

MATHEW JOHNSTON
THE LAST 12 MONTHS

On the 31st October 2010 Mathew was rushed to the Q.A in Portsmouth, he was seriously ill.

The previous week he had been suffering from sickness and diarrhoea, and several trips to the doctor had not helped.

Mathew was admitted to the critical care unit and placed in an 'induced coma'. Doctors were unable to do any tests as Mathew was so ill – his platelet level was so low there was danger of internal bleeding.

He remained in this induced coma for 5 days, and large amounts of antibiotics were pumped into his system. At this stage doctors were unsure whether Mathew would pull through. After 5 days Mathew was brought out of the coma his condition started to stabilise. The doctors believed that he was suffering from meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia. Mathew was extremely lucky to have survived.

Once out of his coma Mathews' family realised the enormity of his condition. The meningitis had left Mathew partially paralysed down his left side and with no movement at all below his waist.

Mathew remained in Intensive Care for a further 5 days and once doctors were satisfied his condition had stabilised, and that all the bacteria had been killed, he was moved to the Paediatrics ward, where he spent 10 days before being moved to the rehabilitation ward on F1.

This was where Mathew was to spend the next 4 months. He had to have intense physiotherapy sessions every day, and things moved very slowly.

The doctors had warned the family that once the danger had passed the long uphill climb would begin.

Mathew was discharged from the Q.A on 22nd March 2011, and went to Salisbury General Hospital to the specialist spinal unit. Here he was helped on how to cope with the problems his condition had left him with, both physical and mental.

Mathew was using a wheel chair at this stage as he was unable to walk very far unaided.

Mathew continued with his physio sessions as an outpatient, and after some cajoling from Alan went to Warsash for a little 'knock about' on the tennis courts.

Alan and Mandy decided that Mathew needed a bit more of a challenge, and Mathew started to hit a few more balls at Hamble. With Colin and his team giving Mathew much encouragement.

Mathew started coming to Hamble at the end of July, and having a few gentle hits twice a week. Due to the fact that Mathew has amazing hand to eye reflexes, he is still hitting the tennis ball as cleanly as he was before his illness.

Alan and Mandy sincerely believe that it down to the kindness and support from Colin and JEM Tennis that has allowed Mathew to believe in himself again and that he will make a full recovery in time.

Mathew went back to college in September, and is on course to go to University as was planned before he became ill.

He has done amazingly well in these last few months, walking with only the use of a stick.

His physio is down to twice a week, and he is coming to play tennis at least twice a week as well. Although Mathew is not yet running around the courts, his mobility has improved greatly, and everyone is extremely pleased and proud for him.

Mathew said that his physiotherapists have noticed a difference in him, and both Mathew and his family believe it is down to his tennis.

The doctors have told Mathew that it will take at least 2 years for him to regain full feeling and movement in his legs and lower body.

Alan and Mandy said that they are extremely grateful to Colin and JEM Tennis for all the support that they have given to Mathew. To have given him his confidence back, his self belief in his mobility and his tennis, and just the confidence to chat to people and mix in. Thank you.