

The Donor

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR BLOOD DONORS

SUMMER 2012



“Every day is
touch and go”

**Donated skin brings new
hope to leg ulcer patients**

TV PRESENTER PENNY SMITH
“It’s easy to give blood”

Donor Helpline – 0300 123 23 23

NHS

Help donors worldwide with a different donation



As a blood donor, you are part of a 50 million strong worldwide community. But in many low-income countries, the culture of altruistic giving needs to be developed and basic facilities provided. We need your financial donations to help make safe blood available to the poorest people in the world.

Dear Blood Donor

You may not have heard of the Global Blood Fund, but I hope your commitment to blood donation will mean that you intuitively understand our mission.

In the poorest countries of the world, shortage of blood kills large numbers of people and what blood there is isn't safe. Helping these countries to establish a large pool of volunteer blood donors, making them less reliant on paid and replacement donation, is one of the most effective ways to improve the blood supply and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Run by blood professionals in the UK and USA, since 2008 the Global Blood Fund

has been helping some of the most disadvantaged communities to recruit and retain volunteer blood donors. But so much more needs to be done. To read about our programmes, visit www.globalbloodfund.org.

I do hope you will feel able to support our work. Thank you.

John Armitage, MD
President, Global Blood Fund



- I want to help make safe blood available to the poorest people in the world.
- £15 towards shipping surplus equipment from Europe/USA
- £10 towards weight scales and portable donor beds
- £5 towards donor education materials
- £_____ We'll gratefully accept any amount.
- My cheque payable to Global Blood Fund is enclosed.

Charge my gift to Visa Mastercard Maestro

Card No

Exp Date _____ Issue No. _____

Signature _____

PLEASE HELP US BOOST YOUR DONATION BY 25% - AT NO COST TO YOU. Please treat this donation and all future donations I make as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

We may write to you about our work and how you can help. If you would prefer we didn't, please tick this box.

that tax year. I understand GBF will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

If you would like us to send you a receipt for your donation, please tick the box.

SEND THIS COUPON TO GLOBAL BLOOD FUND, FREEPOST SN1457, MELKSHAM, SN12 7BR

The Global Blood Fund is a charitable organisation registered in the UK (8076380) and USA (39-2071848)

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Write and tell us your news, views and interesting or unusual donor stories.

Write to The Editor, The Donor, NHSBT, Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5BG

or email thedonor@nhsbt.nhs.uk

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"Make sure people know how easy it is to give blood"

TV presenter and writer Penny Smith explains why she is urging donors to come forward during the busy summer months

When and where did you start donating blood?

I started donating blood when I was 19 and working as a cub reporter on the Peterborough Evening Telegraph. A mobile van came to the office and I have a feeling we were encouraged to give blood.

What made you want to carry on giving blood?

Weirdly, I rather enjoyed donating blood. It felt like you were doing your charity thing without putting in too much effort. You had a bit of a lie down and a biscuit, while someone else did all the work. Afterwards, I was always surprisingly bouncy. It seemed to give me more energy. Perhaps it was all in my mind, but I imagined my body bursting with new, freshly made blood cells.

You gave blood during our Christmas campaign last year. How did that come about?

I heard that this year is a 'perfect storm' in terms of needing blood, with the Olympics, Paralympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. So I wanted to make sure that other people knew how easy it is to give, and how it puts a spring in your step when you've finished.

As a successful reporter and presenter, what has been your career highlight to date?

That's a difficult question. Presenting live during the Gulf War was definitely a highlight.



Breaking news is always exciting as a broadcaster. Listening to what's going on in your earpiece and then telling the viewers about it... it doesn't get much better.

I was working for Sky News when Tony Blair ushered in the first Labour government for almost two decades; that was exciting. Then at GMTV I remember talking live to Richard Branson during his attempt to fly round the world in a hot air balloon. I spoke to him as he was floating by Mount Everest. I can get

quite stupidly overcome with the sheer technological stuff which has allowed us to do that.

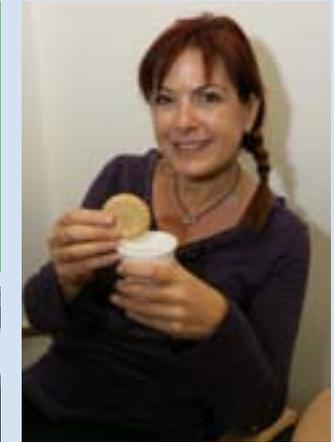
In terms of stars I've interviewed, probably my favourite was talking to Pierce Brosnan and Meryl Streep about *Mamma Mia*. Although I enjoyed hanging out with Gary Barlow in Milan, and Nicolas Cage was a laugh.

You're now a published author. How does that feel?

Having my first novel published was one of the biggest buzzes ever. I seem to remember smiling for days before and after the launch.

The fact that it was a top ten bestseller was thrilling. I had always wanted to write a book, and had started lots of them, but *Coming Up Next* was the first I actually finished. I will be forever grateful to Harper Collins

"It felt like you were doing your charity thing without putting in too much effort"



Penny checks in for a recent session at the West End Donor Centre, London (left), then relaxes afterwards with a welcome cuppa and biscuit (above)

for publishing it. Mind you, it was hard work, because I was also getting up at 4am five days a week for GMTV.

What would you say to encourage others to become blood donors?

Becoming a blood donor is the easiest thing in the world - and even if you don't do it for altruistic reasons, you can do it as a sort of insurance policy. If you are ever unfortunate enough to need a blood transfusion, you are going to have to rely on the kindness of strangers to get you through. It's a little bit of give and take. You give blood ... and take away a biscuit and a nice, warm, gooey feeling from having done a good turn.

How do you relax at the end of a busy day?

Relaxing is what I do best. Some of my favourite things are dozing while listening to radio plays, candlelit baths listening to opera, patting dogs belonging to other people, sleeping in crisp cotton sheets and being silly. ●

LIFE STORY

- Born in 1958 in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire
- Attended Rutland High School for Girls
- 1977 – began career on the Peterborough Evening Telegraph
- Worked in regional TV and radio before becoming a presenter on Sky News
- 1993 – joined breakfast show GMTV as a newsreader then became its presenter
- 2006 – came fourth in the BBC show *Just the Two of Us* singing with Curtis Stigers
- Wrote the novels *Coming Up Next* (2008) and *After The Break* (2009). ●



COURTESY OF ITV

Fewer delays for donors

If you have travelled to a country affected by West Nile Virus (WNV) you can now give blood immediately on your return, thanks to the introduction of a new test. Previously, donors had to wait 28 days after their return before they could donate.

The risk period for WNV is between 1st May and 30th November and affects travellers returning from USA, Canada, Italy, mainland Greece, Romania, Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Israel and some areas of Russia.

The test will be carried out during the risk period on donations when less than 4 weeks have passed since the donor's return from an affected area. If you have been unwell or diagnosed with WNV since your return, please call us on 0300 123 23 23. ●

New blood donors get flashmobbed!

People who signed up as blood donors at Preston's St George's Shopping Centre are unlikely to forget the event in a hurry. As soon as people registered to donate at our stand, 50 strategically placed flashmob "clappers" sprang into action, peeled off their coats to reveal bright red 'Give Blood' T-shirts and gave the new donors an enthusiastic and very public round of applause.

