

A new member introduction - Joy

I left school at fifteen years old in 1948 hoping to become a nurse. At sixteen I started my nurse training. A few weeks before my seventeenth I came home from work feeling unwell. A doctor initially thought it was a bad case of the flu. A few days later a second visit from the doctor resulted in me being sent to Basingstoke cottage hospital for tests. During this time, I was unable to feel my legs and collapsed on the floor when being stood up. I was taken to Millbrook Isolation Hospital and was told I had infantile paralysis and had to spend four weeks in hospital, paralysed from the waist down.

I was transferred to Lord Mayor Tralor Hospital and had seven months doing physiotherapy and rehabilitation to get mobile again. I was off work for two years in all and when I was ready to start work, I was not strong enough to continue nursing.

I met Cyril when I was 24 years old and we went out dancing, swimming and travelling for two years before we married. October 1957. We have had five children together. When I was in my fifties, I started to get very fatigued and ached a lot. Doctors diagnosed me with Myalgia Encephalitis (ME) and put me on steroids. My muscles continued to deteriorate. One day my daughter in law made the comment that 'you had polio, didn't you?', she had read an article about polio effects later on in life. I spoke to my GP about this and confirmed that I had polio as a youngster. My mobility has gone from a walking stick to a wheelchair and mobility scooter. With help from our family my husband and I are able to enjoy reasonable health and in 2017 Cyril and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary.

When I left hospital in 1951 the doctor said 'go and enjoy what is left of your life' and in my young mind I thought perhaps he was saying it may not be long, so now at 86 years old I must say that I have got a lot to thank God for!

