



## A life in appliances

Ted Holland has lived and breathed appliances, from storeman for the local Power Board to foundation Director of Fapay. Merv Robertson reports for our first *Where are they now?*

**TED HOLLAND SPENT VIRTUALLY** his entire working life in the appliance industry. He volunteers: “Before I started out in 1960 I had no serious jobs until I was given the opportunity to join the Wanganui Rangitikei Electric Power Board – the country’s biggest power board appliance retailer – as a storeman.”

Ted progressed to Stores Manager, later to Purchasing Officer and eventually to the position of Marketing Manager, heading up the retail operation. He remained in that position until 1989, after just on 30 years of service.

In the early 1980s it had become evident that the independent retailers were struggling to compete with the chains, especially in “bread & butter” lines such as small appliances. **Richard Papworth** of Fisher & Paykel was inspirational in setting up his brainchild, Fapay, as an independent buying group, members of which were independent F&P retailers across the country.

Ted Holland was a foundation Director and the group flourished, adding big ticket items as the years progressed. “The graphs used to track our performance were just phenomenal,” recalls Ted, “and it just kept going until Fapay was the biggest group in the land.”

### BECOMING PART OF FAPAY

In 1989, **Jim Powell**, another foundation Director and later Manager of Fapay, was tragically killed in a car crash and Ted was offered the top position. Ted and his wife Noeline had to think long and hard about this move to Auckland. They had a home in Wanganui and had just purchased the property next door on which they intended to build flats as preparation for their retirement.

After a month they took the plunge and have never had a moment’s regret, even though it was “a bit of shell shock for a while”. Ted found the transition quite smooth. Through his work at the power board and also as a foundation Director, and then President of the old Appliance Guild, he knew most of the players, suppliers and retailers alike.

“Fapay was the saviour of the independents I believe, and frankly they became my life. It was a great privilege to witness from close quarters, not only their survival, but their competitiveness and growth over the next decade or so.”

Ted considers his 40 years in the industry a highlight in his life but the absolute professional highlight was the formation of Fapay. “Most of our members were family businesses, many handed from father to son,” he says, “and to be a small part of their success was a terrific thrill.”

Another important industry event was the formation of the Appliance Guild which, Ted recalls, “united the whole industry, chains & independents alike into some sort of family, with suppliers also playing a big part. Even the likes of Farmers were members and in fact **Dick Barter**, one of their Buyers, was a Guild Director.

“The late **Dennis Amiss** was a giant in running the Guild but, sadly, often did not receive the recognition and support he deserved. His conferences were just fantastic and the awards programme recognised excellence; it’s wonderful that *Wares* magazine picked up the awards and developed them to the standard experienced today.”

I asked Ted to about some of the “characters” he encountered and



both he and Noeline immediately nominated **Harold Shepherd**. “Harold was and still is I guess a real bloody character and did a hilarious impersonation of Frank Spencer of *Some Mothers Do ‘Ave ‘Em*.” Harold Shepherd was a Fapay Director and came to Auckland from Christies in Tauranga as GM for the Home Team before moving on to 100% Y.E.S. when Home Team joined the 100% camp.

“**Jim Bulloch** is another who springs to mind – he was famous for his loud (and very good) singing, especially later on in the night – and who could forget the oldest man in the industry, **Tom McKay** in Dargaville?” Jim is a prominent retailer in Palmerston North with Manawatu TV & Sound and long time Guild Director who succeeded Ted as President. Tom McKay is the founder of 100% McKay’s and is still turning up to work every day, aged 102.

### LIFE AFTER APPLIANCES?

So, what has life after appliances held for Ted Holland? After he had completely withdrawn from ACL he worked two days a week in a friend’s hardware store in Orewa for five years. Now Ted and Noeline enjoy life at Red Beach on Auckland’s Whangaparaoa Peninsula.

They relish the additional time spent with family and belong to a walking group which ventures out each Tuesday. Their other passion is travel – they spent five weeks in the South Island early this year then cruised the Mediterranean. More cruising seems imminent!

I asked Ted, looking back on a 40 year career in the industry, “What stands out, what memories do you treasure most?” He paused to reflect and then said: “It goes back to the Wanganui Rangitikei Electric Power Board, who gave me my first opportunity, then there’s Fisher & Paykel who were always tremendously supportive, as were the other suppliers. But the really wonderful end result is the substantial number of friendships developed along the way.”

Gentleman Ted and Noeline celebrated 50 years of marriage in September 2009.