

The Donor

News and information
for blood donors

Winter 2013

**A summer
of activity**

TOM FLETCHER

**"If my cat can
donate, then I can!"**



**Organ donation:
We want more
donors**



**Save a life
Give blood**

NHS

Blood and Transplant

Shared your organ donation decision yet?



If you have decided to donate your organs when you die, join the NHS Organ Donor Register and tell your family. They may be asked to agree to donation taking place, so don't leave them with the burden of guessing what you would have wanted.

Join the Register, share your decision, save lives

To register and for more information visit:
organdonation.nhs.uk or call **0300 123 23 23**



**Give life
Sign up**

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your news, views
and interesting
or unusual
donor stories.

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The cost of producing and printing each copy of this magazine is less than half the price of a second class stamp.

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"If my cat can do it then I can!"

When did you become a donor and what made you start donating blood?

I started donating blood a few years ago. It was something that I always thought I'd like to do, but never actually got around to doing it, which is an incredibly lazy attitude, but unfortunately I think it's quite common.

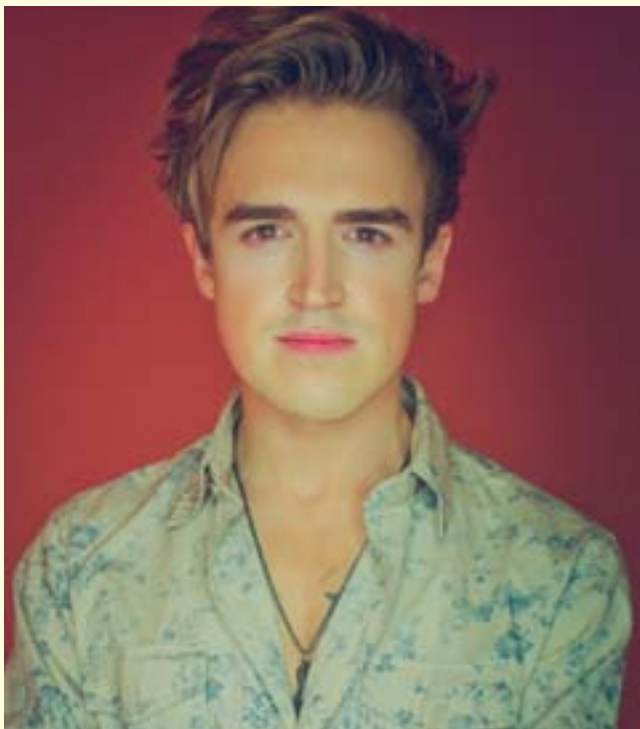
The reason I started donating sounds crazy, but my cat Marvin nearly died because he desperately

**"Quite simply,
it saves lives"**

needed an emergency blood transfusion. Feline blood can't be stored as it needs to come fresh from a donor so my other cat Leia stepped in and saved his life. She is now a regular blood donor and has saved many lives. So I thought if my cat can do it then I flippin' can!

You have supported our campaigns in the past to encourage young people to donate. Why is it important to you to support the 'Give Blood' message?

Quite simply, it saves lives. If sticking a tiny needle in my arm for five minutes is going to save a baby, or someone who has just been in an accident, then I'd happily rather do that than waste another hour playing Grand Theft Auto 5. I genuinely enjoy the donating process, plus I get to walk around with a smug



McFly's Tom Fletcher explains how his cat turned him into a blood donor

smile afterwards!

Why I like supporting the 'Give Blood' message is that it feels instant, like you are physically giving something to someone who needs it. It's not a grand seemingly unattainable message, your single donation is not going to save the planet, but your blood might just save someone's life today.

What would you say to anyone who is thinking about giving blood for the first time?

I speak to a lot of people who say

they are up for donating but just haven't done it yet. We need to motivate these people...Come on slackers!

What do your wife and band mates think about you giving blood? Ever tried to convince them to join you?

My wife donates with me; in fact she was donating before me and was always trying to get me to come along. My band mates are completely useless around needles. Harry would probably



“Your single donation is not going to save the planet, but your blood might just save someone’s life today”

be ok (I must try and convince him harder). Dougie and Danny would literally pass out at the ‘Give Blood’ logo on the form. Dougie is particularly squeamish when it comes to blood and needles.

You have had a really successful music career, but what has been your highlight?

We just played four sold out shows at the Royal Albert Hall celebrating our 10th anniversary. They were definitely the highlight; they felt so special for us.

What projects are you working on at the moment?

Above left: Tom pictured his the band McFly.

Above right: Supporting our ‘100 Days’ campaign

So many. Too many! Obviously there’s McFly (which is always the number one priority), Dougie and I have written two children’s picture books called *The Dinosaur That Pooped Christmas* and *The Dinosaur That Pooped A Planet*. We have written and produced songs for One Direction and have a song on their new album and

that’s only a few of the projects going on.

What do you like to do to relax when you have the time?

When I’m home alone I’ll go to my music room and just play around until I fall asleep. Sometimes a song will be written, sometimes it won’t. I like watching movies and if I’m a bit bummed out and don’t want to play music I’ll take my anger out on the Xbox. Though now my wife and I are expecting a baby, I don’t think there’ll be much time to relax once a little one comes along. ●

LIFE STORY

- 1985 – born July 17th in London
- Tom attended the Sylvia Young Theatre School where, aged 13, he met his future wife.
- 2003 – Forms McFly with band mate Danny Jones
- 2004 – McFly enter Guinness World Records overtaking The Beatles as being the youngest band to have a debut album go straight to number one
- April 2012 – Tom marries his childhood sweetheart Giovanna Falcone
- 2012 – Tom and band mate Dougie Poynter release a children’s book *The Dinosaur that Pooped Christmas*. ●



Growing Facebook fan base

Our Blood Donation Facebook page now has more than 300,000 fans, giving it the largest following for a blood donation page in the world.

We joined the world's biggest social networking site two years ago as a way of building support for blood donation in England and North Wales.

Campaigns, polls, news stories and info about blood donation are posted on the page on a daily basis. Users can share their experiences and the page also includes special features for fans to share with their friends such as videos and our blood campaign creatives along with user-generated content.

Meanwhile, our Organ Donation Facebook page now has more than 100,000 followers – another world best.

You can become a fan of the Blood Donation Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NHSBlood and follow the Blood Donation Twitter feed at twitter.com/GiveBloodNHS. ●

Benefits for stem cell patients

Patients who need life-saving bone marrow and stem cell transplants could benefit from a new collaboration to speed up the search for a suitable match.

The Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry (WBMDR) has now aligned its register into a single UK registry together with our British Bone Marrow Registry (BBMR) and the Anthony Nolan Registry.

This means all the UK bone marrow and stem cell registries are now on one database to make it easier for UK transplant centres to find a potential match for patients. Before the move, transplant centres had to search for donors through individual registries. ●

New recognition on the way

Watch out for the launch of our new Donor Recognition Scheme next June. We've asked lots of you what is good and bad about the current awards system and what changes you would like to see made. Now we're busy turning the results into a new scheme that we hope will win your approval. You can find out more about the Donor Recognition Scheme on our website from early 2014. ●



Organ donation summit

The first ever Faith and Organ Donation Summit was held in London in May and brought together high profile leaders and community representatives from six of the major religions in the UK. It was the chance for a rigorous debate about the perceived religious and cultural barriers to donation in the UK.

These barriers create a shortage in donated organs amongst some of the very communities that need them most. Black and South Asian people are three times more likely to need an organ transplant than the rest of the population and we know from research that, particularly amongst black African and Muslim communities, religious beliefs can deter people from signing up as organ donors because they feel their faith doesn't allow it.

