Cancer Laryngectomee Trust

"To help improve the quality of life for all neck breathers"

Newsletter Autumn 2026

Dear Friends

Summer lunches arranged by Sandra and Dawn on behalf of the Trust have been held in Blackpool and Scarborough and been greatly enjoyed by members attending. We were also pleased to support a lunch for the Plymouth Laryngectomy Support Group arranged by Richard Milton.

Christmas lunches are now being planned at Blackpool, Halifax, Swindon and York. See later in the newsletter for details.

If any other groups would like to arrange lunches or outings we would be very pleased to support them. Please contact me on email or at the address below.

We are very pleased to have been given permission to reproduce the article by Cheryl Davidse interviewing Denis Collings a long-standing laryngectomee. The article appeared originally in the journal ENT & Audiology News.

Thank you to those members who signed the petition on dental care for laryngectomees featured in the March newsletter. Trustee Ros Oswald provides an update on the campaign later in the newsletter.

The newsletter also contains further research proposals by Danielle Holbrook and there is a follow-up to Karen's letter of hope.

Best Wishes

Carole Stainton, Trustee

Contact us:
Website: **www.cancerlt.org** Email: **info@cancerlt.org**
Address: **CLT, PO Box 618, Halifax, HX3 8WX**
Charity Registration No 326653

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Cycling Challenge

Congratulations to laryngectomee Richard Andrews who recently completed the cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, known as LEJOG. Richard has been a laryngectomee for 6 years and summed up his achievement as follows:

All done and completed 1,051 miles and 66,000 feet of climbing. It was an absolute blast loved every minute, hard but worth every minute amazing scenery and lovely people.









Scarborough Lunch

Dawn Potts reports on the lunch in Scarborough:

On Friday 26 June 2026 the Scarborough Summer Lunch was held in the beautiful Brunswick Room at The Crescent Hotel. It was a perfect summer day. Fortunately not the sweltering heat of the preceding few days. Nine laryngectomees and their partners and guests attended. It was great to see a lot of familiar faces as well as a few new ones. Several of the people attending had chosen to have a short break in or around Scarborough which in my opinion is such a good idea.
The table was set up perfectly in a great shape for conversation. The room was so lovely and bright on a summers day with its many large windows. The food and service were as excellent as ever. Always nice to see clean plates at the end of each course. Jayne Yeates kindly took the following photos.









Plymouth Lunch





Richard Milton reports:

On behalf of Plymouth Laryngectomy Support Group I thank the Cancer Laryngectomy Trust for funding our summer lunch, which was enjoyed by everyone.

Twelve of us met for lunch on 8th July at St Elizabeth's House, Plympton. The venue worked well and everyone enjoyed a great lunch - it was a very sociable event.

Derriford Hospital sent out invitations to the lunch to their caseload and I received a response from a new laryngectomee who was keen to come with his wife. This laryngectomee has been to several of our monthly meetings and looks like being a regular attendee. So as well as being an enjoyable lunch for regular members it was good to have gained a new member.

Blackpool Lunch

David Webb reports on the Blackpool lunch:





We had a fantastic time at the Cancer Laryngectomee Trust summer lunch on 7th June at Hotel Sheraton in Blackpool. Twenty six members from the Oldham Quiet One's travelled across to Blackpool and had a wonderful time.

A huge thanks to Sandra and Jean in Blackpool for once again organising yet another wonderful lunch and to you Carole at the Cancer Laryngectomee Trust for putting on the events. It's a huge part of our calendar now and we all look forward to lunches so much and we're now already planning for the Christmas lunch.

David took the photos including one of himself with Sandra and Jean who arrange the event





Christmas Lunches 2026



Blackpool

The Blackpool lunch at the Hotel Sheraton on **Sunday 13th December** is being arranged by Mrs Sandra Waddington 76 Rutland Avenue, Poulton-le Fylde, FY6 7SA

Tel: 01253 899531

Email: waddington46@yahoo.com

York

The lunch in York at Fulford Golf Club, Heslington Lane, York, YO10 5DY will be held on **Thursday 17th December** and is being arranged by Dawn Potts, The Granary, Hull Road, York, YO19 5LE

