



**NHS**

**Blackpool Teaching  
Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Health Matters

Keeping you informed about the news and views of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals



## The joys of Christmas

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A husband and wife are celebrating a Christmas they thought they would not see together thanks to the skills of the Lancashire Cardiac Centre and a special donation from our Blue Skies charity.

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# Hospitals getting into the Christmas spirit



THE A&E Volunteers evening celebration was held at the New Road Inn, Blackpool. It was organised by the hospital's Emergency Department housekeeper, Wendy Hampshire, who kindly paid for the DJ. The A&E staff had a collection and raised £200 to help pay for the event. Everyone had a fabulous time eating, drinking, dancing and singing. It was a great way to show our thanks to our wonderful A&E volunteer team.

WREA Green twins, Charlie and Daisy, along with their mum, Laura Walsh, have donated a beautiful Christmas tree to the Children's Ward.

"It is a thank you for all the care we have received since the twins were born," explained Laura. "Charlie has complex medical issues and has to come into hospital regularly.

"The staff are all so kind and caring they make sure the children love being here and feel part of the hospital family."

Play specialist, Gemma Probin, said the gift was wonderful and made the playroom on the Children's Ward feel fun and festive for the patients.



# School bands bring festive cheer to Vic



Ansdell Primary



Park School



Park School

THE Main Entrance at Blackpool Victoria Hospital has been filled with the sound of carols as schools from across the Fylde Coast have brought their bands and choirs to entertain patients, visitors and staff.

The Trust would like to thank all the schools; St Nicholas' CE, Ansdell Primary, Park School, St Mary's RC, Baines CE and St Kentigerns RC for bringing Christmas cheer to us all.



Baines Endowed School



St Mary's RC



# All the fun of the festive fair

## CLIFTON HOSPITAL



## BLACKPOOL VICTORIA



BLACKPOOL Teaching Hospitals have been holding their festive fairs to raise money and spirits at Christmas.

At Clifton Hospital, staff, volunteers and supporters made the hospital a winter wonderland of stalls, games, raffle and tombolas and many of the local community turned up to support and £2000 was raised to support patient care.

The Vic also went festive with medical students dressing up to visit the Children's Ward and a myriad of festive stalls raising money for Blue Skies in the Education Centre.



# Service and ceremony in the Main Entrance



THE Trust's Tree of Lights event at Blackpool Victoria Hospital gave people a chance to celebrate and remember loved ones.

This year's service was a comforting selection of poems and readings with some Christmas music and carols all beautifully sung by Poulton People's Choir.



BLACKPOOL Victoria Hospital has revealed its annual Christmas display with a fun event performed in front of hundreds of staff, patients and visitors.

Taking inspiration from the Polar Express film, the station master (Volunteer, Denys Barber) declared the platform open before the crowd sang 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town' to reveal Santa (Paul Tilling) greeting the crowd and switching on the Christmas tree lights.



The spectacular signage was donated by Signs Express and Barton Grange Garden Centre kindly provided the Christmas trees and decorations with support from builders, JE Harrison.

Local DJ Kev provided the Christmas songs to get everyone in the festive spirit. Costa also provided free Christmas samples for the duration of the event. You can see the display in the main entrance of Blackpool Victoria Hospital until January.





# Players spread festive cheer



EYES lit up with joy as Santa, Bloomfield Bear and Blackpool Football Club players visited children at Victoria Hospital.

The players spent a few hours on the Children's Ward, Assessment Unit and Neonatal department handing out gifts and bringing Christmas cheer to children.



HARRY the Health Elf has been helping show young people how to stay healthy this Christmas.

The Fylde Coast clinical commissioning groups (CCG) enlisted the help of Santa's own health advisor to teach young people and their families how to stay well in the winter. Unlike his elf on a shelf cousins, who are notoriously naughty, Harry was seen having his flu jab, eating healthy hot meals, being active, looking after sick friends and lots of other key winter behaviours.

Schools across the Fylde Coast shared Harry's adventures so pupils could learn how to stay safe and well.

Dr Neil Hartley-Smith, Clinical Director for the Fylde Coast CCGs, said: "If we can teach children how to look after themselves and what to do if they do feel unwell we can hopefully spread that message to their parents too."



## Staff donate to help the homeless



Mel Young and Danielle Tennant from Ward 24

WARD 24 at Blackpool Victoria Hospital are collecting items for Blackpool Food Bank to support the homeless during the Christmas period.

The idea came from Ward Manager, Helen Taylor, who wanted to try out a different idea with her team.

A Ward Assistant, Mel Young said: "All the staff have been bringing in food, toiletries, sanitary products, pet food and many items into the ward for us to do a collection.

"We normally do a secret Santa

present idea in our team but decided to give back to our community rather than buy presents for each other.

"We want to help people who will be struggling over Christmas and we have all pulled together as a team to bring in bits from our own homes.

"It costs so little but can make a big difference to those who need what we are collecting.

