

ROLAND S.



Roland is the 55-year-old owner of a transport company. He lives in London where he and his wife Iris have a daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.

One day, Roland thought he had a toothache and an abscess on his left upper jaw. It turned out that this swelling was in fact caused by a malignant squamous cell carcinoma of his upper jaw and maxillary sinus.

His surgery involved removal of his left upper jaw, sinus, cheekbone, nose, palate, and the lower part of his eye socket. A large dental plate (obturator) was used to fill the defect. His cheek, which had been peeled back to facilitate removal of the cancer, was replaced at the end of the operation.

After the surgery Roland was treated with radiotherapy every day for six weeks. A mask is worn during this treatment to fix the patient in exactly the same position on the treatment couch so that the patient always receives the radiotherapy at exactly the correct site on the body. Roland found this claustrophobic and more unpleasant than the surgery. Roland brought the mask in to Mark Gilbert and asked to be painted in it. This is one example of a patient taking some control in the Saving Faces project, and using the artistic process as a means of expression and communication.