Tel: 01904 489360

Mobile: 07947624421

Email: dawn.potts@hotmail.co.uk

Halifax

The lunch in Halifax which is planned for **Thursday 3rd December** at Lightcliffe Golf Course, Knowle Top Road, Lightcliffe, Halifax HX3 8SW is being arranged by Carole Stainton contact at CLT, PO Box 618, Halifax, HX3 8WX

Email: info@cancerlt.org

Swindon

Ros Oswald is planning to arrange a lunch for Swindon area members. For further details contact Ros at 17 Kandahar, Aldbourne, Wilts SN8 2EE

Tel: 01672 540619

Email rospiano@yahoo.com



A letter of hope and possibility from Karen...continued

Dear Fellow Family Members,

In the March 2026 edition of the CLT Newsletter, I wrote a letter to you, about what we, as a family, learned from the experience of my dad's laryngectomy. I wanted you to know that it wasn't all doom and gloom - that there is a life of possibility, humour and fulfilment, post laryngectomy, for your loved ones. Every person's story is unique, so feel free to share your family's story (post laryngectomy) in the CLT Newsletter, in order to support, encourage and inspire other laryngectomees.

In my letter, I included several photos of my dad. One of the photos was taken at a CLT Luncheon in Blackpool in the late 1990s. The full photo didn't appear in the March edition. Here is the full photo.

I wondered if anyone recognises the three ladies or two gentlemen who were sitting with my dad?

Best wishes

Karen

For those that have never attended a CLT Luncheon, my dad said they were very enjoyable. A chance to socialise with fellow laryngectomees and their families, pick up tips and ideas, make friends and enjoy a very good meal. So, if you have never been to a CLT Luncheon, give it a try!



The impact of living with audible difference after Laryngectomy

You may have read a previous newsletter item about my planned research exploring laughter after laryngectomy. That work began with a simple observation: laughter is more than a sound. It is part of how we connect with other people and often feels closely linked to our sense of self.

As my thinking has developed, I have realised that laughter is just one part of a much bigger picture. I am now interested in the broader experience of living with audible difference after laryngectomy. This includes how changes in voice, laughter and other sounds we make may influence communication, relationships, everyday interactions, identity and participation in social life. While laughter remains an important part of this work, I hope to better understand the wider experience of sounding different and what this means to people living with and beyond laryngectomy. I am also interested in how sounding different, or having no voice, can affect your access to healthcare systems and services.

To help shape this research, I am looking for people who have undergone a laryngectomy and would be interested in sharing their views and experiences. Initially, this will involve an informal one-to-one conversation held online (or via email exchanges) at a time that suits you, likely in the autumn. These discussions will help ensure that any future research focuses on the issues that matter most to people with lived experience. A voucher will be offered as a thank you for your time and contribution.

If you would like to hear more or express an interest in being involved, I would be delighted to hear from you.

> ***"Because audible difference is not only about how we sound. It is also about how we experience ourselves and connect with others."***

Danielle Holbrook

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist (Team Lead), Bristol Foundation Trust:

danielle.holbrook2@uhbw.nhs.uk
danielle.holbrook2@nhs.net

My email accounts are due to change soon, so please do email **BOTH** of these email addresses.



Update: NHS dental care for head and neck cancer survivors

In January we were contacted by the Swallows Charity asking for support in promoting their petition to Parliament asking for dental treatment to be provided free of charge for head and neck cancer sufferers. This includes people who have had a laryngectomy. We were happy to support this. The Petition reached the 10,000 signature level needed to ensure a reply was received but this simply confirmed that there are no active plans to provide this care.

We agreed, on behalf of the Charity to continue to support the campaign and as a result met with Danny Kruger, my local MP. He asked if we had confirmation from every Integrated Care Board that no dental treatment was provided free of charge. The answer was that we did not have the information but went ahead with a Freedom of Information request to all the Boards to see what they were doing at the moment. So far 18 out of 38 have replied and it is clear from these that they do not have provision. However, I was also told that Cancer Alliances in the West Midlands are actively redesigning pathways in response to the GIRFT Report which could include this type of provision.

In addition Oxford Brookes University are making a grant application to undertake a full study of the key questions about dental care and this is being actively supported by members of the Swallows Charity.

It's great that this initiative is taking place and hopefully it will improve the lives of many laryngectomees as far as dental health is concerned.

