings and they married in 1980. Together they have one son, (living overseas) and 2 daughters, both of whom live close to Rangiora. Mark & Andrenna enjoy looking after their 3 grandchildren, 2 boys and a girl.

They then moved to Alexandra where Mark continued in the tractor field but due to hard economic times in the agricultural sector, Mark decided a move was necessary and he took up a position on the Clyde Dam project for over 4 years. Due to that project nearing completion, the decision was made to re-locate and they moved to Rangiora in 1989, where they still reside today. He continued in the tractor repair field until 2005 when he decided to start his own business and adapted an old barn in to his new business at Ohoka, a business that continued right through until 2022 before disaster struck. Mark closed down his business for the 2022 Christmas break and went home not having any idea that that day would be the last time he ever worked in the workshop. He caught Covid on Boxing Day and by the morning of New Year's Eve, he had a very sore ankle which he could not walk on. His GP rung to check on how he was doing re the Covid and suggested a trip to hospital. Andrenna took him to the After-Hours Surgery around 5pm but was discharged home. By the early hours of New Year's Day, Andrenna had to call an ambulance but after initial testing, he was once



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again sent home. Later that day, things were so bad that Andrenna had no option but to call another ambulance and "luckily", a switched-on Doctor realised that Mark had somehow contracted necrotising fasciitis and he was taken in to surgery immediately where surgeons cut away most of the skin and muscle on his left leg but sadly, they had to further amputate at mid-knee level the next morning. Unfortunately, Mark had to go back to surgery two days later to have his leg amputated higher up, above the knee. During his recovery and rehabilitation, Mark was simply unable to be involved fully with winding up the business & it was far too much for Andrenna and the family to tackle so they opted to employ a contractor who attended to clearing out the workshop and it's 17 years of accumulation!

Last year Mark had Osseointegration surgery, which involves having a titanium rod inserted permanently into his femur and later having a fitting attached to the rod which enables his prosthetic leg to attach directly to the implant. He's found life a lot easier after this surgery.

Mark said that he pretty much gets along with everyone but that he's actually quite reserved although, since his mishap, he has found it easier to strike up conversations with strangers, especially while sitting with fellow amputees in the waiting room at the Burwood Limb Centre.

FAVOURITE FOOD: Steak/Chinese/Roast/Pineapple lumps

FAVOURITE PLACE: Golden Bay.

FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES: Tractors/Fishing/Reading/caravanning/motor sport and wheelchair basketball which he has taken up since attending the "open day" organised by Peke Waihanga back in June this year.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Fleetwood Mac and all the 70's/80's music.

FAVOURITE MOVIE: Jaws & The Great Texas Chainsaw Massacre.

FAVOURITE AUTHOR/BOOKS: Lee Child/Thriller & Detective books.

Mark & Andrenna had their first overseas trip in 2004 and have travelled to Bali, Thailand & Australia but plane travel nowadays is not viable as Mark's high amputation means it's very uncomfortable sitting for long periods of time.

(Thank you for your wonderful hospitality when I visited and Andrenna....your blueberry muffins were superb)