The summit considered ways to tackle these barriers and promote the importance of more people from different faiths signing up to the NHS Organ Donor Register. The 40 strong delegation also considered new ways of encouraging people to embrace organ donation and increase rates of family agreement at the time of someone's death. ●



A very successful 2013 for us

Welcome to the Winter 2013 issue of *The Donor* magazine. I hope you enjoyed the lovely summer we had this year and hopefully we can look forward to a milder winter than in recent years.

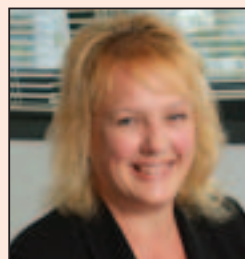
This year we have had some really successful campaigns which have focused on recruiting young people to become blood donors of the future. The theme of this year's National Blood Week was 'Know Blood, Give Blood' where the aim was to inform and encourage young people to sign up and donate. We had a great response to all our campaigns and by the end of August we had managed to recruit more than 3,500 new donors. Many of you have already come forward to donate so a very big thank you

from me on behalf of all the patients who will benefit from your gift.

Our focus now turns to the winter months. This is the time when blood stocks tend to fall through a combination of bad weather disrupting donor sessions and donors being struck down with colds and flu. We very much hope you all stay fit and well and, if able, will make and keep your date to donate.

As we come to the end of a very memorable year, it gives me the opportunity to thank you all for your support and loyalty throughout 2013 and to wish you health and happiness over the festive season.

Lynda Hamlyn
Chief Executive



Our Christmas message

It's Christmas time again and we need to maintain healthy stocks of blood and platelets. So our seasonal campaign message is, 'This year's must have Christmas gift... is blood and platelets'.

The campaign is being featured across radio, social media and through direct marketing, media activity and an online campaign. We have also produced a short film that can be viewed at www.blood.co.uk/campaigns/christmas.

Jon Latham, assistant director for marketing in blood supply, says, "We are fast approaching that period when people are busy preparing for Christmas and New Year and it's easy to forget to make time to donate. While many people know what they want for Christmas, thousands will need blood and platelets just to stay alive."

To find out more, please visit www.blood.co.uk/christmas. ●



Help for Africa

Nigeria and Uganda are benefiting from equipment we have provided to boost their blood donation services.

Working with the charity Blood for Life, we have donated a bloodmobile unit and medical equipment to the Safe Blood for Nigeria Foundation (SBNF). Both donations are part of a programme to support countries with developing blood transfusion services.

In Uganda, our spare donation beds are now with the Uganda Blood Transfusion Service (UBTS) where they will help raise blood collection and processing capacity by up to 50 per cent.

Grace Otekat at UBTS says, "We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to NHSBT for this generous and timely donation to the people of Uganda. This will go a long way to improve the quality of blood service in the UBTS." ●

A better experience

It's an online world today, which is why we've revamped our website www.blood.co.uk to make it more responsive to your needs. You can now create your own personal account, linked to your records, and book, amend or cancel appointments online.

We've just launched our new-look website offering you a more responsive service

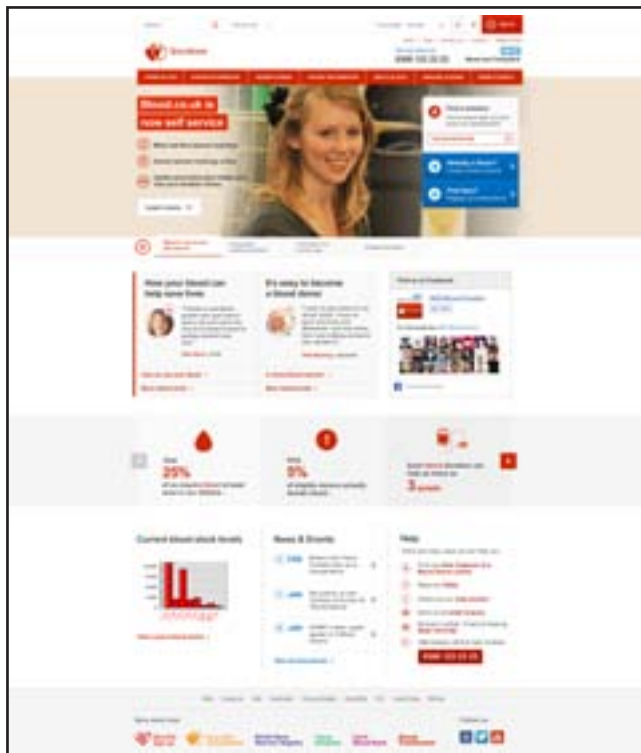
Easy alternative

"We want to make sure we meet a growing expectation for donors to be able to manage their own appointments," says Jon Latham, assistant director for marketing. "These changes to our website are a step forward and may become as common in practice as internet shopping and online banking.

"As a result of donors' accounts being directly connected to blood.co.uk, we are able to offer a much more efficient registration process for both new and existing donors. All donors will still be able to book an appointment using the Donor Helpline if they choose to. The new system will simply offer donors an easily accessible alternative."

Update your details

As well as managing your own appointments, once you have signed up to an online account you will also be able to view your donation timeline, your blood group, update personal details and check medical and travel guidelines.



"We are able to offer a much more efficient registration process for both new and existing donors"

To view the new changes visit www.blood.co.uk. Once on the homepage you will be able to click through to register yourself onto the new online booking system. New donors will also be able to create an online account directly via the website.

Visit www.blood.co.uk/donor-information/how-to-use-this-site/.

FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/NHSBlood www.facebook.com/organdonationuk
TWITTER <http://twitter.com/GiveBloodNHS> <http://twitter.com/NHSBT>



Three generations of blood donors

Veronica Williams first gave blood over 30 years ago at the same donor centre in Leicester that she attends today. In August she clocked up her 104th donation. What keeps Veronica coming back? She jokes, 'I do it for the hot chocolate and biscuits!'

Veronica's example has clearly rubbed off on her family. Daughter Sharon and son Lee are regular blood donors, as is granddaughter Holly (pictured here). Veronica started giving blood because her own mum had a life-saving blood transfusion when Veronica was just two years old. She has even donated blood when she went to live in Florida in the USA for a short spell in the 1990s. She twice went along to the Palm Beach Blood Bank Donor Centre. "It wasn't as glamorous as it sounds!" Veronica says.

Last year Veronica received her award for reaching 100 donations. "I'm really thrilled to have it, and proud to show it off! And I'm going to keep on giving blood for as long as I can." ●

Rick rallies more donors

A donor who owes both his own life and the lives of his wife and daughter to donated blood has used pedal power to recruit new donors

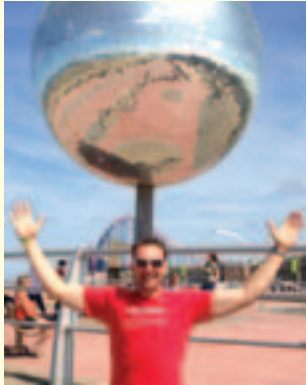
Rick Mills cycled more than 60 miles from his home in Manchester to the seaside resort of Blackpool in July. But instead of asking for sponsorship in money, Rick asked supporters to sign up as blood donors. Rick has a particularly close connection with the life-saving role of blood. Not only did he need a transfusion himself as a child after an operation, Rick's wife Kerry has been saved by blood twice following complications during childbirth.

Life-threatening condition

The couple's first child, Matthew, was born in 2002 following a problem-free pregnancy. However, when Kerry became pregnant again in 2007, she suffered bleeding at 18 weeks and was told she had the condition placenta praevia, or low-lying placenta.

