

John Spencer - Mirfield, Yorkshire



It was in early 2004 when John Spencer first became aware that a mouth ulcer he had developed was a little more persistent than previous ulcers.

After trying numerous ulcer remedies he finally visited his GP in March of that year. Following a recommendation to see his dentist, John was referred to the maxillofacial clinic at Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield for assessment. After being diagnosed mouth cancer he was transferred to Leeds General Hospital, where he underwent an 11 hour operation.

The operation involved having half of his jawbone removed and rebuilt with metal plate and bone, and he remained in the clinic for two weeks.

He remembers: “It was major surgery and my recovery was a long drawn out business. My wife had to drive me everywhere and I could not help around the house or do anything much at all.”

In July of that year another tumour developed at the left side of John’s mouth. Assuming he would have to go through the same again, he was naturally very worried.

However, as the growth was treated early his treatment was much less stressful.

He continued: “The operation lasted for less than one hour. I was able to be treated at Pinderfields Hospital, was at home the next day and pottering in the garden by the end of the week. That is the difference between prompt action and delay - and it can be the difference between life and death!”

Although a heavy smoker in his younger years, 70-year-old John gave up in 1982, though he does drink red wine regularly.

He has since been treated for a third tumour but is recovering well.