



I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis at the age of 60 (14 years ago), which is almost unheard of at my age. My first symptom was a stiff neck, then a year later I went to get out of bed one morning and found I couldn't stand up - my legs wouldn't hold me. Following a MRI (which showed extensive lesions), a lumbar puncture was done and a diagnosis of MS confirmed.

Probably the biggest adjustment for me has been the loss of mobility. Always an outdoor person - I enjoyed skiing, kayaking,

and tramping and I even rode a trail bike.

Perhaps this MS is a blessing in disguise as now I can do many things I never had time for - reading, writing poetry, watching TV, playing the ukulele, singing with the Summerset singers and being part of the quiz team at Summerset. Time to 'Smell the Roses', to enjoy the simple things.

I am thankful for the life I have had - being diagnosed later means that I lived life to the max when I could. In hindsight, not knowing I had this illness for years beforehand has been a bonus.

Life is tough sometimes too, we all know that some places are not yet truly accessible. I don't get to go out when it is raining or the weather is too hot.

My advice to someone newly diagnosed is - make the most of every day, do the things that excite you, and prepare for the future to make life easier later. AND don't be afraid to ask for help.

I enjoy our MS Waikato coffee mornings, the friendship and sharing of ideas and solutions to problems affecting people at different stages in their MS. I am fortunate to have the support of MS Waikato and the Neurology Nurse Specialist; it would be a more difficult path to navigate without them.

Ros has shared a poem she has written about her MS:

This illness it has robbed me, in oh so many ways –

From skiing and kayaking and tramping in the haze.

Instead of legs to get about I have a chair with wheels,

But I would like to dance again, to run, kick up my heels.

I see my feet, but toes and ankles will not move –

It's like they don't belong to me, what have they got to prove?

My brain still says “come on you two, get walking like before”  
But when I stand they just will not lift up from on the floor.

And now my arm is getting weak, my pen is hard to hold  
Expect the worst, hope for the best” is just what I was told.  
My Specialist, he does not know just what the future holds  
I wonder then which bit is next, as my MS unfolds.  
He says my brain it looks real good, he wouldn't mind one like it  
White lesions yes, no rotten wood, no termite mush inside it!!!

Ros

To make a donation - <https://fundraise.msnz.org.nz/faceofms/MS-waikato>