

just us, sitting at home, having a beer together.

Neil: Another great thing about being a twin is that when you're on your own, no one takes much notice of you, but when you're together, everyone stares and comes to talk to you. Because of our long red hair and beards, we do stand out. Until recently, we had the same length beards and people would often say: "Hey, it's ZZ Top." It's a pity we don't charge \$2 every time someone takes our picture. We'd be rich men!

James: We didn't plan to look the same like this, it just happened; the same way it just turned out we like the same heavy-metal music and have AC/DC shrines in our homes.

Neil: In fact, we're very similar. We're always saying the same things at the same time, we surprise each other by watching the same things on TV - weird SBS things, too - and in pubs we're always reaching for our beer and putting it down again at exactly the same time. Once, I got worried that people would think we were freaks so I decided to hold on to my beer and skoll it to look different. I looked over at James and he was skolling his beer, too. He'd had exactly the same thought! That sort of thing is always happening.

We always hoped that we'd both get married and raise our kids together. James is a bit shy so he hasn't found anyone yet, but that's OK. He shares my kids. He feels like they're his anyway - and so do I.

JENNY AND JO PETTERSON, 43

Jenny: As children, we were always happy just playing with each other, so Mum sent us to sports clubs so we would mix with other kids. We did loads of sports, especially athletics, and Jo was always the best in everything except the 100m hurdles. We were at the state championships one year and I fell over in the 100m hurdles race, so Jo got the medal. However, when it got to the 400m race, Jo pulled back right at the finish line so that I got in first.

We did all the same subjects at school, then business studies together at uni and, after that, we both went to work at the Electricity Commission. People were always getting us confused, but unless it was embarrassing, we'd just go along with it and pretend we were the twin they thought we were.

We both answer to each other's names. It doesn't really bother us.

Jo: We have the same tastes in everything, and sometimes I'll buy myself a CD and then think:

"Oh, Jenny would like that," so I buy one for her, too. Then I get home to find she's bought two copies of the same CD as well. It means we have lots of spare presents for friends.

We travel together and share all the same hobbies, including cake decorating. We work on a cake together and Jenny does one side while I do the other. We meet in the middle and it looks as if one person has done [the whole cake].

Jenny: Jo and I had been so healthy all our lives, we didn't even have a GP, so it was a shock when, at 34, I discovered I had breast cancer. Jo took redundancy from work so that she could support me through chemotherapy. At the same time, our mother, Margaret, discovered she had ovarian cancer and we nursed her at home until she died. We were always



close, but that made us even closer.

Four months after my chemo finished, 10 more inoperable tumours were detected across my lungs. I started another course of treatment and was at the hospital when I saw a commercial for Dragons Abreast, the paddling club for breast-cancer survivors and their supporters.

"We should join that," I told Jo, so we did. We were having a ball and pushed each other to a really high standard when I discovered another tumour on my abdomen.

I had to have more chemo, but I went to watch Jo paddle every session and seeing her looking so fit and well inspired me. I had been like her before - and I could be like her again. A week after my final session, I was back in the boat.



THEN & NOW Jenny (left) and Jo Peterson have weathered many of life's trials together as family and friends.

I trained hard with Jo, made it into the NSW Masters Team and we both went on to represent Australia in Shanghai last year, and then again in Berlin earlier this year.

Today, I have just one tumour left on my lung and feel 100 per cent. Jo and I train nine times a week, paddling, running and weight-training.

I got married after finding the lung tumours - but, luckily, my husband Geoff is great. He looks out for Jo, understands we're twins and still encourages us to go off and do things together.

We spend every day together and, one time, someone was asking us about our schedule and there was one night we hadn't accounted for. She asked: "So what do you do Monday nights?" and I said: "That's the night we have dinner with Geoff!"

I felt a bit guilty when I realised, but he's taken up paddling now as well, which makes life easier.

Having cancer totally changed my life - and Jo's - but we believe we have both benefited. We've been an inspiration to each other. ■

TWIN-SETS

In her books *Entwined Lives* and *Indivisible by Two*, leading twins researcher Dr Nancy Segal looked at extraordinary stories of twins separated at birth and reunited...

On December 17, 1985, *The Sun* published the story of married Australian couple Frederick and Susan Machell who were astonished to discover they were twins separated at birth. The couple knew they were both adopted and had been amused to find they were born in the same hospital on the same day, but it wasn't until one of

their children was born with a hereditary birth defect that they decided to investigate their biological families. By that time, they had been married for 20 years and despite the shock of finding out the truth of their relationship, they stayed together.

Oskar and Jack Yufe were identical twin brothers who were raised apart. Born in 1933, Jack was raised as a Jew in Trinidad, Oskar ended up in Germany, and became a member of the Hitler Youth. Despite their different upbringings, they discovered many shared quirks when they met, including wrapping sticky tape around pens to get a better grip, both suffering dry scalps, which they each scratched with their

fourth finger, and a love of spicy food. George and Marcus Holmes were raised as fraternal twins in Ottawa, Canada. Their parents had put their babies into temporary foster care for two months and, because they had been told they were fraternal, weren't phased by the fact they didn't look very similar. The boys grew up close until September 1991, when they were 21, George hooked up with a new friend, Brent Tremblay, also adopted. They liked each other instantly, shared all the same tastes and mannerisms and were both obsessed with sports statistics. In addition, everyone remarked on how similar they looked. The new friends

thought nothing of it for 18 months until discovering they had been in the same foster care at the same time. Tests revealed they were twins. It caused chaos within the family because suddenly, no one was who they thought they were. However, Dr Segal says that the Holmes parents were able to reassure Marcus that he was still a much-loved part of the family and he has since traced his biological family.

Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell Us About Human Behavior and *Indivisible by Two: Lives of Extraordinary Twins* by Nancy Segal are available on www.amazon.com