

## 2 MINUTES WITH ..... BRIAN COWLEY

Last month's newsletter ran an article on the Tawa Salvation Army Family Store celebrating 15 years of loyal service from staff members Janice and Brian. Our "2 Minutes with ....." segment in that newsletter featured Janice, the store manager.

This time we feature Brian who has been on the Tawa scene for a big number of years. Some of us remember when he provided service at the Caltex Station on the site on which Simon's Pharmacy now operates. Now he plays a major role at the Family Store.



*Where were you born and where did you grow up?*

I was born in Eketahuna, NZ and most of my growing up was in Pahiatua.

*Were were you educated?*

I attended Pahiatua primary school and Tararua College.

*How long have you lived in Tawa?*

Our family moved to Tawa in 1976, as both myself and my Dad had jobs with NZ Rail.

We have chosen to stay in the Tawa Community for the last 45 years to raise our family and to be within driving distance of most of our extended family.

*What about family?*

I met my wife Sue whilst we were both working for St John and we now have two adult children.

Our daughter who was working in hospitality has recently returned from the UK due to Covid. My son helps us out down at the Family Store.

*Work experience over the years?*

My years in Wellington have seen me working in admin at NZ Rail but my desire was to get more hands on and I began working as a mechanic on the NZR buses.

I finished my mechanic apprenticeship at Mexted Motors.

I worked at the old Caltex service station on the Main Road of Tawa, mostly forecourt/customer work until that closed down.

I was asked by the Salvation Army Family Store if I would come on as 2IC and drive their store truck.

*What are your interests and hobbies?*

My interests are collecting Matchbox and Hot Wheel cars.

*Favourite sports team and/or sports person?*

I absolutely support the All Blacks. I am part of the Salvation Army Red Shield indoor bowls team which play competition games with other clubs home and away.

*Favourite musical group and/or individual singer(s)?*

I love music from the 50s and 60s including Bill Haley and His Comets, and Bill Justis, even still have the 45 (rpm) records.

*What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you much satisfaction/pride?*

One of my highlights was going with the Salvation Army team to Tonga to help complete an upgrade on the local kindergarten, which included renovating safety/security wire onto the windows and repainting.

One of the things that stood out to me was the generosity of the Tongan hospitality ..... we were fed so well even when they had very little for themselves.

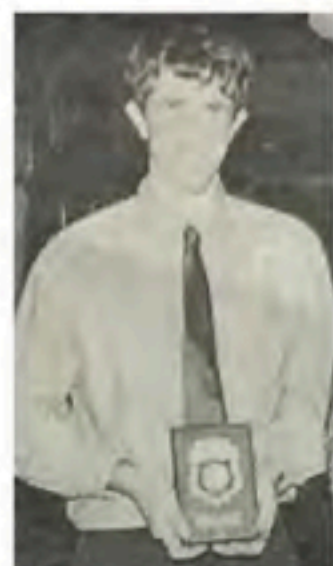
*What are some interesting things about you that local people may not know?*

I helped start St John Cadets here in Tawa and was involved as a first responder on sports fields. I was thrilled to receive the Grand Prior badge which took 3 years to achieve – back then. I was also awarded the 12-year Medal for service to St John and since then a 5-year Bar which is a total of 17 years.

I spent time studying Auto Engineering at the Royal New Zealand Air Force in Woodbourne, Blenheim.

The Outward Bound course for three weeks in the Marlborough Sounds was another highlight.

More recently (November 2019) I have been awarded a second Tawa Rotary Pride-in-Work Award.



From "The Tawa Chronicle" (1994):

"The Rotary Club of Tawa introduced its first Pride of Workmanship Awards ..... Brian Cowley of Mexted Motors was a recipient of the award ..... Mr Cowley is a forecourt manager at Mexted Motors ..... Graham Mexted of Mexted Motors said that Mr Cowley had been employed with the company for 15 years and during that time he displayed remarkable initiative and enthusiasm in his work ....."

(Compiled July 2021)