Our spokesperson Barbara Blanche says, "We used the surprise round of applause to say a very public 'thank you' to



those signing up as donors in the hope that people watching would be inspired to follow their example."

A video of the event was added to YouTube and has been viewed thousands of times. ●

Important target met

Cambridge now has over 100 much-needed new platelet donors, thanks to a campaign to sign up new donors in the area.

Demand for platelets is rising, so a target to recruit 100 new donors was set and a campaign launched at our Cambridge centre, back in December.

With the help of local media coverage, almost 400 volunteers came forward and 114 of those volunteers have now successfully become platelet donors.

Mary Townsend, pictured above, who relies on platelets to help treat her illness, attended our launch. She says, "Last year, out of the blue I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, and within a week was put on a course of treatment. I received over 20 units of blood and eight platelet transfusions. It's easy to assume that blood and platelets are only given to people in emergency situations, in surgery or who are anaemic, but in fact mostly they are given to cancer patients. I never knew that I'd need platelets, but because of other people's generosity, I am alive and well today." ●



Men can now give more blood

Male blood donors can now give four times in a 12-month period, as long as they wait 12 weeks between donations. This means potentially 100,000 extra units of blood can be donated by men every year.

Women can still only donate every 16 weeks, which works out as three times in a 12 month period, as they have lower levels of stored iron than men. ●



Thank you for your fantastic support

Welcome to the summer 2012 issue of *The Donor* magazine.

The heavy snow and ice from earlier in the year seems far away now that we're well into our summer season. Thank you all for your amazing commitment during that time of dreadful weather that made it so difficult for us all to get around. It is due to your dedication that we were able to maintain the vital supply of lifesaving blood to hospitals. Thank you.

During the summer, our stock of blood tends to fall as donors set off on holiday. This year, with the successful Queen's Diamond Jubilee just behind us, and as we enjoy watching a number of large sporting events including the London 2012 Olympics, we know that it is easy for our donors to be distracted from their usual routines. In addition, some donors are unable to donate for some time following

holidays overseas because of the particular destinations they have visited.

We have been preparing for all of these eventualities – I'm sure you have seen our campaigns over the last few months to encourage more donors to come forward – but we cannot do it without you, our regular donors.

Why not book an appointment and donate now before you go on holiday? If you have missed an appointment due to holidays or changes in routine, then you can call the Donor Helpline on 0300 123 23 23 and make another appointment. Let's continue to save lives together.

I wish you all a fantastic time during this very memorable summer of 2012.

Lynda Hamlyn Chief Executive



NHS
Blood and Transplant

7,000 blood donations every day.

You're just as important

Life changing career opportunities

You're already helping us to save lives, but have you thought about joining us? You don't need to have medical or scientific experience for a lot of our roles, because we'll give you all the training and support you need. (In fact, some of our donor carers started off as donors.) We recruit to a variety of roles including laboratory support posts, drivers, registered nurses, consultants and administrators, as well as donor carers. You could be a valued member of our team in a friendly, forward thinking environment – and enjoy a great range of NHS benefits too.

So take a look at our website to see what you could do:

www.nhsbtcareers.co.uk

Saving lives together

Wearing our hearts on their sleeves

Members of the Defence Medical Services Training Group (DMSTG) flashed their red Give Blood armbands as they competed for the Brickwoods Trophy at the annual Field Gun competition. The event was hosted by HMS Collingwood in Fareham and involved 22 crews from the armed forces.

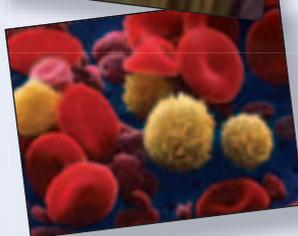
The competition involves strength, stamina and teamwork – and manhandling several tonnes of heavy artillery. NHSBT didn't tackle the course, but we were there on the day to encourage new donors. We were also busy before hand, spreading the donation message and signing up new donors. ●



Aspects of blood

We reveal some fascinating facts about the world of blood donation

- Some amazing facts about our donors - 11,000 of you have been donating for at least 30 years and almost 3,000 have been donating for more than 40 years. About 200 people have been donating for 50 years or more.
- In 2011 nearly 4,000 donors donated blood on their birthday, with 58 giving their first donation on their 17th birthday - the first day they were able to give blood.
- NHSBT drivers travel over 8 million miles each year to carry more than 2 million units of blood to hospitals up and down the country.
- Men can now donate blood more frequently than women – up to four times a year rather than three.
- Last year, 450,000 donors made their appointment online via www.blood.co.uk.
- Only identical twins have exactly the same blood group.
- Every cubic millimetre of blood contains 5-6 million red blood cells.
- Blood makes up around 7 per cent of the weight of a human body.
- It would take 500 red blood cells stacked on top of one another to reach a height of 1mm.
- People and other mammals have red blood. But insects have yellow blood, and lobsters have blue blood as their blood doesn't contain haemoglobin, the red pigment in blood, but does



contain copper which gives it a blue appearance.

- An average person has 20 - 30 trillion blood cells in their body.
- About 5 per cent of Americans have AB blood – including historical figures John F Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe.
- If you laid all the tubing from all the blood packs used in one year end to end, it would stretch from London to Vancouver - over 4,700 miles.

Meanwhile, in other countries...

- In Denmark, some parts of the USA and Czech Republic, donors are offered beer after donating. In Ireland, Guinness was offered to all donors, but this practice was stopped in 2009.
- The world record for the largest blood donation session was in Mumbai in April 2010 when over 25,000 donations were made in one day – that's the equivalent of about four days' worth of donations for NHSBT.
- In Russia, more than half of blood donors are paid for the donations they give – they receive the equivalent of around £20.
- In Paraguay, South America, the act of duelling is still legal - provided that the participants are registered blood donors! ●



Tom with his wife Valerie

More than just the big 5-0!

Tom Whitaker, from Lancaster, first gave blood aged 18 with the farmer he was working for. Now 50 and running his own farm, he reached 50 donations on his 50th birthday. And the father-of-three has given blood in a different location across the North West each time. "The first four times I gave in different places by accident; I just carried on," he says. "You are always busy on the farm, it's difficult to leave unless you have an excuse. Donating blood is a good thing to do but it also gives my wife and me a chance to get away - we turn it into a day out."

Tom and wife Valerie have travelled as far north as Penrith and Carlisle and as far south as Glossop and Chester. The furthest west is Barrow-in-Furness and Blackpool and in the east they have got as far as Huddersfield and Bradford. ●

Trending and tweets

How social media is helping us to reach new supporters

Social media is proving to be one of the fastest growing ways for us to reach our supporters. So we were delighted to begin a new partnership with Facebook with a view to encouraging more people to sign up to the Organ Donor Register (ODR).

The initiative was inspired by Mark Zuckerberg's wife who, as a doctor, is keen to promote the organ donation message. The partnership was launched for Facebook users in four countries – USA, Holland, Australia and the UK.

The new option allows users to express organ donation preferences via their 'Timelines' as a 'Life Event' as well as directly registering onto the ODR from the Facebook page. The rising online support for this new partnership has caught the attention of the media and Sally Johnson, director of Organ Donation and Transplantation, was interviewed on BBC Breakfast.



We have also released new cover images and infographics designed to be shared on social media sites. These contain visualisations of key information about organ donation and have proved to be popular with supporters.

