

# Patient story: Lung cancer

## Don Moulden

KILLING  cancer

## Don gets a new lease of life with PDT

Don Moulden and his wife, Jean, were shocked to the core when they were handed a pack of leaflets by a nurse at their local hospital in Hertfordshire. Don is able to joke about it today, but at the time he and Jean were devastated.

“There was good news, and there was bad news,” he recalls. “The bad news was that I would be dead within 12 months, while the good news was that I had time to organise my own funeral and the flowers and make my last will,” he says. “There was probably time to have a holiday, too.”

For Don, the treatment options had run out.

That was early in 2006 when news arrived that lung cancer had started to invade his one surviving lung. Cancer had devoured his other lung in 2000, and due to the position of the original cancer he was told that his one chance of survival was to remove the lung quickly.



When his second lung cancer was diagnosed, Don was ultimately referred to the National Medical Laser Centre at University College Hospital where sophisticated scanning techniques diagnosed two small areas of cancer.

While Don was expecting his death sentence to be confirmed, on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2007 he received a light-sensitive drug (a photosensitiser) at the hospital. “I listened to what I was told that the Photodynamic Therapy process should be able to kill the cancer completely. At the back of my mind were all the messages that I had started to believe that I was going to die.

“But having read all the literature, and spoken to my new specialist, Dr Jeremy George, I had complete faith in him and his colleagues. I was convinced that it would work.”

Two days later, the fibres carrying the light to the

target area were inserted into his lung, and a further two days later he was having a follow-up bronchoscopy check that confirmed that his nightmare was really over.

“It was only a month after the treatment that I went on holiday to France, and really begin to look forward. Without Dr Jeremy George and his team, and this incredible PDT science, I would have been dead a few months after that French trip.”

Looking back, one of the things Don recalls is how the treatment was completely painless. “With the surgery seven years before, I can remember the incredible pain as they broke my ribs. The surgeons had to make a hole so they could pull out the damaged lung. With the PDT, I simply didn’t feel a thing.”

Don had been treated with the Photofrin drug as part of a new, official trial that is giving hope to lung cancer patients. Dr George’s team have now treated more than 20 patients over the past three years, with the limitation being the funds available from the NHS and the patient’s Primary Care Trust.

The one downside to this particular version of PDT is the prolonged period of light-sensitivity. While some of the drugs are washed from the body in just hours or days at most, for Don and other Photofrin patients it takes around 30-days.

“I am told that there is an antidote to the drug that is being developed, but to be cancer-free is the result that I wanted. Any advances they can make will be brilliant, but right now I am delighted with the result.”

When Don completed his first six months cancer free, he celebrated by going white water rafting on the Shenandoah River in the Blue Ridge Mountains, west of Washington. This year (2009) he has again been back to America and has more plans and ambitions to fulfil.