



CONNOR CLIFFORD
AGE 11 BORN IN SSCBU ON 29TH AUGUST 1994
WEIGHT 755GSM (1LB 10.5)

12 years ago this week I was terrified. Lying in St Johns hospital being told that I was in danger and so was my unborn baby due to my developing pre-eclampsia. The day we were transferred to Simpson's Connor was born, it was 29th August 1994.

This poor wee scrap of life who was neither ready or able to face the world was thrust upon it nearly 3 months early. In the first few days the fear grew and the uncertainty was great but we soon became adjusted to our environment and learned a lot about the machinery and Connors treatment. This was down to both the wonderful medical staff and the fantastic baby diaries. The fear never went away for a long time. He was promoted onto Cpap after about 3 weeks which was fab then disaster struck. Connor developed NEC and so a slight set back began. His O2 requirement was quite high and he needed to be re-intubated and ventilated once again. By the time he was 1 month old he had only grown to 2lb. 2 Hernia repairs over at sick kids, septicaemia, blood transfusions, heart valves not closing, the NEC, and the ever developing BPD due to the ventilation. Could this poor wee man take much more? He did and began to grow and become less dependant on ventilation and at last after 12 weeks was re-promoted onto Cpap once again he seemed to thrive. Then disaster struck. We were being transferred to St Johns!!! Now living so close to the hospital you would think that we would be delighted!!! We were terrified once again. To leave our friends at Simpson's, the staff who knew Connor so well and had nursed him with so much care. The people who had become our lifeline, sanity, shoulder to cry on and almost our family. However more poorly babies than Connor required that care so back home we went.

Connor thrived and grew and eventually on 20th of December we took him home. He was still Oxygen dependant but mainly a trickle through the night. The main thing was that after 4 long months we were a real family at last. It was the best Christmas!!!

We attended the child development clinic at St Johns who closely monitored his progress which was slow but sure. After a month at home he required no more oxygen. We were told that he would probably be back in hospital a few times as he grew up with chest infections and the like. However to date he has never had to be back in hospital!! By the time he was 1 he still only weighed 14lb but was walking and talking and doing so well.

Each year was a milestone and when he started school just before his 5th birthday I once more was terrified. He was just so small compared to his class mates. Soon after starting school he became the proud brother of baby Scott who was born at a whopping 5lb 2!!!

Connor is still quite small for his age. He will be 12 next week but wears 8/9 clothes. He has done well at school but struggles with both concentration and his writing. As time goes by this is always improving. He has lots of friends and is a sociable, musical funny wee boy. So this morning it was unbelievable that this wee miracle man was heading off to high school!!! Yes you guessed I am terrified once again.

He was excited and nervous as he headed out this morning.

I'm unsure how many of you will remember Connor as I know how many babies pass through the unit but I send this picture and note to you in the hope that some of you do. Every year that we celebrate a birthday reminds me of you all and of Connors 'rocky' start in life and there really are no words to express our gratitude for the love and care given to our son and all the other Special Care Babies.

Much Love to you all, Suzanne & Jason Clifford

