



Cancer survivor's Outback challenge

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By Kate Mansey Daily Post Staff



FIVE years ago breast cancer patient Liz Furlong was lying in the bath planning her own funeral.

But after a double mastectomy and a course of chemotherapy the mother-of-one has made a remarkable recovery and has been given the "all clear".

Now Mrs Furlong, 47, of Roby, Huyton, faces a battle of a different kind.

Next month the charity worker will be attempting to ride a Harley Davidson across Australia, the only British woman to take up the challenge.

In October - chosen because it is Breast Cancer Awareness Month - she will ride 1,200 miles from Sydney to Brisbane alongside other cancer survivors to raise £3,000 for charity.

The former Age Concern co-ordinator said: "When I recovered from the second mastectomy I asked myself when the best time of my life had been and I realised it was when I was on the back of a motorbike.

"I always rode as a passenger but this time I've learnt to ride a bike myself so I can take up the challenge.

"I've always liked Harleys so this will be a real experience for me.

"But it is quite a daunting challenge because so far I've only ridden as far as Chester."

Mrs Furlong was diagnosed with cancer at the Linda McCartney Centre in 2001 and advised that she would have to undergo a mastectomy and chemotherapy.

She said: "I remember coming home after I'd been told I had cancer and seeing my son who was 11 at the time just sat on the sofa watching television.

"It just struck me that until then I had never thought for a moment that I wouldn't see him growing up.

"You wouldn't believe the number of times I lay in the bath planning my funeral - remembering a piece of music that would be nice and then realising that the only person who wouldn't be there would be me.

"I had a mastectomy but six months later I asked to have the other breast removed as well because I could not have handled going through all that again.

"Believe it or not, breast cancer was the best and the worst thing that has ever happened to me.

"I've had full reconstruction and it made me realise how precious life is."

The funds Mrs Furlong raises will go to research into Inflammatory Breast Cancer and Amazon Heart - a charity that provides a network of support for breast cancer sufferers.

Heather Chapple, trustee of Amazon Heart, said: "This is a huge challenge for Liz and one she's approaching with great bravery and enthusiasm.

"It's very daring of her to fly halfway round the world to take part in the ride - which is a daunting prospect for anyone - and we're very proud of her."

- Anyone wishing to sponsor Liz Furlong can call her on: 0151 449 3454 or donate online at: <http://www.amazonheart.org/AHThunder/lizfurlong.htm>

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