

# Mail says...

## Five minutes is all it takes to help Katherine

**MOST of you know us. In fact as staff at a local paper, we often share snippets of our lives with our readers, our advertisers and the people across our community who make the news.**

You know us through the many ways we are out and about, breaking the news on our patch.

But you perhaps don't know much more than that.

You probably don't know that – much the same as virtually everybody else – we have all been touched by cancer.

And on Saturday, we launched our own appeal in the fight against this devastating disease.

One of our own, Stephen Sinfield, is currently caring for his wife, Katherine, 32, who was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia shortly after Easter.

Katherine's illness is a terrible blow to us all and comes after she lost her mum and Steve lost his sister to cancer.

For a short while it seemed the leukaemia could be controlled with drugs, but over the last couple of weeks finding a bone marrow donor for Katherine has become increasingly urgent.

Now the hunt is on for a match.

Which is why we are launching our Five Minutes campaign.

All we're asking is that you take five minutes out of your day to get online and search for bone marrow donation.

It takes five minutes to look through the information and think about whether you could save someone's life.

Whether you spit in a cup or donate blood, anything will help in our quest.

Take five minutes to think about whether you could save someone's life.

And then take another five to go and do it.

### ABOUT US

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**COUPLE WILL FIGHT CANCER ... Stephen and Katherine Sinfield enjoy a holiday together before her diagnosis.**

# 'It hit me like a train... and I just broke down'

by **Rob Smyth**  
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**THE husband of a woman who needs a bone marrow transplant to save her life has spoken of the devastating moment they learned her diagnosis.**

Stephen Sinfield, who works for the Mail as a journalist and is editor of the Ashbourne News Telegraph, told of their emotions when he and Katherine first were told that she had cancer.

The 33-year-old opened his heart to help a Mail campaign launched in an effort to find a bone marrow match for his wife to save her life.

The Balfour Street resident said: "I still remember the exact moment when Katherine was diagnosed with leukaemia. The shock and trauma of such news hit me like a train and I broke down in accident and emergency.

"Katherine took the news much better. She feared that all of those aches, pains and niggles she had been going through

for months, if not years, all added up to something more serious.

"On the morning we went to the hospital I said something which I deeply regret. It's a guilt I cannot forget.

"Katherine was clearly anxious about visiting accident and emergency while I was hopeful that it was simply a case of deep vein thrombosis and we would both be back at work by lunchtime.

"In a bid to reassure Katherine, I said 'don't worry, they are hardly going to diagnose with you leukaemia or anything nasty, we'll be home and sorted soon' - how wrong was I?"

After learning of the diagnosis, Stephen's thoughts turned to a former colleague.

He added: "I couldn't help but think of a reporter I used to work with who died of leukaemia in October 2009.

"Richard Woolley was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in April 2008 just before his 26th birthday and just months before his wedding day.

**'We are both deeply touched by how family, friends and colleagues have offered to become bone marrow donors.'**

**Stephen Sinfield**

"I didn't know the full extent of Richard's fight until his diary 'My Marathon for Love' was published.

"I had always kept in touch with Richard's family and it was through his dad Mike, that I helped with the book's launch by reviewing it within the Weekender section of the Mail.

"I have avoided Richard's book since Katherine's diagnosis but have kept in touch with his dad who is eager to hear of good news.

"We are both deeply touched by how family, friends and colleagues have offered to become bone marrow donors.

"Being thrown into this situation certainly makes you think twice about helping others. It would be nice if one of Katherine's volunteers could be found to be a match – but even if they're not, it's reassuring to know that they could be helping another family in this town or this county who are going through the same torment."

## Factfile: What is bone marrow

BONE marrow is a soft tissue found in the centre of certain bones in your body.

It is this bone marrow which creates stem cells.

Stem cells are the 'building blocks', which can grow into any of the other normal blood cells which fight infection.

There are a number of diseases that prevent a patient's bone marrow from working properly.

These include leukaemia as well as other diseases of the immune system.

Although chemotherapy will successfully treat some of these patients, for many the only possibility of a cure is to have a transplant.

## People urged to take 'five minutes' to see if they could help save a life

THE Anthony Nolan Trust uses its register to match potential bone marrow donors to blood cancer patients in desperate need of a bone marrow transplant.

There are around 1,700 people in the UK in need of a bone marrow or blood stem cell transplant.

Seventy per cent of patients will not find a matching donor from within their families – instead they turn to the trust to find them an unrelated donor.

The trust can only find a suitable donor for around half the people who need a lifesaving bone marrow transplant.

Anyone aged 16 to 30 can sign

up online by visiting [www.anthonynolan.org](http://www.anthonynolan.org), filling in a short application form and providing a saliva sample.

People can also donate via the NHS British Bone Marrow Registry.

People must be aged between 18 and 49 years old and be a blood donor.

People can join when they next give blood, or at the same time as their first donation.

They will check that there is no medical reason preventing people from being both a blood donor and a stem cell donor.

More information is available by calling the donor helpline on 03001 232323.

