

Late May 2008 I managed to damage my knee whilst climbing. It was felt odd at the time. It felt like I had only twisted it but it was very painful to walk on and I could not straighten my leg. The swelling came up the next day when I went to visit the Doctor who said I had just pulled something and it would go down. Sure enough it went down but it was never really recovered, always slightly swollen and I couldn't straighten it so I had a slight limp. Being a very active person this was very frustrating not to mention the fact that all my jobs require being physically fit. I kept going back to the doctors who said it was nothing to worry about. Eventually I went to see a physio who said she thought it was something more serious. My dad recommended a doctor he knew through work who specializes in knees which is when I first went to see Mr Ian McDermott.

I went in sat down and explained what happened, he examined my right leg and declared it was a medial meniscal tear, could be a bucket handle tear. For me this was fantastic; having spent the last two months hobbling around with people telling me it would be fine and get better to have someone look at it and quickly diagnose the



problem felt such a relief. He explained what this meant and the options which were fairly simple and what to do next. Ian must have spent 20 mins drawing diagrams (which I still have) and going through possible outcomes, which meant I really understood what had happened and how it could be treated. He sent me off for an MRI and once the results were back I was straight into surgery a couple of days later. So from meeting Ian to operation was under two weeks!

The operation was more successful than I could have imagined. It turned out Ian didn't need to cut anything out, and instead he was able to repair the meniscal tear, to try and get it to heal back together - a far better long term outcome for me with a much less chance of developing arthritis early. But that was the first step. I had 6 weeks non weight bearing on that leg before I could start using it in gentle exercise and then a further six weeks of intensive physiotherapy to regain all strength, movement and reflexes. At the end of the six weeks I was cycling, walking, climbing and ready for a winter of snowboarding in the French alps.

My meniscal tear has healed up and my knee recovered so well that I was able to follow out my plan and dream to do a ski season. I skied almost every day as well as leading groups of guests out on the mountain.

By Laura Procter, July 2009