This rare complication means the placenta can obstruct a baby's way out at the neck of the womb and lead to heavy bleeding, putting both the mother and child in danger. Kerry was hospitalised for the six weeks and went into labour at 24 weeks. She was in labour for 25 hours and needed 13 units of blood to save her life. Sadly Rick and Kerry's baby son Christian did not survive the birth.

Rick says, "Kerry was very ill and we both suffered the loss a great



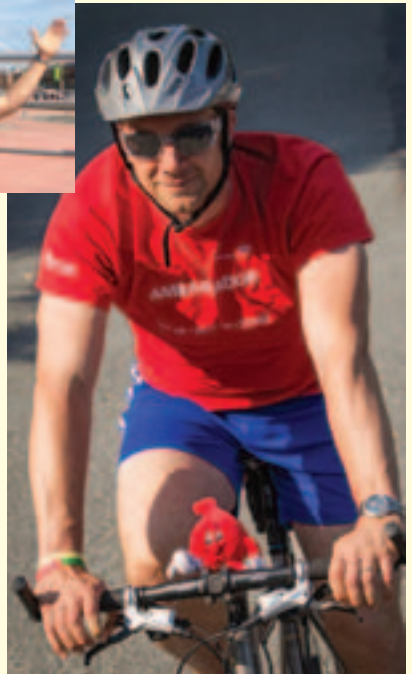
Rick cycled 60 miles this summer in support of blood donation

deal, and to be honest we still do. Christian is always loved and never forgotten. It has taken some time to cope with the loss."

In 2009, the couple were delighted when Kerry became pregnant again but soon discovered she had a recurrence of placenta praevia. At 33 weeks, Kerry started suffering from bleeds again, making the couple fear that they would lose another child.

However, thanks to expert care at Saint Mary's Hospital in Manchester, a caesarean birth and a further six units of blood, Rick and Kerry's daughter Amy Hannah

"Sometimes these donors do not know how their blood has changed or saved someone's life"



Louise arrived healthy and well to the absolute delight of her mum and dad.

Rick says, "We have much to be grateful for in the work of Saint Mary's Hospital and those brilliant blood donors, the unsung heroes who put themselves out every three



Rick with Kerry, with their two children Matthew and Amy

or four months to donate a precious part of themselves. Sometimes these donors do not know how their blood has changed or saved someone's life."

Rick became a donor in the 1990s but the couple's ordeal in 2007 made him into a committed donor and he has now made over 30 donations.

Personal best

Rick has also helped us to raise awareness of the constant need for new donors, through activities like his summer cycle ride. During training, Rick lost almost five stones in weight, helping him to complete the ride in three hours 42 minutes – bettering a time set by his 27-year-old self over the same distance 13

years earlier.

Rick's family and friends signed up as new donors and others who had not given blood for a while started donating again. Rick asked those who were unable to donate blood to donate money instead to

Saint Mary's Central Delivery Unit.

Rick adds, "I am proud to help NHS Blood and Transplant raise awareness of donating. It's a special thing to do; it gives you a sense of pride in giving something selflessly to whoever may need it." ●

What is placenta praevia?

As a woman's pregnancy progresses, the womb expands and this affects the placenta's position. The area where the placenta is attached usually stretches up and away from the cervix.

However, if the placenta stays low in the womb, it may cover the cervix and obstruct the baby's way out.

This complication – known as placenta praevia or low-lying placenta – is a serious one. It can cause heavy bleeding and put mothers and their babies at risk. Women suffering from the condition may have to stay in hospital towards the end of their pregnancy and a caesarean section, along with blood transfusions, may be needed.

Placenta praevia is rare, affecting just six in 1,000 of all NHS hospital births in England during 2008-09. With an annual birth rate of around 600,000, this means potentially 4,800 women are affected every year. ●

Attracting donors of the future

We're making some changes to make our service more donor-friendly and cost-effective



Expanding our donor base is a priority

Maintaining a world-class blood service is our top priority, but being cost-effective is also vital. If we can make savings, that means more money is available for patient care in the NHS.

So, how do we meet both priorities? At the heart of our service is you, the donor, so making sure we look after your needs and continue to attract new donors are obvious steps. We never forget donors choose to give blood, so making that experience as comfortable and convenient as possible so we can maintain and grow donor numbers makes good sense.

Importance of flexibility

Clive Ronaldson, director of blood supply, says, "Blood has a short shelf life, so making sure we have the blood hospitals need in the right quantities at the right time is definitely a challenge. Every year, a

number of donors will not be able to give blood due to things like illness and pregnancy so it's vital that we constantly attract new donors to replace them.

"There are also advantages in increasing the overall size of the donor base. Quite simply, the bigger the number of registered

donors, the easier it is for us to be flexible and collect what's needed at the right time."

Attracting donors for the future

Half of those who have given blood over the last two years are over 45, but to secure our future donor base we need to attract more younger donors.

"We want to modernise our sessions and our relationship with donors, so that giving blood is something that's attractive to younger people and something they regularly build into their lives too," says Jon Latham, assistant director of marketing and donor services.

"One way to achieve this is to use brighter, more modern



We are hoping to attract younger donors with improvements such as free wifi

venues wherever possible, offering improved facilities such as wifi on session so donors can get online while they wait. Another is to make it easier to contact us online. We're increasing our ability to answer questions on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. We're also improving the functionality of our

“We never forget donors choose to give blood, so making that experience as comfortable and convenient as possible makes good sense”

blood website. Donors can now sign up to www.blood.co.uk and book real-time appointments (see p8). We also hope to increase the use of paperless processes.”

Meeting donor expectations

Blood is a precious resource and as donors like you give up your time to donate, we try our best to ensure every donation counts. We plan our sessions carefully so we can collect blood in the right volumes at the right time so patients get the transfusion they need.

“Ideally we don't want to leave any donor waiting too long for their appointment or turn away any donor who comes in to donate,” says Jon Latham. “We want every donor to have a positive experience and leave feeling great that they have helped to save lives.”

Donating your pint in comfort



Over the last year we have introduced new donation chairs into all of our sessions. The new blue chairs have upright and reclining positions, making it easier for you to get comfortable and then relax into position for the donation. They are also easier to clean. Feedback has been very positive, with donors telling us they are more comfortable and simpler to get in and out of.

So make a date to sit back and relax into one of our new chairs soon whilst you donate and help to save up to three lives. ●

We are looking at the balance of appointments and walk-in slots available in a session, so you can give blood at a time that is convenient to you. Surveys and feedback are helping us to understand what you need from us.

Efficient sessions

We've been making changes to when and where we collect blood, moving away from bloodmobiles in some areas and increasing our use of larger sessions with more donor chairs. More chairs means more blood collected.

Jane Pearson, director of operations and nursing, says, “A team collecting blood from a six or nine bed session not only collects significantly more blood, but is

able to do so more efficiently than at a smaller, usually three bed, bloodmobile session.

“We do appreciate that donors may not always welcome changes to their existing sessions, especially if they need to travel a bit further to donate. But hopefully they will understand that moving to another venue nearby, or consolidating smaller sessions into larger venues, enables us to collect blood more efficiently and keep the blood price low for hospitals.”

Thank you, donors

Being a donor is incredibly important. On behalf of the patients for whom we collect blood and platelets, we offer you our sincere thanks. ●

We want more people to c

More than 10,000 people in the UK currently need a transplant. Of these, 1,000 each year - that's three a day - will die because there are not enough organs available. Thirty-one per cent of the population in the UK has now joined the NHS Organ Donor Register (ODR), but more are needed.

Crucially, people on the ODR, and anyone considering becoming an organ donor, need to have discussed their wishes with their loved ones. That's because four out of ten families asked to donate their loved ones organs say no. If they know their relative wanted to be an organ donor they are more than twice as likely to say yes.

