

Fi was diagnosed with 2 brain aneurysms in 2020 after going for a scan to try and pinpoint the source of some chronic nosebleeds she had been having on and off for a year or more that had required glueing, quarterizing but still not fixed. Totally unrelated, they found the aneurysms. The plan was to have stents put in to reduce the chance of them rupturing as the aneurysms were deemed to be in a challenging place to be operated on (read inoperable). The doctors said they may have developed over months, or even years.

Fi was advised not to drive, so we sold her car and since then I've been chauffeur, although we went most places together before this anyway.

August 2021, just after a CT scan with contrast dye to do extra measurements of the aneurysms so they could choose the right stent size for the upcoming procedure, she developed liver problems causing major jaundice and complications. Unfortunately they could not carry on with the stents route as once she had them in she would be on blood thinners lifelong to reduce chance of stroke, which ruled out liver surgery. It was higher priority to get the liver sorted.

The liver situation has been managed since then with medications plus many and regular hospital visits plus several admissions for other symptoms and complications.

For several months Fi battled with severe water retention causing swelling in legs and abdomen requiring hospital stays for invasive draining. Fi also had a major rupture of the hepatic vein (oesophageal varices) causing a severe bleed in to her stomach and then large scale vomiting of blood, all while in the car after picking her up from the hospital appointment they had to cancel after a few hours due to staffing problems. A quick u turn had her back in the Emergency department within 10 mins. The oesophageal bleeds required banding. This was all caused as the liver could not cleanse blood fast enough, so the pressure builds up in the hepatic vein, which then stresses and ruptures in to the oesophagus.

As the liver is unable to cleanse the blood fast enough, toxins can build up in the blood (Hepatic encephalopathy). For several months while we got medications adjusted, these caused symptoms for Fiona of moodiness, disorientation, irritability, tiredness, and somewhere along the way Fiona suddenly had a hugely enhanced sense of smell and taste, so much so that almost any food was off-putting and Fiona was unable to cook anything. Always a good, adventurous and capable cook with some must have go to recipes in her collection, this was quite a change for Fi. Her disorientation meant that when she tried to cook a couple of times, it all went pear shaped although no pears were used. The disorientation at some times was very severe and once at 3am I had to get the ambulance to take her to hospital as she kept wandering the house making no sense and not able to comprehend where she was or what I was trying to help her with. I was worried she had had a stroke, but it was another liver related toxin build up problem. Blood transfusions were necessary and a couple of days in the HDU and a week in hospital.

Sustenance for the last year has been a prescribed high protein supplement drink (Ensure) vanilla as the chocolate one was not a fav, fruit, yoghurt, the odd chocolate, jellys and deserts. Obviously no alcohol since Aug 2021. We tried to introduce regular foods or treats, but the taste thing meant Fi could not stomach anything much. Her fav foods were no longer. For the last year Fi had needed a lot more rest.

After some major ups and downs, in the last year we had finally got things stable and under control with meds and were one appointment away from getting put on the transplant list after ticking all the many boxes and referrals to varying specialists. The last several months have seen Fi get more strength and a lot more energy that the previous year.

Sunday night 6th Nov Fi went to bed a bit before me as is usual. When I came to bed later on Fi was awake and she rolled over for her usual routine back rub before we went to sleep. When I woke up early in the morning I found her not in bed, but I could see the light under the door so thought she was in the ensuite. Nothing new, as with the diuretics prescribed she was up and down to the toilet like a yoyo. I dozed off for an hour or so then awoke and Fi was still not back. I checked the lounge in case she was having trouble sleeping or had one of her frequent nausea episodes where she was more comfortable sitting up for a while. When I couldn't find her and knocks on the ensuite door and calls to her got no reply, I found her on the toilet, unresponsive, gently slumped, gone. It must have happened very quickly as she looked in no distress. The coroner has confirmed after a PM that one or more aneurysms had most likely burst.