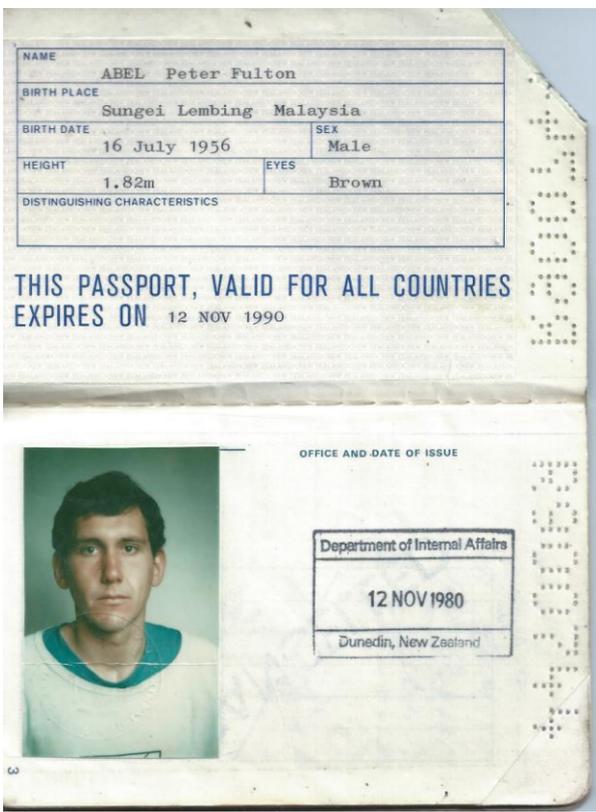
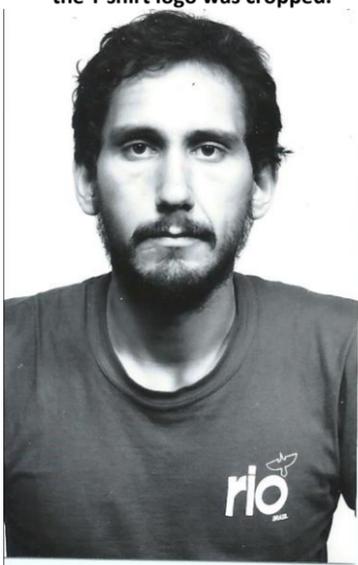