Ros Oswald, Trustee



Life after Lary ID cards

ID cards for laryngectomees have been created by Life after Lary and can be obtained from Jon Organ by contacting:

contact@lifeafterlary.co.uk

Life after Lary
90 Brabazon Avenue
Wallington
SM6 9ET



Denis Collings
38 years as a total laryngectomee
by Cheryl Davidse

The following article has been reproduced from ENT & AUDIOLOGY NEWS Vol 35 Issue 3 Jul/Aug 2026

In the UK, there are more than 2000 new cases of laryngeal cancer each year [1]. In 1988, at the age of 58 years old, Mr Denis Collings was diagnosed with laryngeal cancer and underwent a total laryngectomy operation at Charing Cross Hospital, London, UK. Shortly after this operation, he underwent a surgical voice restoration procedure to enable him to speak again using a one-way silicon valve inserted into his tracheoesophageal wall. This 'voice prosthesis' enables pulmonary air to divert through the valve and vibrate in the pharyngoesophageal tissue as a pseudo voice [2].

"He had a look with the endoscope and said, 'I don't like what I see. I'm sorry, I've got to take your voice away."

Mr Collings kindly agreed to reflect upon his last 37 years of living with a permanent tracheal stoma, communicating with a tracheoesophageal voice. In this interview, he provides his insights into his experiences of how healthcare and life in general have changed since his original surgery.

A lot of progress has been made in the detection and management of head and neck cancers in the UK since 1988. Do you recall the circumstances around your diagnosis?

My voice started to change so I went to the doctor, and he sent me to hospital (Princess Margaret Hospital in Swindon). They decided to have a look with an endoscope and, in those days, endoscopy wasn't very pleasant. I had also developed a node in the neck so they sent me to Churchill Hospital in Oxford. There they did a biopsy on the node and it was confirmed as cancerous. They carried out five weeks of radiotherapy and that did seem to do the trick for three to four months, but then the symptoms returned. So, I went back to the PMH in Swindon and they decided to do a neck dissection (1987). That operation removed the node that was wrapped around the carotid artery but left the voice box, as the surgeon seemed to think it was okay. Unfortunately after another three to four months, the voice problems returned. I then asked for a second opinion as the consultant still couldn't see any issues.

I went to Charing Cross Hospital in London, where my daughter was training as a doctor. I saw a rather remarkable man called Mr Cheeseman – I believe he was the leading surgeon in the UK at the time in surgical voice restoration. He had a look with the endoscope and said, "I don't like what I see. I'm sorry, I've got to take your voice away." The following week, I had another neck dissection and total laryngectomy. He came to see me the next day and I think he was quite surprised at how well I was looking.

What was your biggest fear about the operation?

Losing my voice. That was my job; I was a teacher.

What was the most enduring memory of your hospital admission?

I had to be fed by a tube which went through the tracheoesophageal puncture. I got some contamination and I was very ill and vomiting. Anyway, it didn't kill me.

How long did you stay in hospital?

I was in about eight days. My neck was very sore and I had to be fed by the tube at first. They gave me a DeVilbiss nebuliser which blew warm steam onto my neck - that certainly helped with the pain.

How did your surgery impact your job?

Well, Mr Cheeseman was wonderful to me. I was obviously very upset at losing my voice because that was my life as a teacher. I used to enjoy singing as well, but he came and sat on the bed and said, "I'll give you a voice back." I did try to return to teaching, but I wasn't able to speak as well as I can now. The equipment wasn't as accomplished as it is now - the baseplates would come off, etc. So, I retired from teaching in 1988.

Did you try a different profession?

No, I actually got quite depressed for about six months. Then I convinced myself that I had to buck my ideas up because I was only 58 years old. In a way, I'm glad I was brought up in an age when you didn't complain. My grandfather, who was my best pal, used to say, "if you fall over and skin your knees, you get up and forget it. You don't complain." Before the war, people didn't complain. The idea was that if something bad happened, you made the best of it! It's the mentality I still have.

What were your family's reactions?

I had three teenage children. They came to see me after the operation when I couldn't talk and that really upset them. I convinced them I was going to speak again and, thereafter, they were very supportive and helpful. They knew all the things that could go wrong and they put up with it - and they still put up with me!

Were you a swimmer? Did it affect any of your leisure activities?

