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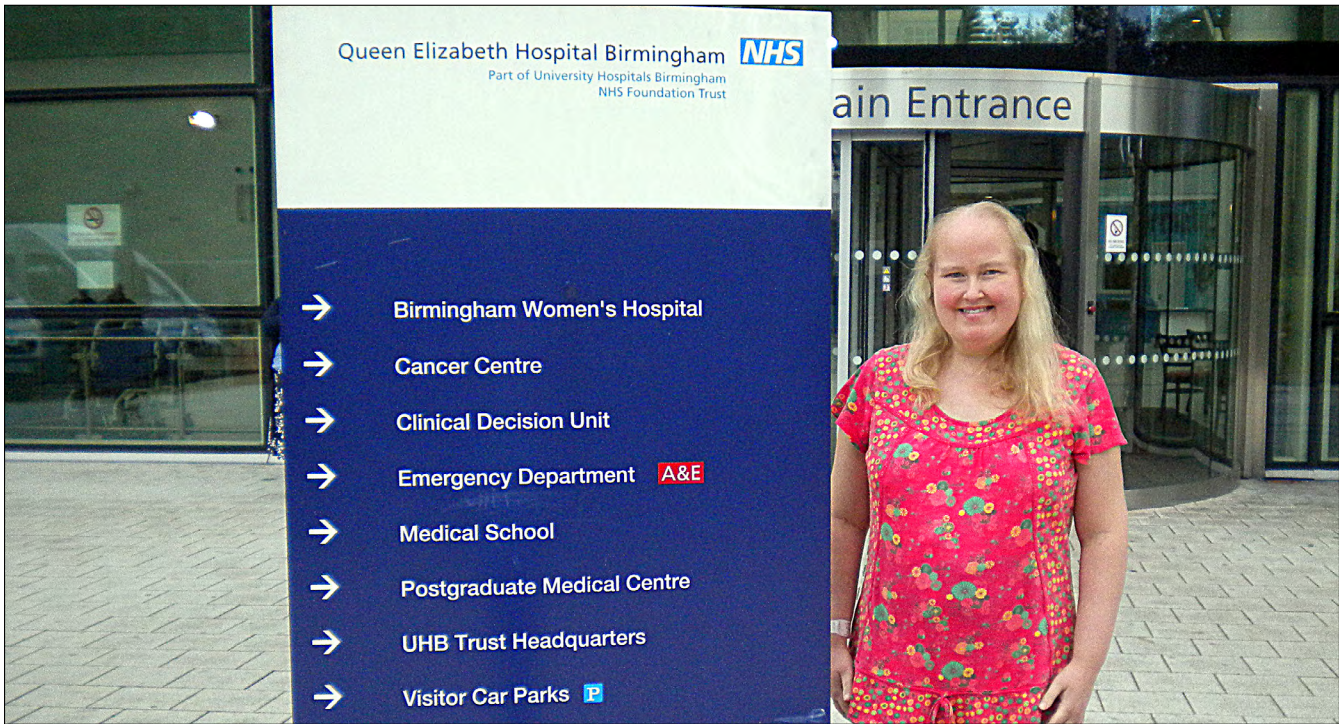
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As she battles leukaemia, Katherine Katherine finally gets to head back home



RELIEF... Katherine Sinfield has finally been allowed to go home after more than 50 days in hospital. (Right) Katherine and Ashbourne News Telegraph editor Stephen Sinfield.

THE wife of Ashbourne News Telegraph editor Stephen Sinfield, who is battling against leukaemia, has described in her own words daily life on the hospital ward where she is confined to in her fight against the disease.

Katherine Sinfield, 33, needs daily doses of antibiotics, fungal drips and blood transfusions after being diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia in April. She remained in hospital, in Birmingham, for the seven weeks after doctors said her only hope of survival was to receive a bone marrow transplant.

Last month, the News Telegraph launched its Take Five Minutes campaign in a bid to locate a suitable donor, not just for Katherine, but for anyone who is in her position and to encourage our readers to give blood, an essential resource for anyone suffering with cancer.

Here, Katherine describes life on the ward and her daily battle against cancer and against her increasing boredom of being confined on the ward.

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

Tuesday, August 13:
Good news - apart from being my birthday, today I was also allowed home.

Before you pull the party-poppers, the reality is that it was gone 9pm before I managed to set foot out of the ward and so not getting home to Burton until 10.20pm meant my cards and presents remained unopened.

My leaving presents from the hospital included a bag of dressings to give to the district nurses for my back and a bag of new nozzles, clamps and cleaning fluid for my Hickman Line, which remains in place.

The pharmacy team also equipped me with endless different tablets, medicines and a bottle of that awful antifungal fluid.

So many that I need a timetable to ensure I remember them all.

