

DAN STUART-FORBES...INVENTOR

In late May, I had the absolute pleasure to meet a new member, Dan Stuart-Forbes along with his sister and brother-in-law, Cathy & Willie Paraha from Blenheim. Over a coffee, we chatted about the Amputee Society, life as an amputee and most importantly, Dan's recent "invention"

Dan is 63 years old and living in Rangiora with his wife, Sonia and their 19-year-old son after having moved from Blenheim just before the 2011 earthquake. Back in 2013, Dan was working for a local contractor when a digger ran over his foot causing serious damage and unfortunately, gangrene set in. After a month of treatment, the decision was made to amputate his left leg below knee. He returned to work 2-3 months later on a part-time basis but he admitted that this was a struggle and he couldn't fulfil his ethos of good day's pay for an honest day's work so he finished up. A knee replacement on his good leg 5 years later, due to extra stress, also slowed Dan down somewhat.



Dan is a keen white baiter and loves to "tinker" in his shed at home so having experienced the common problem for amputees of walking on uneven ground, he began a process of trying to come up with a solution. Rudimentary attempts were made over a number of years to come up with a moveable ankle joint on his prosthetic leg but failure is not a word in Dan's vocabulary so he stuck to the task and has now perfected and constructed a working adaption that is fitted to his prosthetic. There is a video link to this wonderful invention on both our website and Face Book page should you wish to see the end result and just how well it functions. Dan assures me that having the ability to "flex" the foot makes it SO much easier to not only get in and out of his gumboots during white baiting season but it also assists him greatly walking on uneven ground when he is down at the river.



He appreciates all the support he gets from Sonia but also from Cathy & Willy who are assisting him to progress this wonderful invention in an effort to get this "game-changing" innovation out there for the local, national and international amputee community. Dan and his team are investigating channels to progress this invention from a personal use adaption made in his back shed to taking it global. He is firmly of the view that amputees should have the chance to enjoy the benefits of a fully moveable ankle, increased mobility and a safer experience and Dan sees the benefits as being both physical and mental.