Yes, I was a swimmer. That was a great disappointment, not to be able to swim anymore. But, like with everything else in life, you can either feel very sad or do something about it. I ignored the advice, "if you go on a boat and fall overboard, that's it, you drown", but it didn't stop me going fishing. I thought, to hell with that, I've never fallen overboard before so I'm going to keep fishing! I also used to walk a lot and just speak to myself because that does help. The more you speak, the better you will speak. I used to talk to my dog who thought I was crazy, but you mustn't be embarrassed about it, and he got used to it.

Did you join any laryngectomy clubs?

No. Part of the reason was that the only one in existence was in London. It wasn't very widespread, and Charing Cross did operations for the whole country.

Do you know any other laryngectomy patients?

No, but Mr Cheeseman said once or twice, "Look, I've got a very depressed patient I need to operate on. You couldn't talk to him, could you?". I used to go to the ward and talk to people, telling them that it wasn't all bad and that they could speak again. The equipment available to laryngectomy patients' recovery has changed over the past few decades.

How have these developments helped you?

Oh, they're much better now. The development of HMEs (heat moisture exchange filters) has certainly lessened the amount of mucus you produce, and gives you a much better breathing regime at night. Trying to breathe at night without a HME was very drying. And there were no hands-free valves in 1988.

"Even though my voice may sound a bit odd, as long as I can express myself, they accept it."

How many different devices for communication after surgery have you experienced? What are your memories of them?

I was offered an electrolarynx but I sounded like a Doctor Who Dalek. So I decided to stick with the voice prostheses and try to improve that voice - and I did!

Do you think there have been changes over time in the way people respond to disability or physical differences?

Yes. When I first had the laryngectomy and spoke to people, they would ask, "have you got a sore throat?" or make some other comment, but now I think they are aware that certain people do speak like this. I meet people now and they don't bat an eyelid! Even though my voice may sound a bit odd, as long as I can express myself, they accept it.

What advice would you give to those undergoing total laryngectomy surgery today?

I would tell them that, by some means, they will get a voice back. It's very important to tell them that. There are different ways to communicate after surgery. I did try oesophageal speech for a time – learning to use swallowed air to speak with the help of a speech therapist – but I personally found it difficult and uncomfortable because of the effect on my stomach, so I persisted with the Blom-Singer voice prosthesis.

What do you think have been the main changes in the NHS since 1988? Is it generally better or worse, and in what ways?

It's so much harder to get an appointment quickly nowadays. I used to be able to phone up Mr Cheeseman and go and see him. Now the appointments are all made by someone else. People demand too much of the NHS. I've had thousands of pounds worth of treatment and there is much reason to be grateful. Someone said to me once, "If you give the public a service for free, they will always demand more", and it's absolutely true.

References

1. NHS 111 Wales. Cancer of the larynx **https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/c/article/cancerofthelarynx**

2. InHealth. Post-Laryngectomy Anatomical Changes and Methods of Voice. **https://inhealth.com/media/documents/pdf/LT_ANATOMICAL_AID-B_ENG_WEB(1).pdf3333.**

Rekindled love of travel

Good Day to all my 'Larry' family," A little story I hope of inspiration" for those of you out there with doubts on travelling abroad again.

Prior to my Laryngectomy in 2022 you could say I was an avid traveller, visiting places far and wide around the world! But it all came to a very abrupt end 'for why to this day I do not know why except for fear of the unknown '. How on earth would I cope with both the flights and being in a foreign country that potentially knew nothing about Laryngectomees! However all those fears were soon to become just a distant memory.

I took the plunge and decided to book a short holiday in the Portuguese Mountains just a hop, skip & a jump into Europe.

The Great day came when I was to board that Big Metal Bird and head for foreign lands.

First a slight backtrack as The adventure started with obtaining a document from my medical support team stating I needed to carry Essential Medical Supplies during flight this document also meant I was entitled to carry extra on board hand luggage "at no extra cost" containing all medical supplies needed for my trip including scissors, medication and bottled liquids. Worth remembering this is at no cost and it frees up valuable spaces in your cases for "much needed Glad rags ,shoes & handbags for the ladies, whisky, watches & hankies for the men".

