

# Russell and Lesley Jeffries

On 20 November 2024, Elijah, Johnny and The Macaulay Class at Lake Tekapo School interviewed our Local Legends Russell and Lesley Jeffries.

Videographer - Lexi

Scribe - Tu Peni



## **How do you feel about being interviewed and has this happened before?**

We are very happy to be interviewed and this is the first time ever.

## **Where were you born and have you ever moved?**

Russ: I was born in Port Chalmers, Dunedin. Then I came up here to Tekapo in 1975, for 3 years. I met Lesley in Dunedin, and moved back to Dunedin. Then we moved to Alexandra for 5 years, came here to Tekapo in 1985 and have been here ever since.

Lesley: I was born in Balclutha, and moved to Dunedin when I was 6.

## **What school did you go to, and what was your favourite subject?**

R: I went to Sawyers Bay School, and then to Otago Boys. I had lots of good subjects but my favourite would have been Geography and History.

L: I went to Balclutha Primary School, and when we moved to Dunedin I went to Balmacewen Intermediate, and then on to Otago Girls' High School. My favourite subjects were Cooking and Sewing. I did also enjoy Arithmetic.

**What activity or hobby are you the most serious about and why?**

R: Watching Sport, Motor Racing or Reading

L: I'd say travel. I have the bug, I like going and seeing places. We've bought a caravan, we are looking forward to getting into that and travelling all over New Zealand.

**What famous person do you admire the most?**

L: I think Sir Ed. He's done a lot. He came from that little country way down under.

R: He was the first to climb Mt Everest and he put New Zealand on the map, when many people didn't really know where we were. He also put so much into helping the people of Nepal, with new schools and help. He was also a very humble and great man.

**When was a time you were most proud of yourself and why?**

Apart from getting married, it would be when we opened up the new shop, down the road. The old one was pretty good and we built it up, but when we opened up the new shop. There was a lot of hard work and Jason and Casey joined us and transformed it. That made us very proud. To be able to pass on and sell to Jason and Casey made us very proud.

**When did you start working at the Four Square?**

R: 1975, it wasn't a Four Square in those days. It was a little country store, "Al Groceries". It was very small, it would have been maybe a third the size of this library. We had petrol pumps outside because there was no tourism, it was just to feed the locals basically.

**Have you ever been out of the country and if so where?**

Yes, how many fingers have you got? We have travelled through the United States, Canada. We have had many trips, and just recently we had seven weeks in Europe. We have done a lot of travel to The Gold Coast in Australia when the kids were young, with theme parks. Once the kids had left home, we started travelling in the States.

**What was your favourite place? Why**

R and L : Canada!

R: When I was young about your age, I started reading books about Canada and I always wanted to go. As you start work and have a family, you don't always get to fulfil your dreams. But then one day we decided we were going to go, and we went, we loved it. Canadians are very friendly, very similar to New Zealanders. The country is very pretty and safe.

L: It is a gorgeous country.

### **What is the longest adventure you have had in your life?**

Travel - our longest being 8 weeks,

### **Would you rather travel back to the past and meet your great great grandparents or into the future to meet your great great grandchildren?**

Both: I'd go back,

L: Things were simple then.

R: It was simple and given that we were born in the 1950's, life was more simple but I'd love to know how our great grandparents got on as they didn't have things we take for granted today, yes like machinery.

L: Building houses and things like that, we have cranes. In the old days they would have done it all by hand.

No electricity, running water, flushing toilets.

L: Possibly wouldn't go back as far as no flushing toilets!

### **If you had one wish what would it be?**

World Peace and that all countries got on with each other and there were no wars.

This was followed up by many interesting encounters and tidbits regarding Bears, Cougars and Moose when travelling through Canada. Russell has a simple analogy to safety when travelling, follow the traffic light rule for life. Green is when you are at home with your family or at school and you feel safe, orange is when you are up town and not quite certain, you are still safe but just aware of cars etc. Red is dangerous and you need to get out of there. Always being aware and looking around.

The students would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you for your time and the lovely atlas you donated to our library to help us with our future travels. We are so lucky to have such Local Legends in our Tekapo Community.