Facebook support

We're expecting extra interest from Facebook supporters with the

launch of the National Transplant Week film competition (read more on pages 19 & 20).

Meanwhile, our profile for blood donation on Facebook and Twitter continues to grow and our blood page on Facebook now has the largest following for any blood donation page in the world, with over 151,000 supporters - and all achieved in less than 12 months!

Our blood donation Facebook page has recently supported the 'Body Art-ery' PR activity to kick-start our summer drive to build up

"Our blood page on Facebook now has the largest following for any blood donation page in the world"

sufficient supplies of blood during the busy summer months.

Over on Twitter, we now have over 8,000 followers on our blood donation account including plenty of celebrities who support the work that we do and are happy to spread the message, retweeting or writing messages of their own!

Team Give Blood

This summer eight celebrities, each representing a different ABO and Rh group, have been helping us to encourage more people to give blood ahead of the Olympics to build blood stocks through a jam-packed summer of events.

Social Media Award

Our social media campaign for National Blood Week 2011 was victorious in the 'Best use of Social Media' category at the Performance Marketing Awards in May 2012.

The award was in recognition of the successful integration of the campaign within our Facebook and Twitter presence. The campaign generated significant support on our Facebook page, which had been launched only a month before the campaign. We generated 8,000 fans and hundreds of posts on both Facebook and Twitter.

Our @givebloodnhs account was trending on Twitter in London during the campaign and we gained celebrity support from people such as Dr Hilary Jones, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Jenny Frost and Dr Pixie McKenna. ●



The campaign, Team Give Blood, launched in May and our eight stars have all used social media to promote the campaign.

We have posted videos on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/nhsbt1>) of Team Give Blood captains Gary Lineker, Jayne Torvill, Twin B, Sarah Beeny and Saira Khan all talking about the significance of blood donation, especially during National Blood Week (see pages 12 & 13). Rosie Fortescue, from *Made*

in Chelsea, has also supported National Blood Week and tweeted her support for blood donation.

And last but not least, we have been working to develop apps to make blood donation easier for those of you with smartphones. The apps for Android and iPhone were launched during National Blood Week and allow donors to find out where their local sessions are and make it easier to book appointments. ●

Follow us



BLOOD DONATION

Facebook: facebook.com/NHSBlood

Twitter: twitter.com/GiveBloodNHS

YouTube: youtube.com/nhsbt1

ORGAN DONATION

Facebook: facebook.com/organdonationuk

Twitter: twitter.com/nhsbt

YouTube: youtube.com/transplantweek





1

1. Boisterous recruiting in Birmingham. 2. The Yeoman Warders were among the first to donate



2



3

3. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue service played their part. 4. Flash mob in Croydon. 5. The balloon release in Manchester. 6. Celeb supporter Rosie Fortescue re-enacting the famous war poster.



4



5

Created to capitalise on World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) on June 14th, this year's events followed last year's award winning week. Every year, countries throughout the world organise events to celebrate the day, which marks the birth of Dr Karl Landsteiner, the Austrian scientist who discovered the ABO blood group system.

This year we had the challenge of a busy summer of sporting events like the Olympic and Paralympic Games as well the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. This meant a double bank holiday, plus 1.2 million spectators and 15,000 athletes expected to visit London.

These visitors will have a very different range of blood groups from the regular UK population – so we will need to have sufficient stocks of different types available.

Healthy stocks

Major events are a distraction for donors. Fewer people book an appointment and they often cancel them when they realise it conflicts with something they want to do or watch; with the biggest sporting event in history on our doorstep,

Donors do it again!

This June saw our second National Blood Week (NBW), where we celebrated the gift of blood and recognised donors as 'everyday heroes'

we need to make sure stocks remain healthy throughout the Olympic Games.

With this in mind we launched

"With the biggest sporting event in history on our doorstep, we need to make sure stocks remain healthy throughout the Olympic Games"

National Blood Week (June 11th – 17th) catching the attention of national and local media.

Elsewhere, magazines featured interviews with patients who had received blood or who rely on regular transfusions to stay alive.

Rolling up your sleeves

Made In Chelsea's Rosie Fortescue rolled her sleeves up to recreate the heroic 'Rosie the Riveter' WWII poster and issue a rallying cry for new and existing blood donors to come forward (see picture 6).

Rosie says, "This woman clearly knew how to get things done, and I feel honoured to become a modern day campaigner for the national blood stock build. Blood supplies are vital to the health service and every unit of blood can save or improve the lives of up to three people."

The famous guardians of the Tower of London, The Yeoman Warders (Beefeaters), were among the first to donate their blood in a mobile blood unit, positioned against one of London's most iconic backdrops especially for World Blood Donor Day. Members of the public living, working near or visiting the Tower were also encouraged to join the national effort to build blood stocks.

Celebration events were organised up and down the country as well with a series of 'flash mobs' to entertain everyone. In Bath, 100 students from Kingwood School in the city burst into dance, while in Leeds the local amateur dramatics association, STAR, entertained passers by.

Exeter and Croydon also surprised watchers, while guests tucked into special cakes in all the regions to mark World Blood Donor Day. Back in Bath there was even a dedicated song from

Kingswood Choir to entertain donors and recipients.

As a result, we had a fantastic

to our call centre – amazing! This special week was just part of a much bigger challenge to cope with a summer of historic national events, extended bank holidays and the biggest sporting event in the world on our own doorstep.

Thanks to the hard work of donors, staff, celebrities and the general public, we hope to meet the challenge of keeping the blood flowing

start to National Blood Week - on Monday 11th June we had the highest number of contacts EVER

throughout one of the most memorable summers we have ever seen. ●



6

Building stocks over a busy summer

Jon Latham, assistant director of marketing and donor contact service says, "This year we have a unique situation and we need donors from across the country to help boost blood stocks to 30 per cent above usual levels by the start of the Olympic Games.

Donors of all blood groups are needed to help build stocks, but we need to increase levels of particular blood groups like O- and B- as there will be people from across the world visiting this summer. Additional appointments have been created and selected blood donor sessions have extended their opening hours to give donors more flexibility. People who haven't donated before and may not know their blood type are also encouraged to help with the national stock-build effort by making an appointment now to donate for the first time." ●



"Every day is touch and go"

Life for eight-year-old Henry Udueni is far from simple. His sickle cell anaemia means he needs regular transfusions to stay well, and for his family every day could bring a crisis

Henry Udueni was just four years old when he was diagnosed with sickle cell anaemia and he now relies on monthly blood transfusions to stay well. There is no cure for sickle cell anaemia, an inherited condition prevalent among black and minority ethnic people (BME). Sufferers have a much higher chance of a stroke and an average life expectancy of just 42.

Reduced risk

Since he began having transfusions, Henry's condition has improved. Dad Anthony says, "Before he received blood Henry was at a very high risk of having a stroke,

but since he's received blood, the brain scans have showed he's at a much reduced risk."

But the stress of having a child

with sickle cell anaemia never goes away, admits Anthony. He and his wife Margaret have two other children – four-year-old Jedediah, who does not have sickle cell disease, and one-year-old Joanna, who does have the disease.

Anthony says, "Every day is touch and go. One minute they can be fine, the next they've collapsed.



