

*For those of you who do not know Joanne, she is the website manager and also the Stand-in treasurer for the Canterbury / Westland Society.*



Joanne was born in Dunedin in 1958 and completed her primary and secondary education there. Her parents had emigrated to NZ from Holland after WW2, originally moving to Roxburgh, where her father worked on the hydro dam project, before moving to Dunedin to run a 7 day a week dairy in St Kilda. She recalls that life always seemed to be extremely busy for her Mum & Dad. Jo has 3 brothers, 3 step-brothers and her mother now lives in Millers Flat between Dunedin & Roxburgh. After leaving school, Jo's first job was at the Cherry Farm institution for 2 years as an aide before moving on to work for IHC in Dunedin where she stayed for the next 26 years. During her time with IHC, she managed 2 day services outlets where IHC attendees worked and she said she really enjoyed this experience. Whilst working for IHC, Jo made several trips to Holland to meet all of her parent's relations and ended doing a lot of travel in Europe to Belgium, Germany, France & Sweden. In 1984, IHC sponsored Jo to complete a diploma in Teaching People with Disabilities at ChCh Teachers college over a 2 year period and she found that she liked ChCh as a city.

Jo loved living on a lifestyle block at Portobello on the Peninsula where she had numerous animals including 3 dogs, 3 cats, 3 goats, a pet sheep and a goose called "Missy" After a relationship ended in 2000, she decided to move to ChCh where she lived with one of her brothers. She said she found living in the city in a confined space very hard after life on the Otago Peninsula. She then made a decision to travel back to Europe and ended up living in Sweden for almost a year but her visa did not allow her to work during this time. In winter, Sweden is in complete darkness, temperature at -25 degrees Celsius and these factors along with not being able to work, caused her to return to ChCh and start her new life here. She joined the ChCh Tramping Club which gave her the opportunities to visit many interesting places around NZ including the Milford, Heaphy, Stewart Island and the Kepler Track, where she said it got very scary when the group became snowed in. In 2003, when tramping near Mt Hutt, Jo had a fall and sustained a broken foot which tore all her ligaments and despite numerous surgeries to try and correct the problems, she lost her leg BK in 2009 due to complications. Since that

time, Jo has been unable to work full-time due to Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRP) but is currently heavily involved with the society on a voluntary basis as well as being a computer tutor part-time. Jo currently lives in Linwood with her loyal companion, "Ralf", a Bichon/Papillion cross.

During her childhood, Jo has this vivid memory of enjoying a Xmas Day BBQ with her extended family as it was her parent's ONLY day off. She also recalls being looked after by a neighbour who used to sprinkle pepper on cooked eggs. Whenever Jo smells pepper nowadays, it always reminds her of that childhood time!

Difficult times that Jo remembers was the time spent dealing with the issues surrounding her leg problems leading up to the amputation but she says the positive things to come out of this was becoming involved with the Amputee Society, assisting other amputees and also learning to paint which has become a real passion for her. Jo stated that she still finds it difficult to deal with & manage her pain issues and knowing when "too much" is TOO MUCH". Working on her time-management skills is an ongoing project! Another aspect of life which Jo finds very satisfying is mentoring other people with problems and is currently assisting two people in their daily living challenges. In looking back on her life, Jo says that she has always been at her happiest when she has been challenged and learning new things. Currently, she is working on improving her written Dutch in order to communicate better with her family in Holland.

FAVOURITE FOOD: Salads, fish & chicken.

FAVOURITE PLACE: Harwood on the Otago Peninsula.

ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES: Art, painting, computer tutoring, web design, voluntary work & gardening.

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Pink Floyd, Roy Orbison.

FAVOURITE MOVIE: Shawshank Redemption & One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest.

Jo admits to not being a "reader", prefers to be hands on doing things.

*Jo, thank you on behalf of the Society for all the voluntary work you do to help out and it is always a pleasure to be in your (and "Ralf's" company)*