

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 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 penning a daily diary to raise awareness of the condition and generate support for the charities. For more information on how to become a bone marrow donor, call the National Blood Service Donor helpline on 0300 123 2323.

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 sauced renamed GP sauce.

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 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.

It was a moving experience to watch the Military Wives choir perform.

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
rob.smyth@burtonmail.co.uk

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 fundraisers 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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Concern at 'earn or learn' entitlement

A CHAMPION for Burton's homeless has expressed concern over benefit entitlement for the under 25s following a speech by the Prime Minister.

Paul Laffey, chief executive of Burton YMCA, said while the speech did not directly mention removing benefit entitlement, the Conservative manifesto for the 2015 General Election would contain a commitment to end the automatic entitlement to housing benefit for the under 25s.

The speech focused on the need to give young people a choice of only two alternatives – either earn or learn.

During the speech he argued that it was too easy for young people to move straight onto the 'dole' after leaving education.

Mr Laffey said: "The reality of the matter is education and employment options are limited and more young people, through no fault of their own, are finding themselves in need of support. Simply removing their access to

benefits will not resolve this problem.

"There are many reasons why young people feel unable to continue living at home – from family breakdown, death or illness of a parent or a concern for their safety. Many also have children of their own to support.

"While we welcome initiatives to get more young people into education, employment or training, this does not take away the need for the safety net housing benefit is supposed to provide."