So back to the great day I arrived at the airport with my documents in hand and headed straight for the special assistance desk, produced my letter explained my special needs, from there it could not have been easier "I must explain at this point I also cannot go through electronic scanning systems so I had to be escorted through manual search procedures" however that does not change the service as you are carrying prohibited items you will still be assigned an escort.

From the minute of checking into the special assistance desk it was taken out of my hands the assigned team member took care of everything from checking-in, security and getting me to the departure lounge. At this point I thought it was goodbye to my little helper only to be surprised like a genie he appeared come boarding which I was whisked through as priority and before I knew it seated overlooking the Great Silver Birds Wings. At this point it is important to remember make yourself known to the cabin crew and of your special needs in the case of an emergency and requirement of a special adapted breathing mask "Remember pack an extra one in your medical bag as they do not all carry one as standard". The cabin crew also have to inform the pilot as a matter of protocol he's carrying special needs passengers! Once this was done the cabin crew could not do enough even to the point that during the Safety briefing there was some friendly banter about our ability to inflate life jackets. "A refreshing change that not all people shy away from our disability" They were attentive and reassuring during the flight.







To my surprise the service didn't stop on leaving British Air space as once we landed there were support members to see me through arrivals and onto the point of collecting my car , which I thought I would have some difficulty in negotiating as I am one of the few Larry's with No Means of Speech. But all my fears were soon washed away.

The Portuguese People conveyed Patience, Understanding and Compassion and went out of their way to accommodate me in many dealings throughout my whole holiday no matter which port of call from large towns to small mountain villages. "A refreshing change when in our own country I so often encounter rudeness and dismissal of our needs!"

Suffice to say a most enjoyable time during my stay but as closure arrived I did have some fears for the return journey.

However in preparation I had printed myself in English & Portuguese a letter of explanation that I was a Laryngectomee with medical needs which I presented to a checking-in team member before I joined the very long waiting queue. Before I knew it there was a Portuguese porter picking up my bags and whisking me through check-in, security and seating me in the departure lounge only to return to assist with boarding.

My return journey was as smooth as my departure with the same level of attentiveness and ease "remembering to inform the cabin crew again" Before I knew it we were landing and escorted through arrivals with ease and to my desired pick up area. All my fears washed away only to be left on my return journey home to plan my next Big Adventures.

Which I can share currently stands at two! After telling other Larry friends they have decided to take the plunge "One of which although a fairly new Larry at the age of 66 has never even been abroad" and are accompanying me on a return trip to the Portuguese Mountains in Sept (Just 4 weeks away) by the time you read this we probably will have been, seen & conquered. But I haven't stopped there I'm now booked for a "life long dream" to Cruise the Danube in May 27 with more planning in the initial stages for other foreign travel.

You might be interested to know the two airlines involved in my adventure were Easy Jet & Ryanair two airlines so often to receive bad press but in my opinion deserve Gold Stars for the service Treatment & Compassion I received. Well done to them in relaying all my fears and giving me back my confidence not only in Travel but Humanity.

And not forgetting the Portuguese People some of the kindest & patient I have come across.

I hope my story gives those of you in doubt some encouragement to take that step towards travel again.

Good Wishes to all & Happy Travels

Jayne Yeates

Welcome to Atos Care

Atos | Care

The only integrated care and distribution service for people with a laryngectomy and tracheostomy in the UK.

Atos Care is a comprehensive support service, dedicated to making life easier for people living with a neck stoma. We provide a range of services to patients and the clinicians who care for them, including delivery of prescription products and a rich network of care and support services to help them adjust to life after a laryngectomy or tracheostomy.



The Atos Circle of Care

Best Start: Get off to the best start in life after a laryngectomy.

- Enhanced support for your first six months from our Welcome Team of CQC Registered Nurses
- A welcome pack and a welcome call
- Practical tools and equipment to make life easier, including a complimentary care bag containing a range of helpful items
- Regular liaison with clinicians for joined up care

Inspected and rated Good CareQuality Commission

Connection hub: Stay connected to those who know and understand.

- A dedicated Customer Care Representative
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- CQC Registered Nurses to support you in your daily routines, in close partnership and communication with clinicians
- Educational events in the community for people with similar experiences
- Atos MyLife app to provide inspiration and information on living well after a laryngectomy

Care delivered: Bringing the right products and care your way.

- Easy and convenient ordering
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- Discreet packaging
- Convenience orders by subscription

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