

## REPORT OF 3rd SUCCESSFUL HEALTH MELA IN LEYLAND Saturday 13th September 2014

### A summary ...

In close cooperation with the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing, the Rotary Club of Leyland ran its third Health Mela on Saturday 13th September 2014. The event took place at the Civic Centre in Leyland.

Popularly known as a "Health MOT", members of the public and their friends and families were invited to a free health check.

Many visitors also took the opportunity to seek one-to-one confidential professional advice including on dental health.

Of the 400 or so visitors, 96 chose to have the full MOT. All these were given one-to-one counselling. As a result, 40% were referred to their GP for further investigation.

The Mela was opened by Professor John Ashton, President of UK Faculty of Public Health who praised the concept of the Health Mela and strongly suggested that events such as these are vital to keep the increasing number of elderly within the community.

### Introduction and background to the Health Mela/Fair

In the Indian sub-continent the Mela is a festive get together involving whole villages or wider areas. It has long had a role in promoting community well-being.

This is a model that found traction in the North of England some twelve years



ago under the leadership of Professor Romesh Gupta and Ishwer Tailor, President of the Preston Gujarat Hindu Society. They planned an event to promote healthy living which used the Mela format to mobilise the community to take an active and enjoyable part in securing its own health and well-being. The Mela's immediate success provided a solid foundation for what was to become a popular, multi-cultural, annual fixture in Preston.

With support from the Preston Steering Group, similar events have been organised in venues as far apart as Chorley, Blackpool, Fleetwood, Bolton, Bradford, London and Cardiff and interest in the objectives of the Health Mela movement continues to grow.

The involvement of members of Rotary International raises the exciting prospect that this organisation might act as a conductor, transmitting the ideals of the Health Mela throughout the Northwest and beyond.

This year health checks were managed by the Health Olympics Team from the University of Manchester partnered with

the Blood Drop Team from Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, conducted tests for cholesterol, blood glucose levels, height, weight and body mass index. In addition, more than 50 stalls provided a wealth of information on all aspects of health and wellbeing, traditional and alternative.

Also helping to open the Mela was Rtn. Roger Mason, District 1190 Governor who expressed his wish to encourage the development of similar Health Melas in the whole of Lancashire and Cumbria.

Supporting the event was Cllr. Graham Walton Mayor of South Ribble, Kevin Walsh immediate past District Governor, officers of many other Rotary clubs, Chris Catherall Head Teacher of the Academy @Worden together with other local and public and health leaders.

The Health Mela movement is supported by NHS Trusts and local authorities, universities, the Gujarat Hindu Society and health-related organisations.

### The venue

The Health Mela was held on Saturday, 13th September 2014, in Leyland Civic Centre by courtesy of South Ribble Borough Council.

The organisers record their gratitude to the Mayor Cllr. Graham Walton and his staff for allowing us to utilise their excellent facilities.

The Civic Centre provided space for around 50 exhibitors together with areas





to accommodate the wide range of health checks detailed below. Appropriate catering facilities allowed for the provision of refreshments to visitors and exhibitors.

The venue is fortunate to have extensive free car-parking facilities adjacent to the site.

## Opening ceremony and theme

The opening ceremony was performed by the Chief Guest, Professor John Ashton, President of UK Faculty of Public Health.

The overall theme of the event was "Community Health and Well-being". Within this theme the event had a plan to focus on the extensive range of health checks and counselling opportunities which were on offer. These are detailed later in the report.

## NFW Fellowship Awards

At the 2014 Leyland Health Mela fellowships were given to the following:

**Derek Ormerod** Communication, Publicity Officer for NFW.

**Khushal Kumar** Reiki Grand Master, Lead of Complimentary Therapy.

**Ken Ainscough** Rotary Member and Ambassador for Worden Academy School.

**James Humphries** Health Olympics Medical Student.



Amelia accepting the trophy on behalf of James Humphries



## Acknowledgement of support received in planning and staging the event

Partnership is at the heart of the Health Mela concept. The Rotary Club of Leyland and NFW gratefully acknowledge the substantial assistance in planning and resourcing the event which was provided by the organisations listed herein.

## Publicity

As this was the third event of its kind to take place in South Ribble, effective publicity was seen to be very important to secure its success. An extensive campaign was conducted in the weeks preceding the event. This included:

A full page colour advert in the Leyland Leader, an A5 colour booklet delivered to 12,000 homes across Leyland District. The flyers were distributed at the Leyland festival earlier. A door to door leaflet drop conducted by members of the Rotary Club of Leyland. Banner advertising on the Civic Centre and four key gateways to Leyland.

A broadcast interview on Radio Lancashire.

Targeted press releases sent out before and after the event which resulted in reports in the Lancashire Evening Post, the Leyland Guardian, Chorley Guardian and the Citizen. In terms of the attendance at the event which is recorded below, the publicity strategy is judged to have been successful.

## Exhibitors and supporters

Over 50 exhibitors attended or provided material support for the event. As a result of the interest shown in the event, all the space available in the venue was utilised. Those involved represented local voluntary organisations, local government, health trusts, pharmaceutical and medical diagnostic companies and a major food retailer.

Participants and volunteers from the Gujarat Hindu Society, UCLAN and the Health Olympics team offered information and advice.

A special "Thank You" to Academy@ Worden that provided the opening dance and very helpful volunteers. Without this help the Health Mela could not have taken place. The organisers hope and believe that, in return for the invaluable support provided by our foundation partners, the Health Mela provided them with an opportunity for public engagement and networking in a unique and lively supporting environment.







## Health checks and counselling

In excess of 96 health checks were carried out covering a general health MOT which included tests for blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol.