Peter Abel

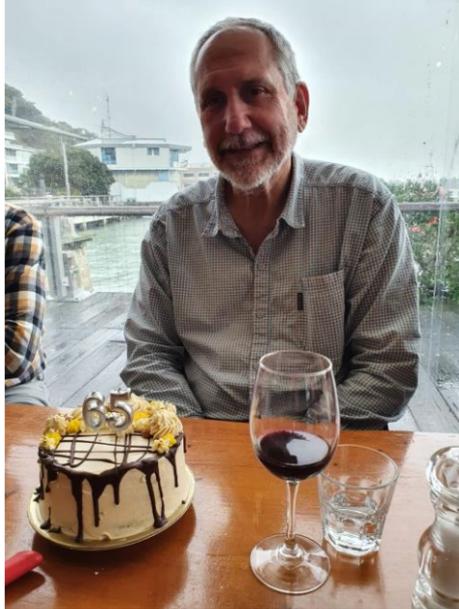
Worked with EO	<u>from</u> Aug 1981 <u>to</u> Jul 1986
Age on joining EO	Just turned 24
Nationality	New Zealand. My parents were expat NZers and I was born in Malaya – 10 years there and then a further 6 years in London. The olds retired to NZ in 1972 and most of us followed - an older brother remained in London.
Role at EO	Leader Driver – Manager Kathmandu
Expeditions/Brief Encounters etc. led or taken	<p>Trainee Daze - Hitchin and EO base/workshop in Shefford</p> <p>I was in the workshop for quite some time – Aug 81 through to the end of March 82. My intake and fellow inmates at the EO house in Hitchin were: Clive Jones, Dave Walkley, Lance Thomas, Tony Simmons, Alan Griffiths, a couple of other guys I can't recall the names of and of course quite a few drivers coming in and going out. We went on a training trip in North Africa from mid Nov to late December 81. We all enjoyed that immensely – it was a great adventure, hitchhiking through France down to Marseilles, a boat to Algiers and picked up a truck that had just finished the North African short haul season. We then drove to Tamanrasset and Tony Jones flew in to join us. It was a great trip – Tony left us after the desert and we drove the truck back to Shefford via Morocco, Spain and France.</p> <p>Asia</p> <p>I was sent out to Kathmandu in late March 82 to drive a truck servicing the rafting and trekking operations. Davy Hunter was our fearless leader with rafters Alan Donnelly, Mike Wood, and John Kubryn. There were plenty of other people – the house in Thamel was always full – but I can't recall the names. After the season ended – June 82 and the monsoon came – I got involved with several EO trips in India - a long haul that Davy started and then another trip with James Hogg. I spent some time in Kashmir with Lance Thomas, setting up the short haul season there. Eventually I was left on my own and ran four back-to-back Kashmir/Ladakhs. I got very sick on the last trip but luckily Rosemary from EO London was on board and she saved the day. I eventually got back to Kathmandu skinny as a rake and the truck worse for wear. Then it was off to India again running two short hauls – Kathmandu to Bombay and Bombay to Madras. That second trip around southern India was an eyeopener, not a lot of people see that part of the sub-continent. Extraordinary cities, temples, hill resorts and fishing villages. I was then brought back to London and Warren Burton and I drove the first Himalayan Encounters coach out from England. We drove it empty with a spare engine on board for an ex Sundowners coach stuck in Lahore. We put that engine in and I'm not sure what happened to that coach but Warren and I drove the HE coach on to Delhi. I then finished the trip to Kathmandu with an ex Sundowners driver who I only knew as 'Fingers' (he had seven). I then drove a long haul Kathmandu to London in mid 83. Turned the truck around in Shefford and was back on the road – London to Kathmandu – within a month. On both trips Iran was issuing visas so we drove through. Both trips were great, fantastic passengers and no hiccups and by that time I knew India like the back of my hand.</p> <p>South America</p> <p>On getting into Kathmandu in late December 83 I was then flown to Rio, via London. Warren Burton came out with me – he was importing a truck in Rio. Then, co-driving with Dennis Cornell we drove a Rio to Lima and then on to Colombia. The trip was marred by engine troubles and we had to have the engine rebuilt in La Paz. I then had to relocate the truck to Lima – driving it from Barranquilla to Lima on my own, quite an adventure. I then ran a Lima – Rio trip with a great set of passengers, mostly women. Once in Rio I met up with James Alexander and with him, co-drove a trans Amazon and on through Venezuela and into Columbia. That was the best long haul I drove in South America, James was good company and the passengers were great, but best of all were the lands we drove through.</p> <p>Africa</p> <p>I was flown from Bogota back to London to drive a London to Joburg. While at the workshop getting the truck ready I had run out of malaria pills, but thought I'd be ok...I came down with a fairly good malarial fever and ended up at Tropical Diseases hospital in London. Rene Muller started the trip and I eventually caught up with the trip in Fez. Rene stayed with the trip until Tam (I think) and then flew back to London. For the first time I struck the phenomena I had heard of and dreaded – a split group. But we managed through. Dennis Cornell's brother was on the trip – Terry – with his fiancée. They got married in Bangui – full French civil wedding with the Mayor of Bangui presiding. On getting to Joburg I met up with Bruce Watkins. We relocated the truck to East Africa – Dar es Salaam. We were both slated to run the East African short hauls – the Safari and the Mountain Gorillas. I had to fly to Arusha and then on to Kibo to pick up a truck parked at the hotel. It and been there some months and the clutch was stuck. That was fun. After the unsticking I drove it back down to Dar. Bruce then went off on a 6 week Gorillas and I took out a 4 week Safari. On getting back to Dar, London got in touch – I was to finish off a long haul that Simon Boone was driving. Simon was injured and was flown back to London from Dar and so I took his trip down to Joburg.</p> <p>Nepal EO Kathmandu</p> <p>From Joburg I flew back to London and then on to Kathmandu. I spent the 85/86 rafting and trekking season managing the office based at the Kathmandu Guest House.</p>
Why did you want to work for EO?	Travel opportunities. I had a bad case of wander lust, but not the means, and reading EO's advert in the Evening Standard, all boxes were ticked. At the selection weekend after an initial presentation by Tony & Derek with input from a couple of drivers named Rein & Jerry, I was hooked and keener than before to get the job.
Occupation before joining EO	I hadn't really started working - in a vocational sense. During uni I had joined the TA – very enjoyable (eventually making Lieutenant) and the pay was welcome. Then upon graduation, on invitation, I spent a year or so in the Regulars. After that a student holiday job – I had intended and was accepted into a post grad course in urban planning! But, instead, I sold my car, bought a plane ticket and headed to the UK with my 2yr working holiday visa.
Occupation after leaving EO	Joined an HMNZ govt department. Rose to the dizzying heights of Branch Manager.
Now living in	Nelson NZ
Then photo(s)	Now photo(s)



After 5 odd years on the road with EO my last passport photo – the T shirt logo was cropped.



Something to celebrate I guess but given my expression it does appear that I wasn't all that keen...I had been cycling quite a bit hence the weight loss.



A year earlier and a better time, revisiting Malaya, and a reunion at my old primary school in Penang.



Uplands School in the background



On a Penang beach

Memories or anecdotes

Where to start, so many memories. I think I'll stop for now. I might add something in the future.