So this year's National Transplant Week, July 8th-14th, focused on getting people to tell their loved ones about their donation wishes. The 'Pass It On' theme returned to drive home the message that as well as registering, people must talk to those closest to them.

Sally Johnson, director of organ donation and transplantation, says, "We need a transformation in donor and family consent to organ donation because the UK's family refusal rate remains one of the highest in Europe. Until we see a shift in consent, each year thousands of viable organs will be cremated or buried, leaving others to die needlessly.

"We want more people to consent to organ donation so that the UK can be proud of a donation



Homeland actor David Harewood is supporting our campaign

Although donation rates are rising, many organs still go to waste every year because donors did not make their wishes clear to their families

record that matches the best in the world."

The main aim of the campaign was to encourage more

"We need a transformation in donor and family consent to organ donation"

conversations and increase consent to organ donation. Thousands of people also joined the ODR.

Film competition

The campaign started with the second annual Organ Donation Through a Lens film competition. The brief was to show people how

easy but important it is to share your donation wishes and the quality of entries was very high. The shortlisted films featured everything from socks to Barbie dolls and balloons to giant presents.

The judging panel, which included TV producers Cat Lewis and Jemma North, had a tough job choosing winners but in the end awarded the film *Barbara and Kenneth* as overall winner. *Odd Socks* took the title of People's Favourite after capturing the most YouTube views. You can still see the films at www.YouTube.com/TransplantWeek.

Meanwhile we released our own film featuring *Homeland's* David Harewood (pictured above), *Wil Johnson* from *Emmerdale* and Sky presenter Kay Burley. They

consent to organ donation

“We want more people to consent to organ donation so that the UK can be proud of a donation record that matches the best in the world”

demonstrated how they would tell a loved one about their wishes. A special video message by Richard Branson also urged people to join the ODR. Visit the earlier link to see these films.

Events across the country

Supporters held events across the UK and there was a huge amount of media and social media activity. The focus was on increasing conversations and registrations, especially within black, Asian and minority ethnic

(BAME) communities where there is a particular shortage of organ donors.

National Transplant Week signed off with the Donate Life concert, organised by Transplant Sport UK and supported by us and other organisations. At the Sheffield gig there was a huge range of musical talent taking part and many performers had personal experience of donation and transplantation. Celebrity supporters included Aled Jones

and X-Factor's Matt Cardle who added their voices to the theme of celebrating, supporting and encouraging organ donation.

Faith summit

In the run up to National Transplant Week, the first ever Faith and Organ Donation Summit brought together high profile leaders and community representatives from six of the major religions. Held in May, the special event considered how leaders and organ donation champions could best promote organ donation amongst different faiths.

Areas for discussion included perceived barriers to organ donation, including religion, and how to improve consent rates. Events in centres of

worship across London also spread the organ donation message. ●

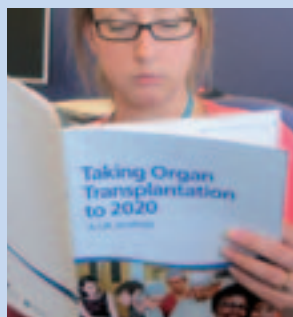


The transplant choir sing out the organ donation message

Launch of 2020 Strategy

The UK wants to become a world leader in organ donation and transplantation, and with that aim in mind Taking Organ Transplantation to 2020 – a UK Strategy was launched during National Transplant Week. The strategy has the backing of the four UK health ministers and the goal is to improve on existing achievements such as a 50 per cent rise in deceased donation rates since 2008.

The new strategy aims to improve consent rates to organ donation and increase the number of patients receiving a transplant. The strategy calls for a revolution in public attitudes and behaviours, a reminder of how important it is for individuals and their families to support donation whenever they can. ●



A summer of activity

Superheroes, celebrities and special events up and down the country helped to boost donor numbers during National Blood Week

Each year National Blood Week (NBW) takes place in the second week of June to coincide with World Blood Donor Day (WBDD). Countries from all over the world celebrate WBDD on June 14th, the birthday of Dr Karl Landsteiner, the Austrian scientist who discovered the ABO blood grouping system.

This year the theme for NBW was 'Know Blood, Give Blood', focusing on recruiting more young blood donors and welcoming back donors

**Each year,
we need 200,000
new registered
donors to ensure
that we are able
to keep our donor
levels stable**

who have not given blood for a while. Each year, we need 200,000 new registered donors to ensure that we are able to keep our donor levels stable. New donors are needed to replace those of you who are ill, move away or can't donate any longer for health reasons.

We know from recent research



that it's a lack of knowledge about the blood donation process that stops some people from giving blood. We are trying to dispel the myths and misinformation around the process and so this year's campaign had an educational slant.

We also held events up and down the country to raise awareness and to enable people to sign up as blood donors. Donors and blood recipients came together for events in cities and town centres to show how blood donation had affected their lives and to educate people about the different blood groups.

Claire Sweeney made-up like David Bowie for the 'Come back' and donate message

Celebrity support

We also had celebrity support from Claire Sweeney, Pooja Shah, Dawn Steele and Wendi Peters. Borrowing from the idea of a comeback, as demonstrated by David Bowie and his comeback album earlier this year, the four celebrities got together to re-create Bowie's classic *Aladdin Sane* album shot. The message to the public was, you guessed it, 'Come back' and donate.

Claire Sweeney says, "My brother's

**“Giving blood
saves lives -
you really can be
a hero, for more
than one day”**

still here today thanks to a blood transfusion so I know how important it is. Giving blood saves lives - you really can be a hero, for more than one day. So if you haven't donated for a while or ever before, do consider coming forward to register.”

Paramount partnership

In a NBW first, we teamed up with one of Hollywood's biggest studios, Paramount Pictures, to 'Help Save Humanity' in advance of their World War Z film about global apocalypse. Four lucky blood donors and recipients shared the red carpet with Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie and other stars at the London premiere. There's a chance for you to share some of the excitement and win a bevy of prizes by following us on social media and retweeting our messages and linking to the official World War Z website.

Social media

We are delighted with how important social media is becoming in spreading the word about blood donation. Over one million unique users accessed the blood donation Facebook page during NBW and over 25,000 of you were talking about the page. In addition to this, we gained over 1,000 new followers to our @GiveBloodNHS twitter account.

NBW was a real success and we

WBDD across the world

This year marks the 10th anniversary of World Blood Donor Day. The focus of the campaign was blood donation as a gift that saves lives. France was the host country this year with the global focus on Paris on June 14th.

Bangladesh – Dhaka hosted a rally and seminar, with talks from blood donors and a thalassemia sufferer presided over by Professor Ahmed, President of the Blood Transfusion Society Bangladesh.

Jamaica – Schools were invited to join the celebration at Emancipation Park in Kingston to encourage blood donation amongst young people. They were joined by Jamaica's oldest blood donor organiser who started the blood service 65 years ago and is still assisting it today.

Pakistan – There was a mixed programme of celebrations, including seminars, a live morning show and a theatre and musical evening. The theatre event was held in Lake View Park, Islamabad, and people were given t-shirts, badges and car stickers with messages on them thanking and encouraging blood donors.

Russia – In Moscow the Blood Centre of the Federal Medical and Biological Agency of Russia celebrated WBDD with a unique exhibition 'Planet of Blood Donation'. The exhibition displayed press materials, photos, drawings and testimonials from blood donors all over the world. ●

smashed our target of signing up 10,000 new blood donors, with a total of 13,400 new registrations recorded through national and regional events.

