

## Patient Case Study (19) Alan Whincup



### Alan Whincup joins an exclusive PDT lung cancer club after his pioneering UCH treatment

It was six years ago (summer of 2004) that Alan Whincup from Southend was in his bathroom at home and he coughed. He looked down and saw blood in his handkerchief. 'Nothing to worry about', he thought, and gargled with salt water and assumed the problem would go away.

It did for a few weeks. But then he coughed again. More blood.

A GP visit was swiftly followed by an X-ray at his local hospital in Southend. "They couldn't find anything, and I thought that meant that I had nothing to worry about. My GP didn't agree, and I was back at Southend for a biopsy.

"What they found was a cancer in my trachea – the wind pipe above the lungs. That was not what I wanted to hear!

"To everyone's credit, I was sent up to the Royal Brompton in London where he was sent for surgery. Surgery seemed to be the only choice for me," he recalls.

A short section was removed, and the hope was that the problem had been dealt with, but three months later Alan was coughing up blood again.

"Within three hours I was back at the Brompton, but this time I was told that repeat surgery was impossible. There was no alternative treatment approved that would work, according to the specialists."

The lucky break for the former railwayman and JP of 30 years came when news of progress with Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) was mentioned to him by his team. Within days he was up at University College Hospital, to begin his life-changing treatment.

"For me, the PDT treatment was fantastic. I thought I had run out of options. Dr Jeremy George and his team have been brilliant and the PDT was so simple. I feel incredibly lucky to have been treated – only 15 lung cancer patients have been able to receive it so far.

"But my story is even more remarkable. After the first PDT on the trachea, a second one developed and they caught it in time. I have now been free of the cancer for nearly three years.

"I don't like to think that I have been cured. You never know with cancer. I have been treated for my two cancers and, right now, all the signs are looking good. I am able to get on with my life and look forward. And even if a new cancer emerges, I have every confidence that it will be detected and treated before it can do any lasting damage.

“What I don’t understand is why this treatment and the care I have had at UCH isn’t more widely available to every lung cancer patient?”

Ends

Further information from David Longman, Director, KILLING Cancer

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