

## Di's Polio Story

My polio story is without doubt very similar to many others. I contracted polio just before my fourth birthday in 1952 - I am now 75. I am definitely a half glass full person and I feel I owe that to polio. Some might find that a strange comment, but life has not always been easy and like many polio survivors has made me stronger, more determined, a type A achiever and defiant!

Like many others I had long stays in hospital, operations, callipers, bedtime splints and built up shoes. I was one of the lucky ones and made a good recovery and by eighteen had discarded all assistive aids. I married young, had two children, obtained a degree at 39 and went into teaching. In my late forties I was diagnosed at the Lane Fox Unit with post polio and for the last 27 years have been back in callipers. I was widowed at 58 but in my Motability car can still visit friends and family. Life has become more sedentary, but I can fill my time in with a variety of hobbies, mainly playing bridge, which seems to be keeping the grey cells working. However! It is being reliant on outside agencies where problems occur!

My blue badge blew out of my car six weeks ago, never to be seen again, when I opened my car door in a gale! I immediately went online to order a replacement, paid £10 and am still waiting. My walking is limited so not being able to park on double yellow lines has been a real nuisance. The same week the foot dropped off one of my callipers! That took five weeks to get repaired - luckily I have a spare one. Agencies who are meant to help disabled folk do not seem to understand the urgent necessity of our needs. Delays can cause great anxiety. The post polio clinic which I used to attend at a Liverpool hospital has closed. As polio survivors our physical needs are not understood and this in turn puts a great toll on our mental and emotional health. We are our own ambassadors and facilitators and that takes a lot of our energies and strength. I know I am very grateful to the volunteers who work tirelessly in producing Post Polio Matters and running the Polio Survivors Network. - Di Brennand