Summer Superheroes

The need for more new donors never ends. Last year we saw a six per cent drop in the number of registered donors coming forward



Four lucky donors and recipients at the 'World War Z' premier in Leicester Square. Vanessa Agyemang, Emma Paine, Ryan Perry and Nikita Mardia (recipient)

▶ so in August we held our 'Summer Superhero' campaign to let people know that 'You don't need to be superhuman to be a superhero'. Our own donor relations teams dressed up in blue capes and took their superpowers to road shows in towns and cities across the UK to encourage

Our Summer Superhero campaign in August helped to recruit over 3,500 new blood donors



We would like to say a massive thank you to all of you who have helped us to exceed our targets on both of our summer campaigns

a new generation of donors to become superheroes.

The theme continued on social media where we encouraged blood donors to show their support by updating their profiles with Superhero Twibbons. Twibbons are

small images that you can overlay onto your social media profile picture and for this campaign the image was a superhero mask. By the end of August, we had recruited over 3,500 new blood donors, hitting another campaign target.

We would like to say a massive thank you to all of you who have helped us to exceed our targets on

both of our summer campaigns. It would not be possible for us to do this without all of your hard work, dedication and passion for blood donation. ●



Keeping stocks healthy for Christmas

Blood stocks often dip during the festive season as people find themselves busy preparing for the Christmas break. But the need for blood does not go away. In the season of goodwill and giving, donating blood has special resonance. So please give the gift that costs nothing and make an appointment to donate blood. It's an hour or so out of your day but it could help save the life of someone seriously ill. ●



Dad always wanted to donate

Roy Cole had reached 92 blood donations when he died suddenly, aged 62, in July. Roy, a quantity surveyor from North London, collapsed at work following a major stroke and was rushed to hospital. Despite the best efforts of medical staff it quickly became clear that Roy would never recover.

Jean, Roy's wife, had passed away from cancer in 2005. As a result, it fell to the couple's three sons – Paul, James and Chris – to agree to donate their father's organs when they were approached by a specialist nurse in organ donation (or SNOD) employed by NHS Blood and Transplant.

Roy had already discussed the issue of organ donation with his family and always made his wishes clear to them. So eldest son Paul said the decision was an easy one to make.

Doing something good

He says, "From my point of view, it was a no-brainer – our dad committed his life to helping others as a blood donor and he always said he wanted to donate his organs too."

"The only thing that kept us going over those first 24 hours was knowing his organs were going to be used and knowing they were going to do some good."

Paul said he was very grateful to the specialist nurses from NHSBT who guided him and his brothers through the donation process and arranged overnight accommodation for them before

When their father suffered a fatal stroke, his three sons knew the right thing to do



the surgery to remove the organs took place.

Well handled

He says, "What really amazed me was how well the organ donation nurses from NHSBT handled everything. It's amazing how much work they do in the 12-hour or so period they have to make all the arrangements, and they couldn't have been better in the way they treated us."

While some of his organs were found to be unsuitable for donation, Roy's kidneys were successfully transplanted, helping

Paul, James and Chris hope their story will help other families facing the same decision about organ donation

to save the lives of two people. Roy's family also agreed to donate his tissues, including bone which can be used to repair major fractures, and corneas which were used to restore someone's sight.

Paul has followed in his father's footsteps as a blood donor and has also signed up to the Organ Donor Register. He says, "We've always been a very close family so it's a massive loss."

"But we hope that our story will help any other young people who find themselves facing the same decision."

Paul says that when his mother Jean died in 2005, she received several transfusions as part of her treatment for cancer and this strengthened his father's commitment to blood donation. ●

Sign up now!

Anyone wishing to donate their organs or tissues after death should sign up to the Organ Donor Register by calling 0300 123 23 23 or going to www.organdonation.nhs.uk ●

★★★★★★★★★★★★★ STAR LETTER ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

A healthy walking advert for donating

My wife Margaret Hogan donated her 100th pint of blood in July and I'm extremely proud of her. Margaret is a walk leader for the Wellingborough Council. She walks six days a week and radiates good health. Her fellow



walkers often comment that giving blood must be good for her and that she is a great advertisement for the blood service.

JOHN HOGAN, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: *Well done to your wife Margaret on her amazing achievement. She certainly is a great advertisement for blood donation. Here's to her next milestone.*

A **Star Letter** is chosen for every issue.

The winner will be invited to a behind-the-scenes tour of a Blood Centre. He or she will don a white coat and see what happens to a donation of blood. (You must be 16 or over.)

★★★★★★★★★★★★★

This is your chance to tell us your news, views and interesting or unusual donor stories. Write to The Editor, The Donor, NHSBT, Charcot Road, London NW9 5BG or email thedonor@nhsbt.nhs.uk

A change of mind

I was out with my family in the summer and noticed you were recruiting blood donors at the zoo in Bristol. I have always been a bit dismissive of blood donation and just assumed that there is always enough to go around if anyone needs it. My mind was changed recently when my brother needed blood during an emergency operation. He had to be given O negative because the doctors weren't sure of his blood group and didn't have time to find out. If it weren't for people who give blood then my brother might not have made it (he needed another pint of his own blood group after

the operation). So thank you to everyone who donates and I have recently sent a request for an appointment to give blood for the first time.

CLAIRE WATKINS, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your brother's story with us. It's great to hear how donated blood potentially saved his life. Thank you for signing up as a donor and we hope you encourage others to follow your lead.

Thanks to donors for life-saving gift

I'm coming up to 64 and when I was 18 I wanted to go around the world so I joined the merchant navy. I had a great time and saw some great sights, but in 1967 in New Zealand I had a bad car crash in which my brother, who lived there, died. Without the skill and dedication of the doctors and nurses at the hospital and 10 pints of blood I would not be here some

46 years later fit and well.

GEORGE LEWIS, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your story. It's a powerful reminder of how important donors are.

Learning from The Donor

I really enjoy reading *The Donor* and I particularly enjoy reading the science articles. I didn't realise that NHSBT did so much in the way of research and development. Here was me thinking you just came to my local community centre, took my blood, processed it and sent it off to hospitals. I love reading the stories about organ donation too as I feel this is something I have learnt more about over the last few years since reading your magazines. I never really thought about being an organ donor before, but the wonderful stories you feature of people who have been saved by receiving an organ has made me consider it more. Hopefully when I'm gone I can carry on helping save

A photograph of an older man, Patrick Herman, and a woman standing next to a celebratory cake. Patrick is on the right, wearing a dark blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and glasses, leaning forward and cutting a rectangular cake with a knife. The woman is on the left, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top with a lace collar and glasses, smiling. The cake is white with red frosting on the sides and top, and has some red text on it. The background is an indoor setting with large windows and warm lighting.

Dedicated life-saver hits 1,000 donations

Patrick Herman has reached the impressive total of 1,000 blood and platelet donations. The 68-year-old retired teacher from Audenshaw became the first person in Greater Manchester to reach the milestone. Patrick was inspired to start giving blood by one of his teachers.

He says, "I remember him talking about the NHS and how we shouldn't misuse it and should help others when we can. As soon as I was 18 (which was the minimum age then) I went to give blood." That was back in 1962 and after over two decades of giving blood, Patrick gave his first donation of platelets in 1986 at the newly opened blood centre in Manchester. A special celebratory event was held for him at the centre in August to recognise his amazing achievement.

Patrick says, "To be honest, hitting 1,000 donations is just another step – it's something I've done and hoped to reach. I'll keep going as long as I can." ●

lives as I do while I'm still alive.

BOB MARTIN, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: I'm glad you enjoy the magazine and the variety of articles it offers. It's great to hear that they are having an impact and making people think about organ donation.

Dear me!

