

# MANAGING ADVANCED MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

BY CAROLYN COLLINS



Rae Edwards

When Rae Edwards was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, her first priority was to ensure her young family remained “workable.”

As the mother of four school-aged sons, she was determined to continue taking an active role in their care and daily lives for as long as possible. But that meant making a few changes along the way, including adapting the house and acquiring an uncool yellow van. “The yellow was for safety but it had the added attraction of making it not very pleasant for my sons to drive when they didn’t have their own vehicles,” Rae laughs.

The specially converted Mercedes Vito, bought in 2003, has remote controlled back doors and a hydraulic wheelchair lift. Rae could drive her wheelchair into the back, secure it to a box on the floor then transfer to the driver’s seat where she had hand controls on the steering wheel.

The van enabled Rae to keep up her chauffeuring duties until two years ago when she voluntarily gave up her driver’s licence. Rae’s MS has now progressed to the point where she is restricted to a wheelchair although she is still able “albeit slowly to manage all the activities of daily life” with the help of a paid carer who comes in four mornings a week while a friend helps on Fridays.