



LAURA'S LEGACY: INSPIRING HOPE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GBM

As March is Brain Tumour Awareness Month, *Ali Gudgeon* speaks with Nicola Nuttall, about her daughter Laura's battle, the urgent need for research funding and the tireless work she's doing to ensure other families don't have to endure the same heartbreak

May 22nd marks a poignant anniversary – two years since the world lost Laura Nuttall, a vibrant 23-year-old taken too soon by a glioblastoma (GBM). Glioblastoma multiforme is a fast-growing type of tumour of the brain. It is the most common type of primary malignant brain tumour in adults.

Horrified by the statistics around brain tumours and the lack of government investment, Laura's mum, Nicola Nuttall, became a dedicated campaigner and is continuing her eldest daughter's passion to raise awareness and find a cure.

Laura's story, though tragically short, is one of unwavering positivity, incredible courage and a legacy that continues to inspire. Laura's diagnosis in 2018, following a routine eye test, was a devastating blow.

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Eight tumours. Glioblastoma multiforme. The most aggressive form of brain cancer.

For any family, this news would be shattering. “It was a complete shock,” Nicola recalls. “Laura was in her first term at university in London. We had to pack up her room and bring her home to Barrowford. Then the search began – finding a surgeon, registering with a local GP. The immediate priority was surgery to remove the largest tumour, the one causing her headaches, nausea and seizures.”

The standard treatment in the UK involves surgery followed by radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Laura bravely underwent this gruelling regime. “But even with all that,” Nicola explains, “her prognosis was just 12 months. We refused to accept that. We started researching treatments available elsewhere. In Germany, we found a professor using electro hyperthermia and oncolytic virus therapy. It made sense to us, so we started fundraising to take her to Cologne every six weeks for these treatments. Without the incredible generosity of our community, that wouldn't have been possible.”

Laura's positivity throughout her illness was remarkable. “It was incredibly difficult,” Nicola admits. “But Laura was consistently



positive. She never asked, ‘why me?’ or complained about the unfairness of it all. She just got on with things, determined to prove the surgeon wrong. She had this incredible inner strength. She once said, ‘They know what I have, but they don't know who I am.’”

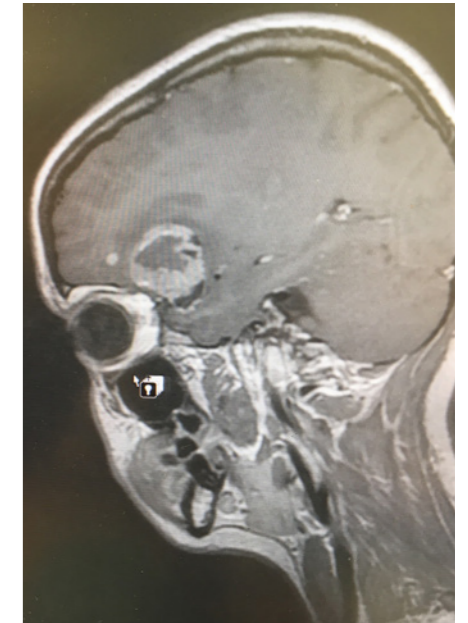
Laura's bucket list became a symbol of her zest for life. “She loved anything to do with driving,” Nicola smiles. “Buses, HGVs, tractors, monster trucks, motorbikes, even the tube! She loved skydiving, went on safari in South Africa, met Michelle Obama, spent a day with Greater Manchester Police and went fishing with Paul Whitehouse and Bob Mortimer. The bucket list was constantly evolving. We were always finding new things to add.”

Now, Nicola is channelling her grief into action. She's a trustee of Our Brain Bank,



campaigning for whole genome sequencing of brain tumours. “Brain tumours are incredibly heterogeneous,” she explains. “Each one has its own genetic fingerprint. Yet, we still treat them all with the same chemotherapy, even though there could be more effective, targeted treatments. Brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under 40, yet they receive only about 2 per cent of cancer research funding. There have been no new drugs for the disease in decades. We need personalised treatments, targeted to the specific drivers of each tumour and we need faster diagnosis.”

The second anniversary of Laura's passing will be marked with a family walk up Pendle Hill, one of Laura's favourite places, and by carrying out random acts of kindness in her name. Her legacy lives on through the book Nicola wrote, ‘The Stars Will Still Be There.’



“I wrote it to tell our whole story,” Nicola says. “Yes, there are sad parts, but there's also a lot of joy and laughter. I wanted to share Laura with the world, her incredible attitude. She taught us that life is short and precious and we have a responsibility to live it as fully as possible. Laura lived a lifetime in her 23 years

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and she helped so many people with her kindness.” The book has resonated deeply with readers, inspiring and energising them with Laura's approach to life.

The Be More Laura Foundation continues to make a difference. “We have our shop at bemorelaura.com selling T-shirts, sweatshirts,



mugs and bags printed with Laura's words: ‘Be Kind, Be Brave, Be Silly, Be Honest,’” Nicola says. “We're working alongside major brain tumour charities and institutes to fund research into kinder, more effective treatments for glioblastoma. So far, we've donated over £100,000.”



Laura's story is a powerful reminder of the urgent need for more research funding and better treatments for brain tumours. Nicola's tireless campaigning and the work of the Be More Laura Foundation are offering hope to families facing this devastating diagnosis. ■

To support their efforts, visit bemorelaura.com and join them in the fight for a future free from brain tumours.