

LEUKAEMIA OP APPEAL TODDLER ALEX DIES

Parents' grief for brave tot

5 August 2007 By Robert Fairburn

TODDLER Alex Matthews has died after a desperate hunt for a bone marrow donor ended in failure.

Thirteen-month-old Alex had battled leukaemia since she was just six weeks old.

It seemed at Christmas that chemotherapy had beaten her acute myeloid leukaemia (AML).

But in March she was found to have acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and doctors told her parents her only hope was a bone marrow transplant from a matching donor.

Her father Lee, who had given his own bone marrow to two strangers, hoped someone would be able to do the same for his daughter.

When locals in her home town of Hawick heard of her plight, more than 200 people turned up at a bone marrow donor recruitment clinic in Drumlanrig Primary School. But no match could be found despite the large number of volunteers.

Leukaemia charity The Anthony Nolan Trust, who hold one of the largest databases of available donors, were also unable to find a match.

Nursing student Lee and his wife Angela were too upset yesterday to speak about their daughter, who died in the Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh.

The toddler's funeral service will take place tomorrow in Trinity Parish Church, Hawick.

A collection will be taken for Ward 2 at the hospital and for CLIC Sargent, the young people's cancer charity.