



The Ben Walton Trust

Dear friends and supporters,

The Trust has been in operation for over 20 years and has achieved many of the things we set out to do. I list below some of the key projects we have initiated or been involved with. The website will also show you, in greater detail, what has been accomplished.

I now have to report that Ben's Trust, as we know it, is to end, as I am no longer able to give it the time and energy it deserves. I retire as soon as I have concluded what happens next.

What I want to do here is to highlight a few of the most important events, and to thank from the bottom of my heart all those people who have given time, energy, commitment and donations. None of this could have happened without you.

Beginnings

It started with Ben saying "something must be done about this" - something that appears to be a simple mouth ulcer, if undetected and untreated, can prove deadly. After Ben's death his piano teacher, Ronald Stevenson, visited with a cheque for £100 and said "Do something". With that we set up The Trust.

- We helped fund the King's study by employing Dr. Alison Giles and Carrie Llewelyn as part-time researchers. This was the first large scale epidemiological study to show that in the under 45 age group, 25% of cases were not caused by the traditional risk factors of alcohol and tobacco.
- We set up, with the late Richard Horner, the Scottish Oral Cancer Action Group and delivered a presentation to the newly formed Scottish Parliament.
- We submitted a proposal to SIGN and I worked as a patient representative on the guidelines on head and neck cancers.
- We worked with dental students on increasing awareness by holding annual events where students speak to other students about risk factors. This was funded by a generous legacy from the late Mary Taubman. Particular thanks are due to Anya Visser for her involvement.
- We supported and developed with BMJ Learning the online module, "Mouth cancer: recognising it and referring early".
- We organised and funded the 'Dinner with a Difference' and the resulting soft food cookbook/ preparation guide.

Thanks are due to:

Unfortunately I cannot name here all of our supporters – most are shown on our news and events page. There have been many who started supporting the Trust 20 years ago and continue to do so today. We never set out to be a large charity and big fundraiser: we wanted to meet and influence people and be an agent for change, by being a voice and advocate for patients. It is still a mystery to me how, without setting out to fundraise, the funds came as and when we needed them. I can only explain, with a quote from Dr. Winifred Rushworth: "If the cause is good, the money will follow". Thank you all – it did indeed.



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I have to mention a few people who have given guidance, advice and encouragement over the years: firstly our Trustees, who have always been supportive and encouraging, contributing specialist knowledge and sound guidance; secondly our Treasurers, who have committed much time to keeping our books in order, reporting to OSCR (Scottish Charity Regulator), working with the Banks and claiming back Gift Aid on donations, both groups doing this voluntarily. David Dean of Old Nick's Tavern, Horncastle, was, together with his customers, our first major fundraiser; staging an ingenious range of events, treasure hunts and quiz nights, they not only allowed us to employ our first researcher but also helped to fund our first research project at King's, London. Along the way they created awareness of mouth cancer in that area of Lincolnshire. Also Sir Peter Main, an early supporter. In the dental / medical profession, Profs. Newell Johnson, Saman Warnakulasuriya, Graham Ogden and Paul Speight; David Souter, Gerry Robertson, John Gibson and Freda Cunningham and dental students of Dundee, Glasgow, Sheffield, Leeds and UCLAN.

I would also like to thank the members of the dental profession who have been so helpful in raising the profile of mouth cancer and making significant donations to the Trust. Sincere thanks to dental professional organisations, FGPD (Scotland) and BSDHT (UK), both of whom adopted us for a year and more. The dental practices of Vermilion, New Town Dental, Iriston House, Kiss Dental, IM Marker, R and PM Thomson and Andrew Boggan. To Scotland's Garden Scheme, Fettes College, the Orcome Trust and the Pyet Deli. A debt of gratitude to Liz Grant, who has worked tirelessly on research projects, promotion, fundraising, being the Trust's Project Manager and the brains behind 'Dinner with a Difference'. Finally I must thank Vicky and Gemma for their support, encouragement and generally allowing me to go beyond the realms of reasonable family life (at times).

So what happens now:

- we will continue to keep a website presence for the next three years to act as a source of information and links to other sites, such as BMJ Learning.
- we are setting aside a sum of money to allow an update of the BMJ Learning module.
- we have an agreement with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow that we will distribute remaining funds to them. They will open an account named 'The Ben Walton oral cancer fund'. This will be used to award prizes / support projects in even years and have an invited lecturer, from persons working in the field of oral cancer, in alternate years. As the College is a charity it can still accept donations into that fund. More details on our website.
- Emma Shanks, a cancer researcher at the Beatson Institute, Glasgow, is setting up a new Trust and has agreed to continue promoting the soft food cookbook and to work with dental and medical students.
- The Trust will deregister as a Charity.

As you will appreciate, a family run Trust is no easy thing to relinquish. However, I am confident that there are many dentists/medics/students who have got the problems in their sights and will bring new energy and drive to increasing awareness of the signs and symptoms and the need for rapid detection and treatment of mouth cancers. I wish them every success. As ever, there is always more to do – very recently I have been in correspondence with the mother of a young man who had late detected mouth cancer; her final note was to tell me that he had sadly died on his 21st birthday.

With thanks larger than I can express in mere words,

Yours aye

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr Walton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Walton MBE, Founder/Chair The Ben Walton Trust