Step Forward Magazine – 2019

A quarterly publication for members of the Limbless Association – supporting it’s members in life beyond limb loss

Andy and I met nine years ago. We chatted on the phone and when we decided to meet up Andy became concerned because he hadn’t told me he was an amputee, he said “there’s something I need to tell you – I’m an amputee, I lost my leg below the knee after a stolen car ran me down on my motorbike” and I just said “Ok, no problem, my late husband was an above knee amputee, you’re still Andy, it doesn’t change anything” and the rest is history, although my Dad jokingly asked me if I had a fetish for men with one leg?!

Andy had holidayed on Kos for many years, becoming an accomplished windsurfer. When he lost his leg 10 years ago he was told he would never windsurf again.... but with the help and support from Pace Rehabilitation in Bredbury and Kefalos Windsurfing and Sailing Centre on Kos Andy got back on the board.

Andy’s aim was to be able to windsurf alongside his son again………and he’s accomplished this. Pace Rehab worked closely with Andy to develop interchangeable feet so he can have separate feet for different activities, windsurfing, swimming, sailing…….. when we travel, he often takes more feet than I take shoes!!

In 2012, Andy and I converted an old van into a campervan and drove across Europe to Kos. We had an amazing six months, but we returned to the UK with a new perspective on life, we wanted to spend more time in Greece. Instead of “Can we do this?” we asked, “How can we do this?”

We worked it out, and as time moved on and we spent more and more time in Greece.

In 2015 I developed a serious problem with my hip, my already mildly arthritic joint had become infected causing the joint to collapse, I required an emergency hip replacement. Disaster struck while we were preparing to travel to Athens and Andy fell and injured himself in the garden and he couldn’t wear his leg! He travels with crutches, but it quickly became apparent that he needed a wheelchair. We finally located one to hire on the island, but it was broken – Andy spent 2 hours repairing it before it was safe to use!

Whilst recovering from my operation I began thinking about the problems facing people with disabilities who wanted to visit Kos…….I’d grown up helping my Mum cope with MS and with our combined experience of living with disability we hoped we had a lot to offer…….and that’s where it all began!

Our aim was to make Kos more accessible to more people and give them the freedom to do and see more on their holiday. Three years ago, we began Mobility Hire Kos, hiring mobility equipment to holidaymakers and locals. We’re making a difference to people’s lives.

Many hotels on Kos advertise themselves as ‘disabled friendly’ but the reality is often disappointing……so we started to think!

We understand the issues faced by people with injuries, disabilities, recovering from surgery or illness, and especially limb loss or serious limb injury, whether they’re post-op, in transition, rehabilitation or adjusting to life with a prosthetic limb.

We set out to offer somewhere that allows people to have a holiday or recuperate in surroundings that don't make life a chore…and so Delphini Studios was born!

The studios are set in a charming olive grove in the heart of Kamari Bay in Kefalos on the beautiful island of Kos in Greece. The studios have been designed with thought and consideration of the needs of disabled travelers, including the full wheel-in wet-rooms.

The work to convert the studios has been challenging, Andy hasn’t just project managed the whole process he’s done much of the work…..people often forget he’s only got one leg!!

When we’re not working, and on days when the wind isn’t ‘good’ for windsurfing Andy, known locally as ‘One Leg Andy’, likes to go spear fishing. We also have a large vegetable plot, chickens and two dogs! Life isn’t boring!!