



Sentinel columnist Martin Tideswell is appearing in this year's pantomime at The Regent Theatre, Hanley. Here Martin, who plays Alderman FitzSentinel and is working alongside stars including Jonathan Wilkes, gets stuck in for week two of the rehearsals...

"TWO great things happened yesterday. Firstly, I got to try on my costume. Imagine Dick Turpin meets Dangerous Liaisons and you're somewhere close. It's amazing how actually wearing the costume somehow makes all your lines seem more realistic and your character starts to come to life. More importantly, Pete Conway and I got to spend some quality time with director Matt Salisbury and run through our dialogue. You can't beat that kind of one-to-one tuition. Suddenly you realise the value of every word you've been given and the power you have to help shape the scenes.

Matt gave us a running commentary on which words we should be affecting and corrected us on our postures at various points. Then I did the whole of Act One with the rest of the cast without a break. To my untrained eye, the first hour looks pretty good already. You know what? It's hard work, but I think I'm beginning to enjoy myself...

Don't miss our interview with the panto's Fairy Oatcakes, Sheila Ferguson, in tomorrow's Go.



# My life-saving treatment must be available to all

Health campaigner Alan Bowley yesterday went to the Houses of Parliament to plead with MPs for a revolutionary cancer treatment which saved his life to be made available on the NHS. The Staffordshire Police officer paid £37,000 out of his own pocket to have CyberKnife treatment in America.

The non-invasive, pain-free treatment fires lasers at tumours and kills them. The 42-year-old, of Congleton, appeared before an all-party select committee to promote the use of CyberKnife treatment. He told reporter Nicola Irwin his story

AS HE helps his youngest son learn words from his spelling tin, Alan Bowley is keenly aware that he is experiencing a life doctors thought he would never see.

In July 2007, a Manchester-based consultant explained he had little more than two years to live and a tumour under his pancreas was inoperable.

The same consultant has since revealed he didn't expect Alan, known as Stan to his friends, to see Christmas 2007.

Suggested treatments focused on palliative care for Stan, dad to Ella, aged 10, Lucas, aged eight and five-year-old Flynn.

Wife Janet, now aged 40, said: "If there's only yourself, if the worst case scenario happened, you would manage. But with having children, if the inevitable happens that's what you don't want to go through. You're determined not to let that happen."

Janet, a midwife based at Macclesfield Hospital, eventually discovered the CyberKnife treatment programme online.

They went against Stan's consultant's recommendation to have the treatment and Stan took part in the CyberKnife programme at a hospital in Washington, in the U.S. in August 2007.

"I can't compare how I am now and then," said Stan. "In July 2007, I couldn't walk - I shuffled and I weighed 8st 7lbs. I was skin and bones. I couldn't stand up for a long time and, at the airport to America, I should have had a wheelchair."

"Now I'm putting on weight, I'm eating properly and getting stronger and, hopefully, positively looking forward to a better future."

Last year, Stan returned to work as a police sergeant based in Leek and is almost up to full-time hours.

## Plea to install £3 million robot

AS family and friends watched on, Alan Bowley delivered a passionate plea for CyberKnife, the group also heard debate about how to progress next.

Doctors explained they wanted to ensure that NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) which approves drugs and technological treatments for NHS use would back CyberKnife.

The debate also looked at how the costs of the treatment sits with the benefits.

It would cost around £3 million to install a CyberKnife robot in a suitable location.

Susan Kramer, MP for Richmond Park, London, asked for the Institute Of Fiscal Studies to be involved.

She argued that as CyberKnife patients need less recuperation time so can return to work quicker, it means they are less reliant on benefits.

Addressing the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Medical Technology, he described how he first fought cancer in 2002 with a successful operation to remove a tumour.

Four-and-a-half years later he was told the cancer was back and was inoperable.

He told MPs surgeons, oncologists, and health service professionals yesterday how he didn't accept the prognosis, and supported by his wife, he discovered CyberKnife surgery and travelled to Georgetown, Washington, for treatment in August 2007.

He began to feel better immediately.

ment and the registered charity has almost £50,000 in the bank. Friends and family initially fund-raised to cover the £35,000 cost of Stan's treatment.

And afterwards, the Bowley family were adamant they needed

to bring CyberKnife to the UK and secure NHS funding for British patients. But there is little knowledge of the surgery in the UK.

As an indication, internet search engine Google returns 330,000 results when you search for CyberKnife. If you search only in the UK, you get just 16,000.