Here's a funny little story from when I took my son along to my last blood donation. I recently gave my 25th donation so was given a 'well done' pack (thank you!) My son was sitting by me waiting patiently so I gave it to him to open. He immediately looked at me with a puzzled look on his face

and said "Mum, they've given you the wrong one! The letter in here says Dear Donna". "No Max. That is pronounced Dear Donor!" We had a giggle anyway and now he wants to give blood when he is old enough!

KAREN HOPE, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: Thanks for making us all smile!

Why I donate

I am a regular blood donor and I try to encourage everyone I meet to donate blood. My family are from Bangladesh, though I was born in the UK, and I know how important it is for people from my community to donate as

we are always told that people from different communities have different antibodies in their blood. If by donating I can help someone recover from their illness or save them in an emergency then I am happy. Regardless of which community they are from.

PARVEZ, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: Thank you for your dedication to helping save lives. All donors are special, but we have fewer from minority ethnic backgrounds so it's great that you are encouraging people in your community to donate. Good luck with your efforts and we hope to see your friends on session. ●

IS IT TRUE THAT...

We reply to some of your questions about donating

Q I can't book an appointment to give blood because I work shifts and never know when I will have time. Every time I go (to a walk in session) I either have to wait ages or get turned away. Why say you allow walk in appointments then make it so difficult?

A We understand that not everyone is able to make an appointment, which is why we are committed to offering an effective mixed appointment and walk in service. Unfortunately, if the session is much busier than expected, it can lead to an unusually long waiting time. We appreciate we don't always get it right and we are making changes to the appointments and walk in slots we offer on session to make things easier.

Q While I was at my last session I came up with an idea that may make a good feature in *The Donor*. I think it would be an interesting idea to have a 'round the table' chat with

donors at certain sessions and get their candid views on what donating is like for them and why they carry on.

A We are always looking at new ways to improve our magazine to fit with donor expectations. We're certainly thinking about your idea!

Q I have decided to give up smoking and I am using patches as well as an e-cigarette. Will I still be able to give blood?

A Probably. If you suffer from any symptoms as a result of quitting we suggest you give blood once those symptoms have passed. Most patches, nasal sprays and gum do not prevent you from giving blood but bring them along to the session and show the nurse before donating.

Q I thought I signed up to the Organ Donor Register a few years ago, but I have never had any confirmation. How do I check?

A You can write in and ask (the confidential nature of the register means that we cannot tell you over the phone) or apply to join online through NHSBT's Facebook page or visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk and our system will identify if you are already on the register. If/once you are registered you can update your details and will receive a confirmation from us.

Q My brother and I have been donors for years, but he moved to Cambridge and continued donating there. He has recently been asked to be a platelet donor, but I have never been asked. Why?

A Platelet donation is only available at 25 permanent donor centres around the country. It is possible that your brother now donates at such a centre in Cambridge. If you also donate at a permanent centre then ask staff next time about donating platelets. ●

Encouraging ethnic donors

Nitin Shukla would like to see other people from minority ethnic backgrounds join him in donating

There are currently 1.2 million people in England and North Wales who regularly donate blood, but only 53,000 are from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Nitin Shukla is one of them. He has been a blood donor for 21 years and knows how important it is for people from different ethnic communities to donate blood.

He says, "My life as a blood donor began back in 1992 when I was walking past our local community centre. I remember seeing a couple of blood donor vans parked outside so I popped in to enquire how I could give blood. I had heard adverts on the radio requesting new donors so this was my opportunity to do something about it and make a real difference to the lives of others.

"When I started to give blood I began to appreciate how important it was for me to do this because ultimately it would save lives. I am blessed with having wonderful parents who have taught me the importance of selfless service,

which is central to our Hindu faith. They have always supported many worthy causes, numerous charities



Nitin Shukla at a session

and helped people in need for as long as I can remember and I have endeavoured to do the same."

Giving platelets

After a few years of giving blood, Nitin was asked by the team at Newcastle Donor Centre if he would consider giving platelets.

"They explained the importance of platelets, what was involved in

the process and also that people with certain blood groups are encouraged to give platelets. Of course I agreed as this was just another thing I could do to help people in desperate need."

Nitin says that being a platelet donor takes a lot more commitment than donating whole blood. "Where I used to give blood every 16 weeks I now visit the centre in Newcastle every four to five weeks. The staff there are great and always treat me with great care and a friendly face."

100th donation

Being a regular donor, Nitin has noticed how few people he sees at sessions are from other ethnic backgrounds. "It saddens me the lack of donors from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (BAME). I know how important it is for people from my community to donate. Black and Asian donors can often have rare blood types or certain antibodies that are only found within the black or Asian community." That is why it is so important that the donor base is as broad as possible so BAME patients can be given compatible blood.

Nitin says, "I strongly believe that we should all take responsibility for the well-being of our communities and do whatever we can to help. I have recently been awarded a certificate and a pin to recognise my 100th donation. I wear the pin with much pride because I know saving a life is the greatest gift you can give someone." ●

Why platelets matter

Whole blood is made up of red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. Platelets are the clotting components found within the blood. They work to form a mesh "plug" to stop or prevent bleeding. They are often given to people undergoing cancer treatment, people with severe blood disorders and those suffering life threatening bleeding from accidents or haemorrhages. ●

Shining the light on cancer treatment

It may sound like something from a sci-fi film, but extracorporeal photopheresis is actually an effective treatment helping dozens of cancer patients every year

Cancer treatments certainly save lives but they can leave some patients with painful or uncomfortable symptoms that are very difficult to live with. Extracorporeal photopheresis (ECP) is a relatively new treatment that is improving the quality of life for dozens of these patients every year.

"Patients come to our units with a range of symptoms that can have a major effect on their everyday lives," says Catherine Howell, chief nurse of patient services at NHS Blood and Transplant.

"ECP is most commonly used to



Cancer patients are feeling the benefits of extracorporeal photopheresis (ECP)

treat two conditions - Cutaneous T cell Lymphoma (CTCL) and Chronic Graft versus Host Disease (GvHD).

"For patients with CTCL - a type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma of the skin - ECP can help to reduce skin itching and ulceration. GvHD - caused as a result of having a bone marrow transplant (where the

transplanted cells attack the recipient's organs) - can show itself in the liver, gut and skin. For both of these, the results (of ECP) are subtle and take place over a long period, but the quality of life can be greatly enhanced with prolonged treatment."

How it works

Blood is taken from the patient's arm and fed into a special cell separator machine. This separates the patient's white cells and channels them into a collection bag. The bag is then injected with a light-sensitising agent (8-MOP) and the white cells are exposed in the machine to ultraviolet-A light.

This causes the 8-MOP to bind to the DNA inside the cells. The treated cells are then returned to the patient, where they have a modulating effect on the patient's immune system. The mechanism of this effect is not yet fully understood.

"The treatment takes

Find out more

To find out more about the specialist services provided by NHS Blood and Transplant visit www.blood.co.uk/about-blood/information-for-patients/specialist-therapeutic-services/.

How Extra Corporeal Photopheresis is helping Daniel

Daniel Gould, 27 from Exeter, knows how important these therapies are. In 2011 his body developed debilitating symptoms as a result of graft-versus-host disease (GvHD) where his new bone marrow began attacking his body's cells.

Daniel was initially diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in November 2006 following a blood test. He was immediately given an essential blood transfusion to boost his levels of haemoglobin which were dangerously low. Daniel then had three years of chemotherapy but suffered a relapse and needed a bone marrow transplant. It was as a result of this transplant that he developed GvHD.