Henry with his father Anthony, brother Jedediah and baby sister Joanna

It's a very difficult condition to plan anything around, and on several occasions I have feared the worst. The disease can affect two people very differently and we are hoping it won't be too advanced in Joanna."

More BME donors

Anthony is very grateful to the blood donors who help keep Henry alive, and is joining us in our appeal for more BME donors to give regularly. People from the same ethnic backgrounds often share the same blood types, so recruiting more BME donors helps us to collect enough of each blood group to treat patients like Henry.



Anthony says, "Blood donors do a great thing for Henry – they have changed his life, really. My message to blood donors is that we're eternally grateful - the blood that you give directly adds value to Henry's life."

Promoting BME donation is an important part of our work, and we work alongside the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust (ACLT) which aims to recruit more BME blood donors. The ACLT are asking donors from the Black Communities to Donate 4 Daniel, in memory of ACLT figurehead Daniel De-Gale who sadly passed away in October 2008. ●

What is sickle cell anaemia?

Sickle cell anaemia is an inherited condition that involves an abnormality in haemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying protein found in red blood cells. It is the most common genetic condition in England, with an estimated 12,500 people living with the disorder.

Normal red blood cells bend and flex, and so travel around the body's blood vessels easily. When sickle cell haemoglobin gives up its oxygen to the body's tissues, it sticks together to form long rods inside the red blood cells.

This makes them hard and sickle-shaped - hence the name of the disorder – and less able to pass through small blood vessels. These small blood vessels then become blocked, preventing oxygen from getting through and causing severe pain and damage to organs.

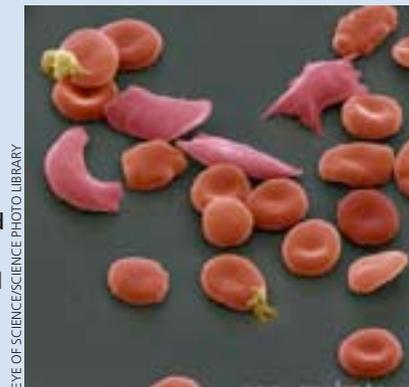
This sort of blockage in a sickle cell patient is known as a crisis. A crisis is more likely to happen

when other factors are involved, such as another illness, exhaustion, dehydration, or low oxygen levels caused by altitude. A sickle cell crisis can last anything from a few minutes to several months, but on average a crisis would usually last between five and seven days.

Sickle cells also die prematurely, leading to a shortage of red blood cells. This causes symptoms of anaemia, such as tiredness and breathlessness, which is why regular blood transfusions are vital for many sufferers.

The genetic mutation responsible for sickle cell anaemia first developed many hundreds or possibly thousands of years ago in Africa. Because of this,

the majority of people with sickle cell disease are of African or Caribbean descent, although it also affects those from Asia, the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. ●



Sickle cells (pink) contrast dramatically in shape to normal round red cells

EYE OF SCIENCE/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Donated skin brings new hope to leg ulcer patients

Donated skin tissue is being used in an entirely new treatment for leg ulcers, with amazing results. The skin is made into a new type of skin graft known as decellularised dermis (DCD) which is processed and supplied to hospitals by our Tissue Services department.

The production of DCD involves

“One of the first patients to be given the new graft was completely healed within ten weeks, and many others treated are showing good progress”

removing the donors’ cells from the skin, leaving a ‘decellularised’ tissue which will not be rejected when implanted into a patient. Traditional treatment for a severe ulcer involves grafting skin from another site on the patient’s body onto the ulcer, which is both painful and requires a second operation to remove the skin graft.

Patient assessment

A clinical evaluation set up with the University Hospital South Manchester (UHSM) is now assessing this new graft for the treatment of chronic, non-healing leg ulcers. DCD works by providing the wound with a ‘scaffold’ into

A new treatment for leg ulcers, made from donated skin at our laboratories, is showing huge promise



Left to right: Dr Akila Chandrasekar, Dr Richard Lomas, Jessie’s son David Townley, Ardeshir Bayat and Mo Baguneid from UHSM and Jessie at the front!

which the patient’s own cells grow, helping the ulcer to heal up properly.

Leg ulcers are unpleasant and painful and can make patients’ lives a misery. They can become severely infected, and even lead to a patient’s leg being amputated. The current evaluation involved 20 patients, all of whom suffer from chronic, long-term ulcers that have resisted traditional treatments. One of the first patients to be given the new graft was completely healed

within ten weeks, and many of the other patients treated are showing good progress.

UHSM’s Professor Mo Baguneid, who carried out the operations, believes that DCD could have applications for other vascular wounds. He says, “Conventional

treatment often includes compression bandaging and at times requires vascular bypass or keyhole techniques such as angioplasty (balloon stretch) and stents (artificial tubes) to improve the circulation. However, whilst these techniques are effective they can be slow to heal. We have demonstrated, using this new form of skin substitute, that we can make a difference in wounds that have become treatment resistant.”

This is the first time that DCD has been used to treat leg ulcers in the UK and in contrast to traditional treatments, patients do not have to be admitted to hospital or undergo an anaesthetic. DCD application takes no longer than an hour and is relatively painless.

The process

The process is quite technical. First, the patient’s wound is cleaned and any unhealthy tissue removed using a high pressure water spray, to leave a healthy base that will aid healing. This innovative method of wound preparation is relatively painless.

The DCD is then applied onto the

Jessie wants to dance!

A 92-year-old great grandmother from Manchester has become the first patient in the UK to be completely healed by a new form of treatment for leg ulcers in an hour-long operation. Jessie Townley has suffered from ulcers on her right leg for 20 years and no previous treatment has worked.

Jessie, who has four children, 12 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren, says the success of this operation has given her a new lease of life. “Anyone who has had leg ulcers as long as I have will know how rotten it can be. I have needed clean dressings twice a week and that has meant trips to hospital. I’ve been careful not to knock my leg as that can make things worse and over the years it has stopped me from doing things. When these lovely doctors and nurses asked me to try this new treatment I thought it might not work for me, but it could help younger folk. I am delighted with the results and I feel so grateful. I’ve said if only they could do something for my knees I could go out dancing!” ●

prepared wound bed. DCD comes as a 5x5cm sheet that is specially cut to fit the outline of the ulcer. Surface tension and a little skin glue is all that is used to keep the graft in place.

A special dressing is then placed over the graft, which then has all the air sucked out of it using a small pump. This creates a negative pressure over the wound, and sucks the patient’s blood and cells into the graft, to start the healing

process. After a week the dressing is removed and the leg is dressed in a conventional manner to continue the healing process. Patients are monitored each week to assess how the ulcer is healing.

Dr Richard Lomas of NHSBT says, “Decellularised dermis has great potential in the development of other patient therapies. We are currently looking at other applications for this graft, such as shoulder surgery and in the treatment of burns.” Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, adds, “Leg ulcers are very a painful and debilitating condition and can be difficult to treat. I am delighted that this further example of the NHS delivering remarkable innovation, supported by the Government’s on going support for research, is ultimately transformed into real benefits for patients.” ●

Did you know?

- It’s estimated that one in a hundred people develop ulcers at some point in their lives, and the cost to the NHS is around £1 billion a year.
- As many as 50 people can be helped from one organ and tissue donor.
- Skin is mainly used as a natural dressing, to treat people with serious burns. This can save lives by stopping infections as well as reducing scarring and pain.
- NHSBT Tissue Services is the UK’s largest multi tissue banking organisation.

