

An Interview With ... Val Scrivener



Tell us a little about yourself, the person behind the photocards.

Bedford has always been my home and, until the age of 17, I suppose I lived a fairly uneventful life. I loved sport and, even in my first school was winning races on sports day (winnings were a 2/6d postal order which bought me a book at our local bookshop). I high-jumped, was in the netball team, swam and also played badminton at our local youth club. I was just beginning to enjoy going to the twice-yearly youth club country dances when polio struck, paralysing my right leg. I returned to school (now in VI form) with a stick. Sport, gym and games were out and I began to feel that I fitted in nowhere and became, I suppose, somewhat isolated knowing that my former friends and team-mates were spending their lunch hour outside practising.

My father was quick to see the void in my life and one day came home with a box camera. Never did it occur to me at the time that his thoughtfulness would lead to a lifetime hobby. Much later in life I went along to the local camera club to learn how to use my newly acquired, second-hand, SLR camera and there I became fully launched as an avid lover of photography. With my late husband, John, I began some weird and wonderful travels around the world in my school holidays as, by now, I had begun teaching at a local lower school. I now restrict my travelling to the UK following several falls, but there is so much out there to photograph if you look for it.

What makes you passionate about supporting Polio Survivors Network?

I suppose the first and most obvious answer is to say, 'Because I had polio.' I, like many others, thought over many years that, although I have never since been able to partake in sport, I made a pretty lucky recovery. I could still walk and was able to

lead a normal life. It was a bit of a shock when things began to deteriorate and I was told that the neurons boosting my muscles were only working at 10 percent capacity and that being overactive was simply wearing the muscles away.

I admire the research that seems to be taking place in the USA and I agree with comments regarding the lack of knowledge in this country, so few of my acquaintances had any idea that problems could resurface in later life once 'recovered from polio'. It is brilliant being updated with the knowledge of recent research via 'Post Polio Matters'. I am hoping that I am able to make the AGM this year as I feel meeting up with fellow members is very much like meeting up with family.

What gave you inspiration for the beautiful photocards sold on behalf of PSN?

I have, over the years, made special cards for friends and some time ago I had the thought that I could also make and sell cards to raise money. Being a PSN member my mind went immediately to this but I knew that I would have a better chance of selling them locally, to people who knew me. My local church seemed the ideal place to set up a pitch but in order to sell the polio cards I felt that I should be doing the same for the church. This I do once a month but it all takes time as I take the photos, print them, cut the prints to size, print details on sheets of card, stick the photos on the card and do any necessary trimming.

How can we place an order with you?

You will find the details on the back of this newsletter or on the PSN website. The orders will arrive in packs and you may ask specifically for a mixed pack/a pack showing animals / transport / scenery / flowers / cards suitable for men - it's your choice. I can then, at the time of ordering, give you the address to which you send a cheque.