"GvHD is to do with the new bone marrow attacking the host body. It can cause all sorts of problems. I had problems with my stomach, my eyes and with my skin. It caused a thickening and tightening of the skin which restricts movement. At



one stage I had to walk around with my arms constantly bent at 90 degree angles," says Daniel.

When Daniel started having ECP treatments in the summer of 2012, the nearest unit was in London which meant fortnightly trips to the capital with overnight stays. The opening of the Bristol unit has made a huge difference as it has saved Daniel time and uncomfortable train journeys and it has meant his wife Lucy can join him for added support.

"After the treatment I am a little tired but I have no other side effects. It takes around an hour and a half to two hours. The nurses are brilliant and they put 100 per cent of their time into you," he says.

Daniel has seen a gradual change in his condition during the course of his treatments and says his overall condition is now much improved. "If I look at myself now from what I was four or five years ago, it's amazing really." ●

approximately two hours and is made up of two procedures on consecutive days," says Catherine.

"The majority of our patients are on long-term treatment plans and visit their treatment centre every two to four weeks depending on their individual needs.

"Between April 2012 and March 2013 we treated 85 people at our two ECP units in Manchester and Bristol. We are planning to expand the number of treatment centres so patients can get access to treatment nearer to where they live."

One of the biggest benefits

"One of the biggest benefits of this therapy is that it can help reduce the large doses of steroids that, for example, bone marrow transplant patients need"

of this therapy is that it can help reduce the large doses of steroids that, for example, bone marrow transplant patients need. Steroids are usually the first treatment used to prevent or treat GvHD.

Unfortunately, taken over a long period of time, steroids can increase the risk of serious or even life-threatening infections and in some patients high doses of steroids are required, or the treatment may not be effective at all. ECP on the other hand does not cause any suppression of the immune system. ●

Blood on the frontline

How we are helping to provide troops serving overseas with life-saving blood products

Since 2005, we have been working with the Ministry of Defence to provide a global, safe and secure supply of blood to military personnel. Blood donated in the UK is regularly shipped over to combat zones and over 8,000 blood components have been delivered overseas in the past year. Britain is the only nation regularly shipping fresh platelets to troops.

Frontline challenge

Getting blood products to the frontline is often a challenge. Blood, plasma and platelets must be transported safely over thousands of miles to military hospitals situated in hot, dusty environments. We use specially designed containers to keep everything at the right temperature



and sterile. If bad weather delays deliveries to the hospitals then soldiers or medical staff on the ground may step in to offer a life-saving donation in an emergency.

Donation on the ground

In 2008, Dr Heidi Doughty, an NHSBT consultant in transfusion and active member of the Territorial Army, helped set up operational apheresis teams at the military

Captain Sarah Wilkinson took special training so she could offer a blood donation service on the front line

hospitals in Iraq and Afghanistan. The teams enable soldiers to donate platelets out in the field in emergency situations. They must still meet the same donor guidelines as in the UK and each donor faces the same vigorous testing as back at home.

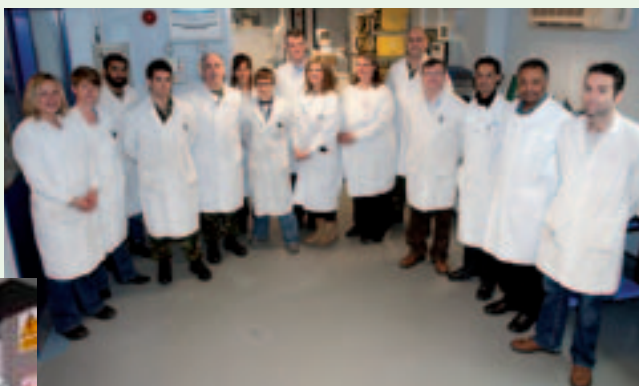
The success of this pilot service means we are now working with the Ministry of Defence to help train qualified nurses to collect blood and platelets from soldiers on the frontline. Captain Sarah Wilkinson was one of the first to be formally trained by us and to put her training into practice out in the field at Camp Bastion, the main British military base in Afghanistan. She is an experienced army nurse and



Blood collected in the UK is regularly shipped to the Forces

took an intensive five-day blood donation course that gave her the essential knowledge and skills to collect blood and platelets safely and, most importantly, care for the donor.

Sarah says, "The training was amazing and the specialists at NHSBT really put us through



Above: The Birmingham team are behind the blood supplied to our soldiers
Left: Checking supplies for the front line



the patient. It was a really great feeling, following this blood donation from donor to patient and especially as it was taken from a colleague who I work with."

The apheresis team collect platelets twice a week. They also conduct donor screening sessions

our paces and made sure we were given the best, most up to date training and covered every eventuality. The hardest bit was putting it into practice.

"I can remember one particular time when I really put my skills to use and took blood from a colleague who works on the ward in the hospital in Bastion. It was a fantastic feeling as it was the first time I had taken whole blood rather than platelets. After we collected the blood, the donor went into the labs to watch all the testing. We then followed the blood to intensive care where we watched it being transfused into

every week so they have pre-screened donors ready to give in an emergency. The soldiers know how important blood

Blood, plasma and platelets must be transported safely over thousands of miles to military hospitals situated in hot, dusty environments

donation is and more than 250 donors have been screened since the apheresis team arrived in Afghanistan in April. ●

What the donors say

The operational apheresis team are constantly recruiting new donors through posters and requests on the army's radio station. Many volunteers who come forward are existing donors who give blood in the UK, but for some it's their first time and they too just want to do their bit to help others.

Sarah says, "Some donors get a real buzz from donating. They tell me it's the least they can do and donating platelets gives them a couple of hours down time from their usually busy day. Another soldier who donated for the first time told me they just wanted to help and it was huge to know that they were donating blood to give to a patient who needed it there and then." ●

"We take concerns seriously"

We're all trying to be greener these days, and NHSBT is no exception. Shaun Eglen, strategic programmes manager, talks about how he is making our service more sustainable



Q What does your job as strategic programmes manager involve?

A NHSBT has a target to reduce carbon emissions by 25 per cent by 2015 and I am responsible for making sure we meet this through my role heading up sustainable development and environmental management.

Q How did you come to join NHSBT?

A I was a chief engineer in the Royal Navy for ten years and before that worked for the company that makes most of the lottery scratch cards you see today. I joined NHSBT when it was looking to re-structure part of the organisation into what is now called facilities management – looking after all aspects of buildings

and premises. This was a relatively new discipline at the time and I jumped at the opportunity of taking part in it.

Q How did you come into your present role?

A After facilities management I took on various other roles before I moved to the strategy directorate working on NHSBT

projects. The UK government's sustainability and carbon reduction agenda was just emerging and once it became apparent that as an organisation we needed to have proper sustainability plans, I was asked to take on this work. That was back in 2008.

Q What are we doing to make the organisation "greener"?

A We are committed to our five-year plan (to 2015) to reduce carbon emissions by 25 per cent. We've a number of ways of reaching this target, with the focus for the first three years on energy consumption, travel and waste. Amongst the things we've done so far are replacing single glazed windows and ageing roofs, replacing bulbs with low energy equivalents and diverting approximately 90 per cent (1,600 tonnes) of clinical waste away from incineration into alternative waste streams. Looking forward, we're trying to build sustainability into all our plans so it just naturally becomes a part of what we do.

Q How are donors helping with this?