“If someone I love needed an organ, I hope they'd get one.”

“No, I haven't joined the Organ Donor Register yet.”



If you believe in organ donation, prove it. Register now at organdonation.nhs.uk | 0300 123 23 23



Pass it on for National Transplant Week

We know that most families would agree to organ donation if they knew that it was their loved one's wish. In fact over 90 per cent of families will agree to donation if a loved one has joined the Organ Donor Register (ODR) AND has discussed their wishes. However,

If you have signed the Organ Donor Register, make sure you pass your wishes on to your family. That's the important message of National Transplant Week (9-15th July)

“It is important to both register and tell your family that you would like your organs to be donated after your death. This will help enormously in making them feel comfortable about giving consent”

this drops to around 40 per cent if people have not signed up to the register and have not told their family of their donation wishes.

The large difference in these figures shows how important it is both to register and tell your family that you would like your organs to be donated after your death. This will help enormously in making them feel comfortable



Visit the website to register and remember to tell your family

about allowing your organs to be donated.

Unfortunately, many people

believe that if they have signed the ODR then donation will automatically take place. But this is a myth. Families are of course encouraged to accept the deceased's wishes and it will be

Pass it On

NATIONAL
TRANSPLANT
WEEK 9-15
JULY 2012

work showcased in the lead up to National Transplant Week, July 9th – 15th. All the shortlisted films are available to view via a link on our campaign specific website www.transplantweek.co.uk

Get involved

If you want to find out more about our campaign or get involved, visit www.transplantweek.co.uk.

The site contains lots of helpful information as well as an electronic action pack which offers tools to

anyone wanting to support the cause of organ donation. The site also provides latest statistics, real life case studies of people who have been affected by organ donation, and news of local campaign activity taking place during National Transplant Week.

You can also catch up on the latest news and developments on National Transplant Week through our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/organdonationuk) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/nhsbt) sites. You can support us by re-tweeting our messages, and spreading the word to your friends to think about organ donation.

We would love to hear any of your transplant stories. The wider the message travels, the more hope there is for the 7,500 people waiting for a transplant to save or transform their lives. So if you have a story to share or if there is activity planned in your area for National Transplant Week, simply email us at campaigns@nhsbt.nhs.uk. ●

World donation experts meet

Back in March, world experts on donation and transplantation met to discuss advances in organ donation, share experience and practice and identify how we could reach our target of a 50 per cent increase in deceased organ donation by 2013.

Also on the agenda were issues such as how to encourage more families to agree to donation and how more donations could be made from hospital emergency departments.

Experts from Canada and Spain, which has the highest rate of organ donation in the world, shared their international experiences of increasing rates of consent to organ donation.

At the end of the two day event, a panel of

religious leaders representing Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism and Sikhism discussed the social, cultural and ethnic influences on deceased donation, which is donation after death, in the UK. They also helped us to launch our new religious belief leaflets, which are available to download from www.organdonation.nhs.uk.

Sally Johnson, director of Organ Donation and Transplantation says, "This is the first time that representatives from all the major religions have met to discuss organ donation. It is hoped this event will help develop links between faith leaders and NHSBT and assist in dispelling any myths and concerns that people in these communities may have." ●

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

Dramatic birth turns dad into a donor

I donated as regularly as I could from my teens and tried to encourage David, my husband, to come along to donate, but the very thought made him feel ill.



Then last year, due to complications in pregnancy, I gave birth to our twins eight weeks early. Our sons and I both received blood transfusions (thank you!) and I am no longer able to donate. However, David has now donated several times and will continue to do so, in thanks for our life changing transfusions. I wanted to write in to say, well done David, we are very proud of you!

LYNDSAY CECIL, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: *Thank you for sharing your story with us. Well done to David for overcoming his fear and becoming a donor.*

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 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5BG or email thedonor@nhsbt.nhs.uk

An unexpected donation

Some years ago I was on holiday in Nepal and a young woman came to my hotel asking if anyone was blood group O Rh positive. I said I was and volunteered to give a donation, along with my husband and a friend.

I have to confess that when we arrived at the hospital I was thinking of ways to retract my offer. The patients were either lying on bare beds or on the floor. Any bedding they had was dirty and I was worried about hygiene.

I need not have worried. We were sent with a guide to another

part of Kathmandu (Nepal's capital), to a Red Cross centre, where my blood was taken. The staff there also took donations from my husband and friend. There was no voluntary donation service in Nepal back then.

My blood was needed for a child who'd had a very bad accident and the family, who had travelled for many miles, had nobody they could ask to donate for him. The following day we visited the little boy in hospital and were told he was likely to make a good recovery. The hospital had little or no medical supplies, so before returning home we left them our meagre travel medical kits for which they were very grateful.

MARION PARKIN, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: *It is amazing that you have seen first hand how blood donations save lives. Well done to you all for helping the little boy.*

A 75th celebration to remember

I have recently reached and surpassed my 75th donation, and I just wanted to say what a fabulous time my wife and I had at the awards ceremony for longstanding donors, held in Bexleyheath last November. The venue and food were great, and everything was superbly organised down to the tiniest detail. The presentations were fun, emotional and informative and I believe everyone there had a really good time. I would thoroughly recommend other donors who reach their 75th to go to their local ceremony when they are invited.

JEREMY KIRK, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: *Thank you for your kind words. We are glad you enjoyed the ceremony; we also appreciate the chance to meet and thank so many wonderful donors like you who spend a lifetime helping others.*

Honey helps out

I don't know if you would be interested in hearing about my lovely retired racing greyhound called Honey. We both gave blood in November - I donated at my local session and Honey donated for the Pet Blood Bank at Greyhound Lifeline (it was her second time) and her blood helped up to four critically injured dogs.

TRISH ECKETT, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: What a heart-warming story. It's lovely to hear that your dog is helping to save the lives of other greyhounds.

Well done to you both.

Happy to go on giving

I have been donating blood since 1985 and am delighted to report that having reached 200 whole blood and platelet donations I shall carry on until somebody tells me not to - and then I shall argue with them about it!!

Having completed about 30 or so whole blood donations I was invited to try out for platelet donation and am now make a monthly pilgrimage up to the Donor Suite in Southampton as a platelet donor.

I would like to send grateful thanks to the very professional team in Southampton and also to my employers, Toll Global Forwarding Group, who allow me the time off to make these very important donations.

CHRIS COX, BY EMAIL

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: Well done Chris on reaching this milestone and thank you for your commitment to helping save lives. It's great that your employer allows you the time to donate, so well done to them. ●

IS IT TRUE THAT...

We reply to some of your questions about donating

Q I understand that there was a film competition for National Transplant Week? Can I still view the films? If so, where?

A The closing date to vote for your favourite film in the competition was June 29th. However, you can still view the films at www.youtube.com/transplantweek so please have a look and choose your favourite film.

Q I receive my Donor magazine by email and I book my appointments online and get confirmation by email. Why can I not get my Invitation letter sent by email?

A Unfortunately, we are currently unable to make our Donor Health Check questionnaire available online. The DHC questionnaires are unique and specific to individual donors, as they hold personal details and a record of the last sessions they attended. Before we allow these to be generated online, we need to ensure all the confidential information can be protected.