Nearly 25% of visitors took the opportunity of getting their health checks done. It was surprising to see a significant proportion of those who underwent health checks and counselling were referred to their GPs for further intervention. The results obtained are summarised below:

**GENERAL MOT:** 96 recorded screenings completed, of which: 23 patients had high cholesterol, 7 had a raised blood pressure and 11 had increased cholesterol and hypertension.

3 patients had Glucose between 7.0 and 11.0 nmol/l and 1 unknown diabetic with Glucose > 11.0 and one not stated with a Glucose >11.0 nmol/l.

4 patients tested with Cholesterol >6.0. Where potential problems were identified, appropriate professional counselling was provided to the individual concerned.

56% had attended a Health Mela before of which 46% had made life style changes as a result.

### COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY:

15 visitors attended the Reiki session with very positive feedback.

**ORAL HEALTH:** 100 visitors attended the oral health stand showing an greater interest in making improvement on their oral health.

The major organisations involved in organising and supporting the Leyland Health Mela are listed below:

- **National Forum of Health & Wellbeing**
- **Leyland Rotary Club**
- **South Ribble Borough Council**
- **Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**
- **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust including: Falls and Fracture Prevention Services, Scientific Staff of Pathology department (Blood Drop Team)**
- **Roche Diagnostic**
- **The Health Olympics Team, University of Manchester**
- **The University of Central Lancashire**
- **North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust**
- **The students and staff of the Academy@Worden**

The organisers gratefully acknowledge the support of all the organisations taking part.

## Attendance

Some 400 members of the public were registered visitors to the Health Mela although it is possible that some managed to overlook the registration process.

Registered visitors came from Adlington, Ashton, Bamber Bridge, Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Fleetwood, Chorley, Croston, Garston, Hutton, Leyland, Lanarkshire, Lytham, Lostock Hall, New Longton, Preston, Falkirk in Scotland and Cumbria.

120 completed feedback forms were received. Taking this as a representative sample, 25% males attended and 75% females.

The age groups of male and female combined were: 0-5yrs: 20%; 11-16yrs: 10%; 17 and over: 70%.

Thank you to all the exhibitors for their helpful feedback.

100% of the exhibitors agreed the Health Mela day was a good platform for networking and engaging with the community.

All the points raised will be taken into account in planning future events.

## Comments from visitors

Visitors were almost unanimous in judging the Health Mela to be informative (99%), well organised (97%) and representing time well spent (99%).

There were many positive individual comments made with particular reference to the friendly atmosphere, good venue and the extensive, helpful information available.

Constructive suggestions for improvement included: need for more space for wheelchairs; wider advertising; more activities for children. There was a request for reflexology and Yoga at future Events. All visitors and exhibitors were invited to complete a feed-back form.





## Feedback from exhibitors

Exhibitors had also commented the number of visitors to their stand made attendance at the Health Mela worthwhile. Good venue and parking; excellent networking opportunity; well organised and friendly staff; good steady stream of visitors. The organisers are very grateful to visitors.

## Comments from our honoured guests



**Chief Guest: Professor John Ashton CBE. President of the UK Faculty of Public Health**

*"It is a particular pleasure to return to the Health Mela. The strength of community leadership in Central Lancashire on matters to do with health and wellbeing is an example for the whole country. I am really looking forward spending time in conversation with visitors to the Mela and to meeting with old friends."*



**Tony Harrison JP. President: The Rotary Club of Leyland**

*"Rotary is at the very heart of the community and we are delighted to be working in collaboration with our partners again this year to help promote the health and wellbeing of our local community. Whilst the day will be a fun day there is a serious message in that each of us have a part to play in ensuring our own health and wellbeing. This event provides a perfect opportunity to meet with a range of health professionals in a friendly environment."*



**Roger Mason. District Governor Cumbria and Lancashire rotary**

*"Rotarians are leaders in their communities, exchanging ideas as to the best ways to serve their communities. Health Mela's are a very positive way to take action and help those*



## Endorsement from Falkirk Rotary Club, Scotland, our international partner

### Visitors: Brian Jack and Bill Laurie

*"We were impressed by the enthusiasm of everyone manning the stands and their willingness to engage with the public for the services they represented.*

*The number of people who underwent full health checks during the 5 hours was also very impressive."*



*that need support. Rotarians in Cumbria and Lancashire are delighted to support these Health Mela's and work with a whole community of health professionals. The service provides a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of many people."*



**Romesh Gupta, OBE, FRCP, MBA. Chair: National Forum for Health & Wellbeing (NFWH)**

*"There are many*

*developments in the Health Mela to show to Professor Ashton since his last visit. In particular we are delighted to have established our collaboration with Rotary International. This is enabling the extension of the Health Mela concept ever further afield both in this country and internationally."*

## Future plans

It is intended that the Leyland Health Mela will continue as an annual event. HEALTH MELAS arrangement for 2014 & 2015:

FYLDE COAST	.....Saturday 4 October 2014
BOLTON	.....Saturday 14th March 2015
PRESTON	.....Saturday 18 April 2015
BRADFORD	.....Saturday 16 May 2015
LEYLAND	.....Saturday 12th Sept. 2015

Volunteers from the NFWH have continued to provide advice and support to organisers of similar events in places as far apart as London, Cardiff, Manchester, Chorley, Blackpool, Bolton and Bradford. The Forum is happy to help any group thinking of developing their own version of this event. 🩺

**Please ask the contacts below for further information: Mrs Sarifa Kabir, Secretary, NFWH. Email: [Sarifakabir@btinternet.com](mailto:Sarifakabir@btinternet.com)  
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[www.nfhw.org.uk](http://www.nfhw.org.uk)

Working towards healthier living in partnership with:



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