

Sylvie Brown abseiling at Bramall Lane

Sylvie's message from the rooftops

FOR most people the thought of abseiling down a tall building is daunting. But for intrepid Sylvie Brown there's an additional element of uncertainty.

For Sylvie, aged 28, from Upperthorpe, Sheffield, has Multiple Sclerosis and is unsure how her body will cope with the challenge. She has difficulty walking.

Yet on Sunday, July 21, she is determined to join a group of friends descending hundreds of feet from the top of the Hotel Bristol near the canal basin to raise money for the Essex-based Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre.

"I really want to do this even though I have no idea what will happen," says Sylvie. "I am not about to let MS or the disability I have stop me from trying. People often think MS means that you stop living life to the full - well, I'm here to prove otherwise."

The attitude has helped Sylvie to adjust to life with MS, which she developed seven years ago.

She decided to go public about her condition in a dramatic way in 1998 by jumping out of an aeroplane at 13,000 feet.

As well as giving her confidence a boost, the tandem skydive raised £2,000 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

More recently Sylvie has taken on the running of an MS self-help group in Sheffield for people under the age of 35.

She firmly believes there needs to be greater awareness of how people can manage the condition and their lives more effectively.

"Groups like ours are so important in letting people know they have a choice and do not have to be a victim of MS. They can be the victor.

"There are many answers out there but it's up to each individual to search them out. What works for one may not work for another but the important thing is that there are many complementary therapies and dietary changes which are working for many, many people with MS.

"I want to shout this message to others with MS and that's part of the reasons why I'm going to climb off the top of the Hotel Bristol - not only to raise funds but to raise awareness."

●Sylvie can be contacted on 272 6619. Donations payable to 'MRSC' can be sent to her at 16 Burlington Court, Sheffield S6 3EX.

Kate Lahive