Please be assured we are working towards making DHC questionnaires available online, as we do appreciate this will save time and money.

Q I was really pleased to be given a pen as an award for my 50th donation, and I have been using it ever since. I now need a refill, can you suggest where I can find one.

A I'm afraid that refills for these pens are not available in shops in this country. However, we do hold stock of refills, so if you email us at thedonor@nhsbt.co.uk, we will send you one for your pen.

Q Whom should I contact if I can't attend my blood donor session?

A If you can't attend a blood donor session where you have booked an appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so that your appointment can be offered to someone else. You can contact the Donor Helpline on 0300 123 23 23. Please do not contact The Donor magazine for this purpose.

Q Is any use made of the white blood cells removed from blood donations? I remember reading that in a healthy individual the white blood cells are responsible for destroying cancerous body cells.

A If this is correct, have any trials been made of giving cancer patients healthy white cell donations between the usual courses of radiotherapy and chemotherapy?

A In some cases, patients with cancer can be transplanted with peripheral blood stem cells that have been donated by apheresis. These contain some white blood cell precursors that are useful for helping to fight the cancer.

In certain cases lymphocytes (white blood cells) can also be donated to help treat cancer. However, it is really important that the matching and dose of these cells is correct so, for this reason, we do not collect or use the white blood cells that we routinely filter from whole blood donations. ●



A great team

Blind donor Barrie Hopcroft from Walworth is a regular face at the blood donor session at the Hop Exchange in South London. Although Barrie had been donating here for several years, he had to stop last year when Bailey, his trusted guide dog of many years who had accompanied him from the train station to the session, sadly died.

Fortunately, new help arrived in the form of three-year-old Marley – a golden labrador retriever who is now learning Barrie's route from London Bridge station to the session on Southwark Street. Barrie says, "Marley needs to be shown the route three times before he can guide me unaided. I talked to the staff on session about this and donor carer supervisor Bobbie Wickenden offered to act as an escort." ●

Unlocking blood secrets

How our research and development programme is building a brighter future for donation

We have a long history at NHSBT of groundbreaking research into areas such as blood components, tissues, stem cells and organ donation and transplantation. All are potentially life-saving and our research and development (R&D) programme is at the forefront of this work.

Currently, four important programmes of research are being funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and coordinated by our scientists in collaboration with other researchers.

Improving stem cell transplant outcomes

One of our key roles is providing blood stem cells to treat patients with severe blood disorders. Stem cell transplants are often successful, but some fail for a variety of reasons. There may not be enough blood stem cells in the transplant, or stem cells may not graft themselves onto the patient's bone marrow, or the disease can reappear. All these lead to poor survival rates.

Professor Suzanne Watt is leading a programme to improve outcomes for stem cell transplant patients. She says, "Our first approach is to understand the basic

biology of how normal blood stem cells reach the bone marrow and engraft after they are transplanted, and to adapt these to clinical practice.

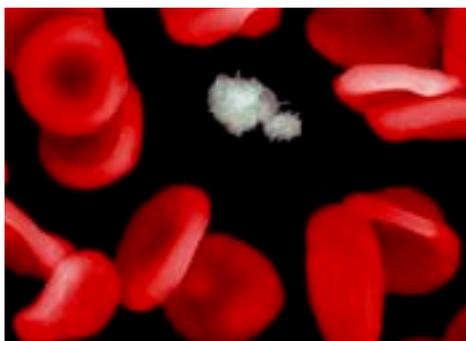
The second aim is to identify and target specific populations of cancer stem cells to prevent their reappearance and relapse. Thirdly, we will use the body's own defence systems to reduce the complications when stem cells that aren't an absolute match are transplanted." If the programme succeeds it will lead to better survival rates for patients.

21st century genetics

Our understanding of the human



Coloured scanning electron micrograph (SEM) of a stem cell



Coloured scanning electron micrograph (SEM) of human erythrocytes (red blood cells, red) and a platelet

genome, the so-called code of life, has increased dramatically over the past ten years.

A programme of research being led by Professor Willem Ouwehand in Cambridge University has been using this information to find the genes that control the basic biology of platelets, which are a crucial component of our work.

His team has discovered genes that are responsible for differences in the platelet count, volume and function in healthy people, including thousands of blood donors. They have also solved the genetic basis of one important but rare platelet bleeding disorder.

Last year, following years of laboratory-based experiments, the

team reported two remarkable discoveries. They identified 68 regions in the human genome that are key controllers of platelet formation, and they discovered the gene that causes Grey Platelet Syndrome, an inherited platelet bleeding disorder.

Professor Ouwehand says, "These discoveries will eventually lead to better care of patients in the NHS and beyond. They will propel forward research on how to generate platelets for clinical use in the laboratory from stem cells. The discovery of genes underlying bleeding disorders will lead to better and affordable DNA-based tests to diagnose these rare conditions."

Individualising blood collection

In a programme directed by Professor David Roberts, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge's Institute of Public Health, we are examining whether both donor care and blood collection efficiency can be improved by studying different intervals between donations.

Professor Roberts says, "We will soon begin to test different donation intervals in 50,000 blood donors to see what intervals give the best yield of blood in different groups of donors. We also aim to reduce deferral of donors due to low haemoglobin levels."

This study is the first of its kind and will provide us with the data we need to predict haemoglobin levels in blood donors. The study also aims to determine any impact of low haemoglobin levels on the health of donors.

"His team has discovered genes that are responsible for differences in the platelet count, volume and function in healthy people, including thousands of blood donors"

Professor Roberts adds, "We are also looking at the basic biology of red cells with the aim of producing red cells in the laboratory. Stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells can be used to produce red blood cells in the laboratory and we are using these techniques to study red cell production in donors and patients."

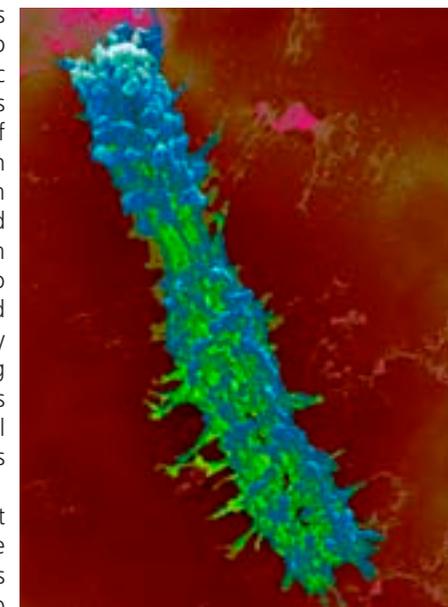
This important work will enable Professor Roberts and colleagues to better understand the mechanisms of diseases such as Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS) which can cause severe anaemia.

A milestone in gene therapy

Adults with haemophilia B may no longer need to rely on injections with clotting factor to prevent bleeds, thanks to a study of gene

therapy carried out at the University College London (UCL), funded in part by us.

Haemophilia B is caused by a deficiency in the protein Factor IX that is essential to blood clotting. An inherited mistake in the Factor IX gene causes the deficiency and, in a landmark study, Dr Amit Nathwani and his team have corrected this in a small number of patients. In the study, spontaneous bleeding was prevented in four patients by a single gene-therapy treatment.