Stan and Janet's website, which offers information on the treatment, is the second result available.

Now Janet is constantly in touch with other cancer sufferers explaining in detail Stan's success following CyberKnife.

But campaigning for CyberKnife has made Stan's health a very public issue, which at times makes it harder to move on.

Initially, it was Janet who was keen to spread the word about Cyberknife with a view to helping others.

Stan said: "I'm very grateful that CyberKnife was found. I'm fortunate to still be here and lucky to have a strong family, particularly Janet. Although I'm not back to how I was, I'm on the way to it and now I'm equally as determined as Janet to get CyberKnife into the UK on the NHS."

Janet added: "With the children we didn't really talk about it before, but as we've done more work to promote CyberKnife we've had to explain, to the two older children, what could have happened to daddy."

"Flynn isn't really aware of anything, but Ella and Lucas know that daddy could have died. It's not something you want them to worry about. They have been brilliant."

Despite the success of the treatment, cancer has left an emotional scar for the family.

Janet explained: "I always feel the illness has robbed him of the person he was, not just



## Liam believed new approach offered greater chance of remission

LIAM Hyland made 3,000-mile trips to Turkey to undergo CyberKnife treatment in November 2007.

The insurance complaints consultant, from Penkhull, had been diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas four months earlier.

He decided to travel for treatment after reading about Leek policeman Alan Bowley's fight against the disease in The Sentinel.

Mr Hyland, pictured with wife Jane, wrote on a support website set up by Mr Bowley how he remembered reading

that sufferers should not give up hope if there was a possibility of a cure.

After undergoing two sessions of the treatment in Turkey, where he owns a holiday home, tests three months later showed there had been no growth of Mr Hyland's tumour.

But, at six months, scans showed the cancer had spread to his liver. He underwent further treatment of CyberKnife in February, but died in March this year while in Turkey. Mr Hyland's death was not related to cancer and

he maintained that the CyberKnife treatment gave him a greater chance of putting the pancreatic cancer into remission.



## Pain-free laser method is step in right direction

CYBERKNIFE is a non-invasive pain-free method of treating cancer.

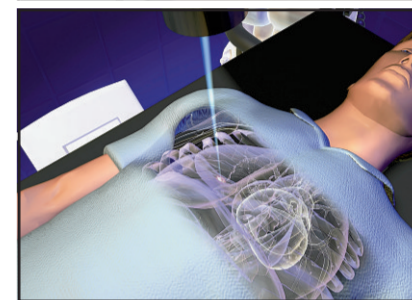
Lasers are used to direct radiotherapy at the tumour with pinpoint accuracy. It means the healthy tissue around that tumour is not damaged unnecessarily while the actual tumour can receive a higher blast of radiation.

Before the first CyberKnife appointment, some patients need to have gold markers inserted into the tumour by an endoscopy procedure. They can help the laser find the tumour.

During the procedure, patients lay down and are asked to wear warm clothes as they need to remain still. Patients wear a special tight-fitting vest. Treatment lasts around 45 minutes. Patients need between three and five sessions, depending on where the tumour is and how large it is. Treatment is daily and completed within one week.

The robot which fires the laser is able to take into account the slight movement of the tumour caused by a patient's breathing.

By opting for CyberKnife, patients have none of the associated complications caused by surgery.



LIFESAVING: Top, the CyberKnife robot and, above, an illustration showing how the process 'zaps' tumours in the body.

## In brief

STAFFORD: A company director was caught driving at nearly 115 mph on the M6 with his two young children in the car.

Craig Whittaker was banned from driving for 42 days by North Staffordshire magistrates after he was stopped by police near Stafford Services. The 39-year-old, of Balmoral Road, Grappenhall, Cheshire, pleaded guilty to the offence on October 24.

As well as the ban, the defendant was fined £360 with £50 costs. The court heard police clocked him driving at 114.99 mph.

STOKE-ON-TRENT: Experts will focus on the city as part of a £1 million transport study of the wider region. Travel patterns for people and goods around Stoke-on-Trent will be part of an assessment of future transport priorities in the West Midlands. The Department for Transport has confirmed four areas are to share £1 million from its Delivering A Sustainable Transport System programme. The scheme aims to identify what the region's transport needs will be from 2014.

ABBAY HULTON: North Staffordshire magistrates issued a warrant without bail after defendant Gareth Walker failed to turn up for a court hearing. The 28-year-old, of Elmcroft Road, Abbey Hulton, faces a charge of theft from TK Maxx on November 4.



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