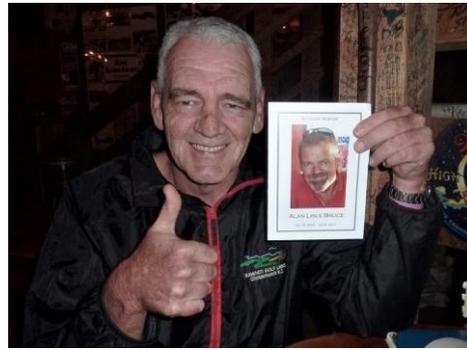


PROFILE-MARK BRUCE



I was the 3rd born son to my parents in Geraldine in 1958 after they had moved from Hokitika 3 years previously. My Dad set up his own plumbing business in Geraldine and I have wonderful childhood memories of going to jobs with him in the plumbing truck. After starting school, 3 weeks later our family moved to Christchurch where my parents had purchased a 7 day dairy business. When I was 6, my older brothers and I approached our parents to tell them we wanted another sibling. We simply thought that if we put an order in, a baby would arrive and it did so 3 boys became 4. Through ages 11-14, I was involved in cycle racing and recall Mum "carting" my brother and all over NZ to compete. After leaving school at the end of my fifth form year and aged 15, I "left home" (because I was right and my parents were wrong) and ended up in Blenheim where I lived and worked for nearly 18 months. This period of my life "made" me grow up very quickly but upon my return to Christchurch, the first thing I did was to tell Mum & Dad that they in fact were right and I was wrong!!! I started playing rugby for the Linwood club and made my way through age group teams, representing Canterbury at U17, U18, U19 and Senior B and finally made the Linwood senior team in 1980. After spending around 3 years working as a block layer, I decided to enter the Ministry of Transport as a traffic officer and spent the early part of 1978 training at Trentham before graduating in April. I was lucky enough to be posted back to Christchurch and after marrying in 1979, Diane and I purchased our first home. Work was going well, family life was great and my rugby career looked promising. Our first child was due to arrive in March, 1983 but on February 8th that year at the age of 24, I was involved in a motorcycle accident whilst at work and due to ongoing problems over the next 2 years, I made an elective decision to have my right leg amputated BK. This is a decision I have never regretted as my challenge has not only provided me many opportunities to become involved with amputees but it has, more importantly, given me a completely different outlook on life.

My focus has, is and will be to do what I can to assist, support and enhance the well-being of others who experience challenges in their lives.

I have been a member of the Canterbury/Westland Society since the mid-1980 and for the last 11 years as a committee member then President for the last 7 years. I am also the Funding Coordinator and editor of our

quarterly newsletter. For the last 8 years I have been an area coordinator for the annual Breast Cancer Foundation Appeal and these roles provide me with a great deal of satisfaction. My partner, Robyn and I as well as our wonderful pooch, "Lou", live in Somerfield, near the Cashmere hills. Christchurch has been our home all our lives apart from a 10 year period from 1990 when work took me to Auckland.

I lost my best friend & brother, Alan, to kidney cancer in 2011 but one of my proudest achievements in life was to complete visiting all 50 states of the USA on July 28th, 2014 when I landed in Juneau, Alaska. Alan had expressed a desire to complete this with me but his passing put paid to those plans so to finally achieve it in his honour was an extremely proud moment in my life. I had attempted to complete this task in June, 2013 but whilst at an Amputee conference in Orlando, Florida, I ruptured my patellar tendon when I was involved in an Amputee Mobility Clinic which necessitated me being medically evacuated back to NZ for immediate surgery. I attended my second Amputee Mobility Clinic in August, 2017 and successfully managed to rupture my Achilles tendon. Hence, I am not attending any more clinics!

In June, 2015 I was co-opted onto the National Executive and at the 2016 National Council meeting, I was elected to the position of Vice-President. In 2017 at New Plymouth, I allowed my name to go forward for the position of President and I was not only humbled but also grateful to have been elected to the role. Due to ongoing problems with my ruptured Achilles tendon injury that required surgery in March last year, I was unable to attend the annual conference in Wellington but once again allowed my name to go forward for the position of President and was subsequently re-elected. Achieving a signed Memorandum of Understanding with CCS Disability Action is a positive step to assist amputees. Recently, another signed MoU has been achieved with NZALS in relation to establishing a nationwide Peer Support programme that should deliver a comprehensive & professional nationwide support network for amputees & their families. The Business Case proposal is currently in its final stages of preparation and I am positively looking forward to the implementation of this major achievement to support amputees in the best possible way. Looking back, I feel I have worked hard in the best interests of my fellow amputees and have focussed on trying to support the "glue that holds our organisation together", Lorraine Peacock. My view is that service to fellow amputees & families has a positive effect on all involved and "we" should continue this selfless and productive work along the fine traditions of all who have passed this way before us.