An SEM of a human chromosome

Dr Nathwani says, "This is a potentially life-changing treatment for patients with this disease and an important milestone for the field of gene therapy. It could have ramifications for the treatment of haemophilia A, other protein and liver disorders and chronic diseases such as cystic fibrosis." ●

How Huw beat the odds

Born premature and very poorly, baby Huw needed months of specialist medical care and many blood transfusions. Today he's a lively six-year-old and mum Joanne has become a blood donor herself

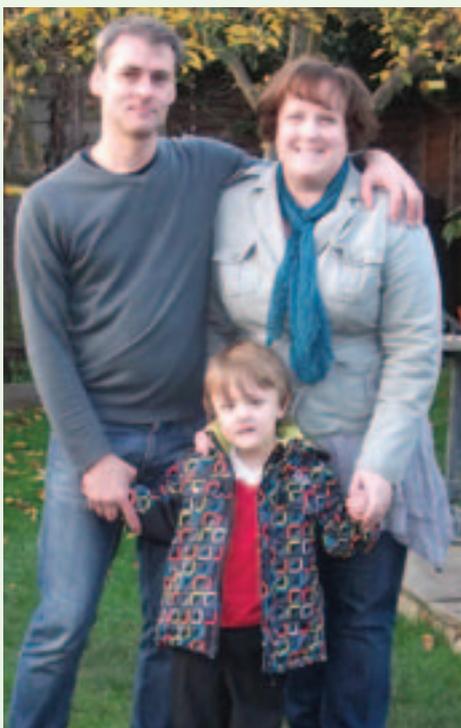
Joanne Weston and her husband Nick, from Stourbridge, West Midlands, have a lot to thank blood donors for. In fact, Joanne has chosen to show her gratitude by becoming a blood donor herself.

The story begins back in 2006 when Joanne was expecting her first child. The pregnancy was going to plan until August when baby Huw was born after only 26 weeks and weighing just 2lbs 2oz – no more than a kilogram.

"The following months were really tough," recalls Joanne. "Huw was poorly when he was born and had a lot of health problems including a collapsed lung and a brain haemorrhage. I was shocked by everything at the time and signed the consent form when I had to."

Huw had to spend five months in the neonatal unit of Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley, and about three months were spent in the intensive care unit.

He was also treated at



that they just became 'normal'. He was so poorly that if he had an infection then he had to have transfusions. These transfusions were life-savers. They often brought Huw back from the brink and saved him from the very dangerous effects of the many infections he contracted due to having no immune system.

"It wasn't until Huw was on the road to recovery that Nick and I had a chance to reflect on how staff had helped to save his life and how, if people hadn't donated blood, it wouldn't have been possible to save Huw," says Joanne.

Baby Huw was eventually discharged

Birmingham Children's Hospital where he underwent surgery to close an open duct in his heart.

Back from the brink

Tiny Huw needed so many blood transfusions as part of his treatment that Joanne says she lost count of them. "He received plasma, platelets and red cells – so many

but had to be readmitted to the paediatric intensive care unit three more times and receive yet more transfusions as part of his treatment. In total he spent two years in hospital.

As soon as home life started to settle, Joanne and two other local women set up a support group for families with sick or premature



Nick, Joanne and Huw are very grateful to donors for helping save Huw's life

babies. The Dudley Borough Bliss Family Group meets once a month and arranges events and activities for parents, carers and children ranging from newborn to school age. When Huw was three Joanne began to give blood, but has now had to stop as she is expecting a brother or sister for Huw very soon.

Rollercoaster ride

Joanne says, "Huw's time in hospital was like a rollercoaster ride with one step forward and two steps back. We are lucky in the UK to have access to donated blood.

"Every birthday we send cards and thanks to the staff who looked after Huw. But we don't have the same opportunities to thank blood donors"

It could have been a very different story if we lived elsewhere in the world and had to ask someone to donate blood."

Over the past six years Huw's health has continued to improve

and medically he is doing well now. He has grown into a lively and boisterous little boy and started school last September. He hasn't had to go to hospital for over a year.

Joanne says she will always be thankful for the help Huw received. "Every birthday we send cards and thanks to the staff who looked after Huw. But we don't have the same opportunities to thank blood donors. We attended an NHSBT donor award ceremony in 2011 and it was very nice to be able to thank donors and show them how their blood is used. We are so grateful to all the donors who helped to save our son's life." ●

“It’s important we have the blood we need, it saves lives”



Dr Rekha Anand is a consultant in transfusion medicine at our blood centre in Birmingham. She talks about her unique role calling up donors with rare blood types and ensuring patients receive the specialised treatment they need

Q What does your job involve?

A My time is divided between working with donors and working with the region’s Red Cell Immunohaematology departments (RCI). I am involved in calling up our rare blood donors, but also oversee the investigations on patients who need these rare types of blood. I act as a link between diagnostics and donor services. We invite people who have a rare blood group to enrol on our rare donor panel and they are

contacted when a particular blood group is needed for a patient.

Q How did you come into the role?

A I am a trained haematologist from India. When I came to the UK I found the transfusion world very interesting so decided to concentrate on it. It has proved to be a fascinating topic.

Q What is a typical day like?

A There is a lot of work involved and it varies day to day. I deal with calls and letters from donors

Dr Rekha says rare blood donors can be called in at short notice to help a specific patient

on many subjects and also counsel donors with infections. After 15 years, I know many of our donors very well and have an excellent relationship with them. I am also particularly interested in the area of BME (black and minority ethnic) donors and patients, being from an ethnic minority myself.

I deal with enquiries from the Red Cell Immunohaematology departments and provide clinical advice to staff. I also help to look after stocks in our National Frozen Blood Bank. In addition, I teach haematology registrars and have an advisory role on various groups and committees.

“The donors are amazing, we are so grateful to them. They can be called in at short notice for a specific patient”

Q What is the National Frozen Blood Bank (NFBB)?

A The bank is at our Liverpool centre. In essence it is a big fridge that we use to freeze blood of specific types for patients with rare blood groups or multiple antibodies.

We keep rare blood units frozen in case of emergencies, but they are especially used for sickle cell patients who are from BME backgrounds and often need numerous blood transfusions. We always try and use fresh supplies

when available. If we can call a donor in we will, but if there isn’t time we use our frozen stocks.

Q Why are rare blood and the NFBB so important?

A It’s important we have the blood we need, for emergencies or planned treatment – it saves lives. The donors are amazing, we are so grateful to them. They can be called in at short notice

for a specific patient. For some particularly rare blood groups we might only have a handful of donors available.

Q How often is rare blood used?

A It isn’t every day but it is used fairly regularly so we have to balance fresh donations and

frozen stock to make sure we have enough when it’s needed.

Q What happens if you can’t get a donation and don’t have stock?

A If necessary we can get blood from other countries. We also provide blood to other blood



services to help patients here or abroad who need a specific rare blood type.

Q What is the best part of your job?

A The best thing is seeing the donation from when it’s collected to when it is issued to help a patient. I don’t deal with patients directly, but I know what a difference the donation makes. For example in antenatal and sickle cell cases I get to see both sides of the transfusion process, the donor side and the recipient side, which is quite a unique position.

Q Is there anything you don’t like about the job?

