

## MY POLIO STORY by Dianah King

I was born in 1942 and when I was 4 I contracted polio the day after visiting Redcar beach. I was admitted to the isolation hospital in Darlington where I spent a week in an iron lung and was then transferred to the Adela Shaw Orthopaedic hospital in Kirkbymoorside in North Yorkshire where I spent a number of years having treatment. I was discharged wearing a caliper on my right leg. At the age of 7 I was readmitted to have 2 operations to my leg and I believe the surgery was related to my Achilles tendon. At 14 I had a further 2 operations for the same thing. My right foot is 2 sizes smaller than my left and an inch shorter. 20 years ago I started wearing an AFO (ankle foot orthoses) on my right leg and a built up shoe.

I have never let my polio hold me back and have lived a normal life enjoying riding a bike, a horse and even abseiling!! I married at the age of 23 after working in London as a Nanny for a number of years. I was married for 53 years until I lost my husband just before the pandemic. I have one son however I would have loved to have more however I do believe that the polio was a factor in why this did not happen as my body is twisted.

As the years have passed I have noticed symptoms that I associate with post polio including reduced mobility and balance issues. I had an operation on my neck in 2013 which gave me back my mobility. I continue to have symptoms however I am still mobile even if I have to use a stick sometimes. I had a steroid injection in June which was fabulous and has given me several weeks pain free.

I have always lived a full life being involved in many charities including WRVS for 32 years, setting up the Alzheimer's day centre in Richmond (North Yorkshire) and being a school governor. I am rarely at home as I am either lace making, sewing, lunching or talking. I am also lucky to spend time with my extended family.

I have attached 3 photos. The first is me with my family on the beach the day before I contracted polio. I am the girl with the dark hair and plaits sat on my Granny's knee.

The second photo is me with my caliper with my younger sister.

The last photo is me as I am today. Fabulous at 80 (nearly 81)!!!!!!