A few strategic points

- In the last three years we have reduced our CO₂ emissions by 22 per cent
- For each unit of blood we produce, our collection teams and managers travel nine miles
- We have partnered with local authorities and businesses to improve sustainable travel in and around our flagship site at Filton in Bristol
- Refrigeration is our single largest area of energy consumption. We rely on it for our blood processing, storage and distribution. ●



A Donors are not afraid to ask questions about what we are doing or to voice their concerns. And we always take those concerns very seriously. For example, across the country many donors have questioned what happens to the plastic drinking cups at the end of a donation session. This made us really think hard about our general waste operations and has recently resulted in a national contract being awarded for the collection and management of all non clinical waste. As part of the new scheme, the contractor is responsible for sorting our waste streams and recycling all eligible materials, including plastic cups, thereby helping us to achieve our ultimate goal of zero waste going to landfill.

Q How has NHSBT been recognised for its sustainability programme?

A NHSBT completed a ten-month programme with

Shaun Eglan says NHSBT is committed to cutting its carbon emissions by 22 per cent

the Carbon Trust for which we received formal certification. We were also awarded the Carbon

“We’re trying to build sustainability into all our plans so it just naturally becomes a part of what we do”

Saver Gold Standard for our efforts to continually reduce, year on year, our carbon emissions. In the latest published league table of around 2,000 organisations in the government’s Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme, we finished 6th, the

highest ranking NHS body, and second highest in the public sector.

Q What is a typical day like for you?

A It is a very varied job. It can range from producing reports for the Board and external bodies to setting up new contracts that will give cost savings and reduce environmental impacts. It can be political and involve influencing external agents to build support or funding for future ventures whilst keeping up the momentum on current projects.

Q What’s the best part of your job?

A Apart from the people - I have made many friends in my time at NHSBT - it is knowing that what we are doing is improving our products and services whilst helping to protect the environment and the earth’s natural resources for the benefit of our children, and grandchildren - when they come along! ●



Dr Gail Miflin
answers your
questions
about the
**Donor Health
Check and
Welcome
Booklet**

Donor Health Check and Welcome Booklet

Q What is the Welcome Booklet?

The booklet contains the latest information on: HIV, Hepatitis B and C, Human T cell Lymphotropic Virus (HTLV) and syphilis as well as reasons why donors should not donate such as life style circumstances. It explains the registration and donation process, haemoglobin testing, and care before and after blood donation plus the consent to donate form.

Q How does this relate to donor and patient safety?

We want every donor to read the Welcome Booklet after they have filled in the Donor Health Check (DHC) to make sure their answers reflect the latest advice for donors, which is contained in the booklet. The booklet is also designed to give you full understanding of the questions in the DHC so you can provide informed consent.

Q Why do donors need to fill the DHC out every time they give blood?

This is important because there could be significant changes in your circumstances since your last donation. It also enables us to have the correct health record for each donor with each donation. We need to be sure that the donor is not being put at risk during the

session and that there is no risk to the patients. We have a duty of care to ensure safety of blood products and donors. Every step of the donation process is vitally important to ensure a safe blood supply to patients.

Q Why do some of the questions change from time to time?

Our guidelines are regularly reviewed by a joint UK committee. We update the DHC to reflect any recent changes to the guideline.

Q Is it necessary to ask travel questions every time a donor gives blood?

Yes. The distribution of blood-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus can change and move around the world. We regularly assess disease risks associated with travel abroad. This means we have to

know where donors have been and we can only do this by asking each time.

Q Why do you need to identify donors twice when they give blood?

Every donor has their identity checked and rechecked to be sure that their blood is always linked correctly to their records (blood group, donor id, product number).

Q Why is it important that you clean the arm prior to putting the needle in?

Certain bacteria live on the skin and the cleaning process eliminates the vast majority of them. As an extra precaution against contamination, we also divert the tiny piece of skin that the needle displaces and the first few millilitres of blood that are drawn at the beginning of the donation into a separate bag. ●

How to become a donor

- Sign up to become a blood donor at www.blood.co.uk or contact the Donor Helpline 0300 123 23 23
- Most people can give blood. If you are generally in good health, age 17 to 65 (if it's your first time) and weigh at least 50kg (7st 12lb) you can donate. Women aged below 20 should check their eligibility (see our website www.blood.co.uk)
- Find your nearest session on the website or use the app for Android and Apple Smartphone and tablet devices – NHS Give Blood.
- It's best to book so please contact our Donor Helpline to book an appointment. You can also walk in to sessions
- Once you've given blood, feel proud and please spread the word! Each donation can potentially save up to three lives
- We also need people to donate platelets, to find out more visit www.blood.co.uk/platelets. ●

CROSSWORD

Complete the crossword. The initial letters of the Across answers, taken in order, spell out a significant name in the history of medicine. Send this phrase on a postcard or in a letter together with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Crossword Competition, *The Donor*, NHSBT, Charcot Road, London NW9 5BG. You could win an "Amazing" NHSBT prize. Answers and the winner's name will be in the next issue. All entries must be received by 31st January 2014.

ACROSS

- 1 Eccentric person (6)
- 5 Part of the eye (4)
- 9 Knight of the Round Table (8)
- 10 Vegetable (4)
- 11 Land surrounded by water (6)
- 12 Continent (6)
- 13 Abs, for instance (7)
- 18 Food basket (6)
- 20 Counting device (6)
- 21 Speed competition (4)
- 22 Explosive (8)
- 23 Whirlpool (4)
- 24 Gives way (6)



DOWN

- 2 Pass (of time) (6)
- 3 Miracle (anagram) (7)
- 4 Lubricated (5)
- 6 Measuring stick (5)
- 7 Rough drawing (6)
- 8 Writer of epistles (2,4)
- 14 Try hard (6)
- 15 City in Washington (7)
- 16 Luxurious home (6)
- 17 Greek geometer (6)
- 19 Beg (5)
- 20 Mixture including metal (5)

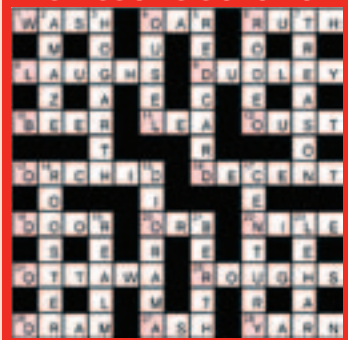
WE HAVE A WINNER!

Congratulations to C Dench, Bridlington, Yorkshire, who successfully answered last issue's crossword.

The correct answer was:

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTION



For thousands of people this Christmas, their must-have gift is blood or platelets.

A blood or platelet transfusion can help a patient enjoy precious time with their family at Christmas.

Please find time in your busy schedule to give something amazing...

NHS
Blood and Transplant

THIS YEAR'S
MUST-HAVE GIFT.
BLOOD

visit blood.co.uk or
call 0300 123 23 23

 Save a life
Give blood

INFORMATION

Just call our 24 hour **Donor Helpline** and staff will answer your queries on all aspects of giving blood.

0300 123 23 23

Remember, you can call the Helpline to tell us if you have moved house or changed employers!

DON'T FORGET information is also available on our website.

www.blood.co.uk

If you are not a donor, please enrol now. Fill out the coupon below, place it in an envelope and send it to NHS Blood and Transplant, FREEPOST RRZG-KUKB-EUBE, 500 North Bristol Park, Northway, Filton, Bristol BS34 7QH, or call 0300 123 23 23.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss	SURNAME
FIRST NAME	DATE OF BIRTH DD / MM / YY
ADDRESS	
POSTCODE	
DAYTIME PHONE No	MOBILE
EMAIL	

To give blood you need to be in good health, aged 17 to 65 and weigh over 7st 12lbs/50kg.

I would like to join the NHS Blood Donor Register as someone who may be contacted and would be prepared to donate blood. I understand that NHS Blood & Transplant (NHSBT) or its partners may phone, write or otherwise contact me with details of local donor sessions. I agree to the NHSBT holding my personal details on their donor database and processing this information as necessary for the proper administration of the NHSBT. MO6