A Sometimes I run out of time; there’s lots to do so it can be hard, but it’s very rewarding – it’s a lovely role. ●

All about the National Frozen Blood Bank

- It currently has around 700 donations, covering many rare blood types
- Red cells are stored at -80°C giving the units a shelf life of ten years
- Cells are processed using a system which gives a three-day shelf life once they have been thawed out
- If we don’t have a current donor, or only one, we consider keeping frozen units for more than ten years
- Our approach enables us to meet most demands for rare types from fresh stocks or the NFBB
- Nearly 2 million red cell donations are issued a year, with only around 150 these being frozen/thawed donations.



Our doctor, Sue Barnes, answers questions about self deferral

When to self defer

Q How often can I donate?

Men can give blood every 12 weeks or three months, women can give blood every 16 weeks or four months. The reason for the difference is that women do not have the same levels of stored iron as men. This means if women donate more than once every four months they could be at risk of anaemia.

Q If I'm feeling unwell, but I don't think it's anything serious, is it ok to donate?

If you have a cold, chesty cough, sore throat or active cold sore, you cannot donate. Once feeling well and recovering you may donate. However, if you have had a high temperature or influenza you must wait two weeks after you are fully fit before you donate.

Q Can I give blood if I'm on antibiotics?

No. If you're currently taking antibiotics or have finished a course within the previous week, you'll need to wait until a week has past from your last dose of medication before donating. Remember, even if it's been a week since you finished the course of antibiotics, you must be feeling well and it should be at least two weeks from having a high temperature if you had one.

Q I've travelled to a country where West Nile Virus may be an issue. Can I donate?

Yes. This year there has been a change to the West Nile Virus guideline; donors are no longer asked to wait four weeks from their return from a West Nile Virus area. If you have visited between May

1st and November 30th you may attend a blood donor session as long as you have not been diagnosed with West Nile Virus (as mentioned in the news pages) and have not been unwell whilst abroad or since your return. Please mention your visit to the staff at the session. If you have been unwell or diagnosed with West Nile Virus then please call us on 0300 123 23 23.

Q What about areas where malaria is prevalent?

You should wait six months before giving blood if you've been to a malarial area. Please note, if you've had malaria or an undiagnosed illness following travel abroad, you may not be able to give blood.

Q If I am pregnant, do I need to wait until I've given birth before I can donate?

You cannot donate whilst pregnant or for six months after the birth. After this time, it is fine to donate.

Q Can I donate if I've got a tattoo or semi-permanent make up?

If you've had a tattoo, semi-permanent make up or any cosmetic treatment that involves skin piercing in the previous four months, you can't donate.

Q I know there are lots of reasons why it is not possible to donate so what can I do if I'm not sure and I'm thinking of self deferring?

If you're ever unsure, just call 0300 123 23 23 for advice. If it turns out that you can't donate at that time, the chances are you will be able to at a later date. ●

Q When might it not be safe for me to donate?

Most people can give blood all of the time. However, there are specific times when you should not give blood, for example when you don't feel well. If you're in any doubt, you can call the Donor Helpline on 0300 123 23 23 for advice. Here we've answered some of the most common questions which may help you to decide if and when you should self defer and not give blood for a while.

Q I'm confused about the new weight rules regarding women under the age of 20. When can they donate?

The general rules on weight still apply to everyone – anyone who gives blood must be at least 50kg (7st 12lbs). However, women under the age of 20 who weigh under 65kg (10st 3lbs) and are below 168cm (5 feet 6 inches) tall need to have their blood volume checked. If it is not high enough, they will have to wait until they are 20 before they can give blood.

Q Is it dangerous if my blood volume is too low to give blood?

No. In your normal everyday life this is fine. And as long as you weigh 50kg (7st 12lbs) or more, you can give blood when you turn 20.

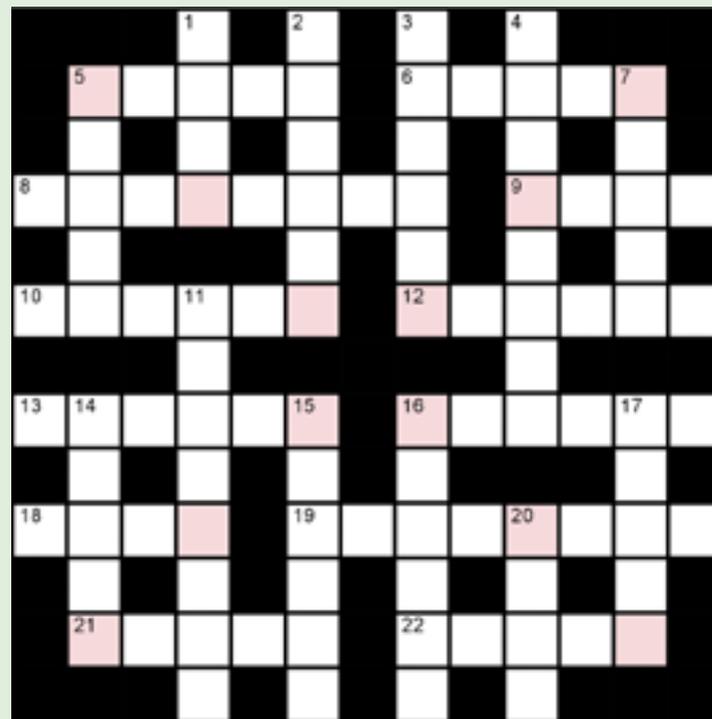
Complete the crossword. The letters in the diagonally marked squares spell out the name of a famous blood donor. Send the name on a postcard or in a letter together with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Crossword Competition, The Donor, NHSBT, Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5BG. You could win an "Amazing" NHSBT prize. Answers and the winner's name will be in the next issue. All entries must be received by 31st August 2012.

ACROSS

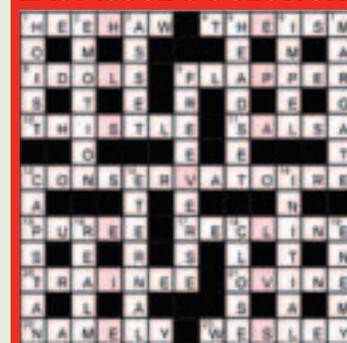
- 5 Oddball in the pack (5)
- 6 Military hat (5)
- 8 One behind another (2,6)
- 9 Baby's bread (4)
- 10 Tall, thin and awkward (6)
- 12 Disappear (6)
- 13 Home of St Francis (6)
- 16 Instrument for sewing (6)
- 18 Lord (4)
- 19 Make smaller (8)
- 21 English philosopher (5)
- 22 Scope (5)

DOWN

- 1 Sea bird (4)
- 2 Man _____, personal assistant (6)
- 3 SF writer (6)
- 4 _____ of Arabia, soldier (8)
- 5 Group seizing power (5)
- 7 Watering hole (5)
- 11 Bad traffic jam (8)
- 14 Slow mover (5)
- 15 Certainly (6)
- 16 Drink of the gods (6)
- 17 Hungarian composer (5)
- 20 Mediterranean island (4)



LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTION



WE HAVE A WINNER!

Congratulations to Ms A E Armstrong, from Cannock, Staffordshire, who correctly answered last issue's crossword.

The correct answer was: **HELP SAVE LIVES**

Become a member of



Blood and Transplant

and help build blood stocks by 30% in time for the Olympics



To find out more and book an appointment please visit blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23

INFORMATION

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

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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. M06

