



Katherine's Diary

THE reception class teacher from Burton, describes in her own words what daily life is like living with Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia (CML).

Earlier this year, the 33-year-old from Balfour Street spent nearly eight weeks at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham undergoing intensive chemotherapy.

Meanwhile, the Burton Mail launched its Take Five Minutes campaign in a bid to locate a suitable bone marrow donor, not just for Katherine, but for anyone who is in her position, while raising greater awareness of the condition.

Thankfully, in September 2013, Katherine was able to announce that a suitable donor had been found in Europe and a transplant was planned for late October.

While undergoing gruelling treatment herself, Katherine wants to

help others in a similar position and has taken to raising awareness of the condition and generating support for the charities Cure Leukaemia, Anthony Nolan, Leukaemia Care, and Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research.

For more information on how to become a bone marrow donor, call the National Blood Service Donor helpline on 0300 123 2323.

For more information on the charities close to Katherine's heart visit www.cureleukaemia.co.uk, www.anthonynolan.org, www.leukaemiacare.org.uk, or <http://leukaemialymphomaresearch.org.uk>

Tuesday, October 1

The day started with the nurse coming to check the dressing on my back and to flush my Hickman Line.

I need to be as fit and active as I can be before my transplant and so regular

walks of around a mile each time now have to be scheduled into each day.

Lunch was spent watching the DVD we were given at clinic yesterday on stem cell transplants. Some bits we knew but it was interesting to learn about the post-transplant support and education meetings.

Armed with booklets, DVDs and a never-ending source of useful and useless information on the internet, I am heading for my transplant knowing pretty much everything there is to know – both good and bad.

Wednesday, October 2

The telephone is far more active in our house since my leukaemia – and many of these calls are various nurses or health workers.

Today's telephone calls brought mixed news. The good news in that a prescription I have been trying to sort has been arranged while the news I am not looking forward to is that I need to have another bone marrow test.

My bone marrow test will take place next Tuesday meaning that we will be at the hospital for four out of five days next week.

Monday is the visit to see the radiologist, Tuesday is the bone marrow, Wednesday is free so far, Thursday is my busy day of various tests and Friday is another trip to the dermatologist.

Thursday, October 3

A large part of the day has been spent trying to find a pharmacy able to prescribe some of the items on a

prescription I now have for my Hickman Line maintenance.

As the items are not medicines as such – more medical style equipment – this has resulted in us trying three pharmacies in town. The third pharmacy on the list is still looking into the possibility of ordering in the items – but this too could result in a red light first thing tomorrow.

Hickman Line bungs and pre-filled saline syringes are not exactly everyday items for most people – they just happen to be important in our household.

Friday, October 4

Friday was a special day in my calendar as it was Cure Leukaemia's 10th birthday and the charity had invited me to help them celebrate at Villa Park.

The evening was superb with food cooked up by Michelin-starred chef Glynn Purnell which paid tribute to Birmingham's heritage – with a menu consisting of custard, chocolate and a special HP-inspired brown sauce named GP sauce.

A Birmingham charity hosting their birthday party at a Birmingham football club with a Birmingham chef meant there was a need for a Birmingham host and this was charity supporter Adrian Chiles. What did I achieve from the party? I spent the evening chatting to former patients who are now cured following successful bone marrow transplants. When you speak to people who are 26 years post-transplant, you know you are in safe hands – the team

at Birmingham are in fact some the best hands in the world for leukaemia care.

Saturday, October 5

Hundreds of people have supported my journey with leukaemia as they continue to religiously read my diary in the newspaper and online or they follow me on Twitter.

Today was my day to show my own support.

Unfortunately, cancer has been a large part of my life for a few years.

Leaving my blood cancer to one side, we have had family members succumb to pancreatic, breast, skin and lung cancer in the past years.

But today I left my vigorous cancer campaigning and awareness-raising to one side as I attended the Ride to the Wall event at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Surrounded by an estimated crowd of 20,000 people, it was a moving experience to watch the Military Wives choir perform and the Red Devils parachute into the grounds.



Today was a day for remembrance, tomorrow I will be back making sure we reach goals for earlier diagnosis, greater awareness and the eventual aim of a cancer cure.

Sunday, October 6

As promised, we are back into the swing of supporting various charities again today and so we headed over to St George's Park for the Cure Leukaemia football trophy.

The match was between Glascote Swifts and EnglandFans FC and ended 7-3. The teams or score didn't matter, we were there to support the charity.

It's been a busy weekend with Aston Villa on Friday night, Ride to the Wall on Saturday and this charity football game today, but as I will spend four of the next five days at the hospital, you might say this weekend was my last big blowout before my transplant.



Charity night fun for brave teacher



CHEF FOR THE NIGHT . . .
Katherine Sinfield enjoyed time at a Cure Leukaemia fund-raising event at the home of Aston Villa Football Club, Villa Park.



by Rob Smyth

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AN evening of glitz was on the cards for 33-year-old leukaemia sufferer Katherine Sinfield – at the home of a premiership football team.

The primary school teacher, who is due to undergo a bone marrow transplant in two weeks' time, was invited to celebrate Cure Leukaemia's 10th birthday.

The Birmingham-based charity held the event at Villa Park, home of Aston Villa, and chose fellow Brummie and charity supporter Adrian Chiles to host the evening.

Katherine, of Balfour Street, said: "I'm very supportive of the work Cure Leukaemia does and so I was thrilled when we got the invite to attend the celebration. "As my transplant is nearing

ever-closer, the timing couldn't have been better as it gave me the opportunity to speak to lots of people who have undergone successful transplants.

"It was encouraging to hear their success stories – one man was marking his 26th year post-transplant."

A special menu celebrating Birmingham's heritage was created for the party by the city's Michelin-starred chef Glynn Purnell and Aston Villa's culinary master Peter Reed.

The menu represented Birmingham's heritage with Bird's Custard, HP Sauce and Cadbury's.

Katherine said: "The highlight of the evening for me was being praised by Glynn Purnell for my meat carving skills as chef's aprons were hidden under one seat per table meaning they were

required to carve up a huge pork joint."

The evening, co-hosted by BBC radio presenter Phil Upton, heard from fund-raisers who are going to extreme lengths to raise money for the charity.

A team of 22 firefighters plan to run the BUPA Great Birmingham Run this month in full uniform while two friends will attempt to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic in December.

A team of runners will be taking part in BUPA Great Birmingham Run for Cure Leukaemia on Sunday, October 20.

To find out more about the charity, visit www.cureleukaemia.co.uk








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