



Talk about galling!



Still, nothing could stop me celebrating my 20th wedding anniversary

By Carole White, 53, from Pudsey, Leeds

We all have our weaknesses. For me, it's burgers and a Bacardi. And I'd enjoyed a few too many of both. On 1 February 2012 – the morning after the night before – I was relaxing on the settee. Then my arm felt tingly. My chest tightened, my heart raced. *Was I having a heart attack?* I'd given birth to four kids, so I knew pain. This was worse. Eventually, 30 minutes later, it eased and I dozed off. Silly, I know, but I didn't



Before I was diagnosed

think to call the doctor. Besides, now was no time to hang up my party shoes. It would be my 20th wedding anniversary that October. My hubby Phil, 53, and I had booked a holiday to Ibiza in August, and a Caribbean cruise. I wanted to enjoy both. But, a few weeks later, after a girly night out... 'I don't feel well,' I groaned. Like heartburn from hell, I was violently sick. 'Maybe you've got food poisoning,' Phil suggested. But I refused to see the doc. Except, when the debilitating pain struck again on a girls' weekend away in May... I clutched my chest as I fought for breath. Staggering to the toilet, I threw up. *What was wrong?* 'I was really ill,' I told the girls later. 'It felt like a heart attack.' 'We'll stay in tonight,' they said, concerned. 'You

You looked awful, so we called an ambulance!



Celebrate! Me and Phil haven't let my illness stop us!

stay put, we'll get wine.' But when they returned... 'You looked awful, so we called NHS Direct and they sent an ambulance,' they admitted. I was grateful. I just wanted to know what was causing the attacks. By the time we got to hospital, my blood pressure had returned to normal, so baffled docs sent me home. Scared to eat or drink, I survived on dry toast and water. But when the pain struck again in June, I went to A&E. Gasping, I explained my symptoms to a nurse. 'Sounds like gallstones,' she said. *I wasn't dying!* The gallbladder is a small,

pear-shaped organ that stores bile and helps you digest fat. If there's too much fat, it hardens into painful gallstones. It meant I'd need surgery. 'Flippin' burgers,' I cursed. With two holidays booked, Phil and I decided to pool our savings so I could go privately. So, in July 2012, I had the 45-minute keyhole surgery at **Spire Leeds Hospital**. Docs removed the gallstone, along with my gallbladder. 'Your body will still be able to digest food,' the surgeon said. Back home the following day, I waited for the pain to strike as I had tea and biccies. *Nothing!* 'I've got my life back,' I said. And, boy, did I make the most of our holidays! Though, these days, I stick to a strictly fat-free diet!

Chat Magazine, May 2013

Mr Jeremy Hayden, Consultant General Surgeon
Patient case study