"Christmas can be such a different time for families, the homeless and people who are lonely so we are doing our best to help our community."

BLACKPOOL Victoria Hospital is pulling out all the stops to make Christmas a special time for patients and families having to spend the festive period in hospital.

Gemma Smith, a ward manager at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, said: "We wanted to do something special for our caring for the older person wards as we feel they can get forgotten about.

"I'd hate for people to get very little if they are in hospital, so we decided to set up a stocking appeal on some of the wards.

"We were delighted to receive donations from local businesses which we put towards our presents and we have made stockings full of toiletries, puzzle books, chocolates and reading books.

"The staff from Ward 26 gave up their own time to wrap presents and get everything ready for Christmas morning. This shows how much our staff care about looking after our patients.

"Our wards are expected to be full on Christmas Day so we know all our patients will have lovely gifts to open with their relatives which makes

## Bringing Christmas to hospital's wards



Gemma Smith with Ellie Copp and Cara Addey

such a difference to the experience they will have during the festive period.

"We know the last place our patients want to be over Christmas is in hospital, but what we can do is to make their experience the best it can be by just adding some Christmas joy."

# My miracle Christmas: A message of hope



GEORGE Thompson is living proof that miracles do happen. Just five months ago a devastated George sat with his wife Jean in the hospital café at Blackpool Victoria Hospital composing a tragic farewell message to his beloved family and friends.

After years of debilitating lung problems, George's heart was failing and he was rushed into hospital, but was not fit enough to undergo a life-saving heart bypass. His condition was so poor he was told he would not withstand a general anaesthetic.

Two of his arteries were totally blocked and his heart was functioning at about 20 per cent. He only had one functioning lung and he doubted he would see Christmas.

"I thought I was going to die," George, 67 from Preston, explained. "Jean and I compiled a text to our family to say there was nothing the medics could do for me and I was being discharged on medication. My heart was not strong enough to survive a heart by-pass."

"Our son, Leighton, and his wife, Laura, had just had their beautiful baby, Georgina, and all I could do when I saw her was cry. I thought that just as Georgina had come into the world I was going to go out. My lungs were shot, my heart was shot, there was no hope for me," George added.

But then a miracle happened. The hospital's charity, Blue Skies Hospitals Fund, had just funded nine, single-use, Impella Heart Pumps which can keep the blood flowing in the heart while stents are being inserted. This device meant the operation could go ahead without general anaesthetic. For patients like George, it can mean the difference between life and death.

The day after George and Jean compiled their heart breaking message, Consultant Cardiologist, Dr Billal Patel, went to see him to tell him the Lancashire Cardiac Centre had just received the Impella pumps which could allow them to insert the stents needed open up George's arteries.

"I must admit at first I thought he was a nutcase," George admitted. "I had been so depressed it was hard to process the information Dr Patel had given me. Having thought I had no hope of a future this was the news I wanted."

George underwent a five-hour operation to have nine stents fitted and now, five months on, his heart is fully recovered. "I will be forever grateful to the medical team at Blackpool and Blue Skies charity who gave me my life back."

Consultant Cardiologist, Dr Andrew Wiper said: "Mr Thompson had a very poor prognosis if his coronary disease was left untreated. Through the use of the Impella heart pump and the expertise of the Lancashire Cardiac Centre, he now has a very bright future'.

# Working together for our Fylde cancer unit



Representatives from Blue Skies, Rosemere and Macmillan celebrate the refurbishment of the Windmill Unit

CANCER patients from across the Fylde coast are benefiting from the refurbishment of a busy unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

The cancer and haematology outpatients department at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, known as the Windmill Unit, has been refurbished with charity Rosemere Cancer Foundation and the Trust's own Blue Skies Hospitals Fund sharing the £27,539 bill for its modernisation.

The look and feel of the unit, which was built in 2003, has been decorated and transformed with new flooring and furniture with the plans co-designed and approved by the Fylde Coast Patient Cancer Care Involvement Group.

Jackie Brunton, Lead for Cancer at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The Windmill Unit is a dedicated outpatient department for patients under the care of Haematology or Oncology.

It also provides psychology clinics, health and wellbeing and patient education events,

complementary therapies and a patient support group meeting venue.

"The unit was in need of modernisation. Its décor and facilities were dated and not representative of the quality service and professional appearance we wanted to present to our patients, carers and families. The refurbishment has created a modern facility providing a relaxing and comfortable environment to improve patient experience and boost the morale of staff."

Rosemere Cancer Foundation works to bring world class cancer treatments and services to cancer patients throughout Lancashire and South Cumbria being treated at Rosemere Cancer Centre, the region's specialist cancer treatment centre at the Royal Preston Hospital, and at another eight local hospital cancer units across the two counties of which Blackpool Victoria Hospital is one.

It does this by funding cutting edge equipment, research, training and other services that would otherwise be beyond limited NHS resources.