

MEDIA RELEASE

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Leeds born Brenda Brady raises over £1,300 for Mouth Cancer Awareness

Mum of two Brenda Brady does not drink or smoke, yet in March 2004 she underwent a 16 hour operation after she was diagnosed with mouth cancer. In 2003 she had two operations for a blocked saliva gland, but after the second operation she had a CT scan, which revealed something far more serious: **mouth cancer**.

With bone being taken from her leg to reconstruct her jawbone and soft tissue being taken from her forearm to provide the flap, which would replace half her tongue, the operation was very traumatic. She needed a tracheotomy to enable her to breathe and a peg fitted to her tummy to enable her to feed.

Brenda said, “It was very stressful. I remember being diagnosed at the follow-up appointment after my scan. I knew it was serious as I was faced with a whole team of people, whereas before only one doctor had ever been present. Fortunately my husband was there, and he was very supportive.”

Since the operation Brenda has had to learn to swallow and speak again and is restricted to a pureed diet. She is doing all she can to promote awareness of mouth cancer. As well as organising a fundraising coffee morning and a charity stall at her local hospital for Mouth Cancer Awareness Week (November), Brenda has designed a Christmas card to help the cause and these are selling well. Brenda has raised over £1,300 for the Mouth Cancer Foundation, which aims to increase mouth cancer awareness amongst the public and also provide support to those suffering from mouth, throat and other head & neck cancers. It has a comprehensive website www.mouthcancerfoundation.org with an online support group.

Brenda is also working on a personal web page to encourage people in a similar situation to share their experiences and exchange ideas. Her story can be read at <http://brendasob.blogspot.com>

Brenda continues: "The medical team at the Newcastle Royal Victoria Infirmary were fantastic and I thank God for their expertise but, once home from hospital, there is very little support out there for the everyday problems. Mouth cancer has a very low profile compared to other cancers. It is very important that people are made aware of the condition, and I will be doing everything I can to help the cause."

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Brenda can be contacted at brendasob@yahoo.co.uk

Brenda, whose maiden name is Dalby, was born in Leeds and attended St Francis of Assisi school in Holbeck. She lived in Churwell before marrying John and moving to Kirkhamgate Nr Wakefield where their son Daniel was born, eventually moving to Whitley Bay. They also have a daughter, Rebecca, who now lives in Leeds.

Mouth cancers have a higher proportion of deaths per number of cases than breast cancer, cervical cancer or skin melanoma. In the UK, there has been a 19% increase in cases from 3,673 in 1995 to 4,374 in 2000 and 13,000 people in the UK are currently living in the shadow of this debilitating disease. The mortality rate from mouth cancer is just over 50% due to late detection. Despite treatment, there were 1,703 deaths in 2002 – that's approximately one death every 5 hours. The chances of survival are much improved if the cancer is detected early and rapidly treated.

More information about **Mouth Cancer** is available at the Mouth Cancer Foundation web site www.mouthcancerfoundation.org or by contacting info@mouthcancerfoundation.org