Leaving was difficult because after more than seven weeks in hospital, you accumulate a lot of stuff and so

Stephen's present from me was two trips to the car with two small suitcases, two holdalls and endless carrier bags - I don't travel light.

Wednesday, August 14:
This was has been my first full day at home since June 24.

But despite being home, my medical treatment continues.

The district nurse arrived to check and change my dressings first thing and then my day revolved around a timetable of tablets, creams and medications.

I managed to venture outdoors to the convenience store, but this was quite a challenge - I'm not used to walking more than 50 metres at any one time.

It's going to take a while before my energy levels return to normal.

I'm also immensely aware of being too close to people who I haven't been in regular contact with in the past few weeks for fear of infection - my regular band of visitors have spent so many hours confined to the same hospital ward as me, they are unlikely to be carrying any new infections.

Today also marked the day I was able to open all of my cards and presents, as I didn't get chance to open any yesterday.

Thursday, August 15:
After a day at home, it was back to the hospital again today - but this time as an outpatient at the haematology clinic.

My blood count is still recovering - the current cell count is just 1.2.

The good news is that there is growing optimism that I may not have to undergo a second round of the Flag/ida chemotherapy I have just been through - instead, we may move straight to a bone marrow transplant, if a donor can be matched.

Meanwhile, as I enjoy time at home, my dad is now in hospital at Leicester. It's a neverending cycle of trauma and hospitals in our household.

Friday, August 16:
I may be home but I am also extremely busy.

The morning started with a visit

from my district nurse and then before lunch I had spoken to specialist nurses in Birmingham on the telephone three times, collected a prescription from my GP and then travelled around Burton searching for a pharmacy which stocked the required medicine.

The reason behind this adventure was that my bronchoscopy results from last week now showed an infection on my lungs, and the tablets needed to treat this condition are so rare it took us to four different pharmacies in the town to track down the medication.

Today would have been the day we flew to Venice, ready to board a cruise ship for our holiday - a lesson for everyone to make sure they have good travel insurance.

Saturday, August 17:
As my dad remains in hospital in Leicester, I had to contact my ward in Birmingham to check on visiting advice.

Because my low white cell count leaves me prone to infection, I was allowed to visit, but it had to be kept short and sterile.

I'm enjoying my freedom away from hospital but, until my counts improve, I have to be extremely careful as to where I go and who I see.

I am also getting used to completing routine daily tasks without catching the two dangling tubes from my Hickman Line.

Stephen is being a good nurse, keeping my temperature monitored.

Sunday, August 18:
I continue to play visitor rather than patient, as my dad remains in hospital.

Since being discharged myself, we are now coping well with the endless timetable of tablets, medicines and creams and Stephen does a good job in between the nurse visits to make sure the dressings on my back and around my Hickman Line are clean and tidy.

We're expecting a busy week with my usual clinic check-up on Thursday, plus the potential for a visit to the dermatology ward.

There may also be a chat with the bone marrow transplant nurses due any day.

Sinfield, wife of ANT editor Steve, writes a daily diary



Katherine's diary appears online
ashbournenewstelegraph.co.uk

Can you help with a charity motorbike ride?

THE ASHBOURNE News Telegraph's editor has revealed his hopes for a two-wheeled fund-raiser to support people like his wife, Katherine, who are suffering from leukaemia.

As part of our 'Take Five Minutes' campaign, which sets out to encourage more people to give blood and research bone marrow donation, editor Stephen Sinfield has revealed his hopes to hold a motorcycle rally in a bid to further raise awareness and cash for charity.

He said: "All I have at the moment is an ambition to stage an event which accomplishes a multitude of hopes. "If we can get this dream from the drawing board to the Tarmac then my hope would be to run the rally from 'Queen's to Queen's'.

"Hence the Queen's Hospital in Birmingham and the Queen's Hospital in Burton - the two institutions instrumental since April in the care of my wife.

"I came up with the wacky name of the 'Boneshaker MARROWthon' and hope the 35-mile ride between the two hospitals would raise vital cash for the charities Cure Leukaemia and the Anthony Nolan Trust, as well as increase awareness and understanding of leukaemia and bone marrow donation.

"It would be great if we could attract a few bikers to also support this rally.

"Bikers are normally always up for a ride-out if the weather's good."

Anyone who would like to get involved is urged to email Stephen at editor@ashbournenewstelegraph.co.uk



Take Five Minutes
News
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Shugborough, Milford, near Stafford, ST17 0XB. Tel: 0845 459 8900 Web: www.shugborough.org.uk

Terms and conditions: This voucher entitles one person to free entry when accompanied by another full paying person. Free entry will be of equal or lower value to the one purchased. Excludes entry to special events or bank holidays. Not valid for privilege pass, garden ticket and group rates. Voucher valid until October 25, 2013.

How to use these great offers:

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The
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