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OUR NEXT RIDE MAY SAVE A LIFE. WILL YOURS?

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **NHS** ENGLAND

# NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 2021

**To date our Calls: 94,655 & Runs completed: 92,433**

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**From Marie Curie**



Since the first lockdown began in 2020, hundreds of thousands of people have died. Too many lives have been cut short and millions have been bereaved. Behind the statistics and whatever the cause, every death has been devastating for the people left behind.

Many have been unable to properly say goodbye to their loved ones, comfort or even hug each other.

As a nation, we need to acknowledge the millions in silent pain. So, join us on **23 March**, the first anniversary of the first UK lockdown, for a National Day of Reflection. Let's come together and reflect on this tragic loss of life, show support for people who've been bereaved and celebrate the lives of all those who've died.

There are still tough times ahead, as the death toll continues to rise. So, whatever your background, whatever your beliefs, and whatever you've been through, please join us for our first National Day of Reflection. This annual day will give us all time to pause and think about this unprecedented loss we're facing, and support each other through grief in the years to come.

### **What's happening on the day?**

- A national minute of reflection at 12pm.
- Free online talks and conversations, featuring expert panels, bereaved families and celebrities throughout the afternoon.
- Activities you can get involved with at home such as drawing and planting daffodils.
- For more information <http://mariecurie.org.uk/dayofreflection>

***"Volunteers Who Care"***

NWBB-Lancs & Lakes, Unit 5, Momentum Place, Bamber Bridge, Preston. PR5 6EF  
Registered Charity 1147282



## It's Winter!

**And don't we know it.** Fortunately, by the time this newsletter goes out it should be getting better, but our Guys & Gals have carried on doing what we do, often in their own cars, because we have had to stand the bikes down on several occasions. That said we are committed to doing what we do.

Our colleagues in other parts of the UK have suffered more than us, but we still get there [#itswhatwedo](#).

## Thank you again Sainsbury's: From Becky Newton:

The staff and customers of Sainsbury's Bamber Bridge have supported us since 2018.

Through a great partnership their kind donations raised over £16k which was enough to buy us a brand new bike to use in our central fleet in early 2020. To acknowledge this generosity we named the

bike 'Bamber' 🏍️

Due to the ongoing pandemic we have been unable to carry out any store collections but they have just donated an incredibly generous £450 which shows the ongoing support from the store.

Thank you Sainsbury's! We could not be here without donations such as this.

Here's to 2021, hopefully we can see you in store again soon ❤️ — 😊 feeling thankful.



We also got a cheque from the retiring Mayor of South Ribble borough Council, Cllr., Harry Hancock to the tune £250. Thank you all at SRBC for your support. Harry said, "You all do a fantastic job, thank you".

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## **And it's goodbye from him:** Written from the heart by Karen Carton.

*So here we are, March 2021, house packed up and bikes ready to ship to the Emerald Isle..... onwards to our new life together and preparing to leave our current life, family and friends behind. Five and a half years of membership, with NWBLL. So, this is the end..... Or is it?*

*I was 42 when I learned to ride a motorcycle (a proper one that is and not a Honda Melody like I had aged 16!), 43 when I passed my Mod 1&2 in November 2014.*

*Some of you will remember my instructor Campbell McCorkindale (Corky), he was the first person to tell me about NWBLL and what it does. I was amazed! My Mum had worked, as a nurse at Chorley Hospital for 31 years and none of our family had ever heard of the charity.*

*Colm and I got married in 2013 and I lay the blame firmly at his door for sparking my interest in riding and although my parents approved of him, I know they absolutely hated the idea that I was going to be out on the roads on a bike. My mother (in particular) was horrified.*

*One weekend in July, we decided to have a trip out to the Rocket Centre in Blackburn. I spotted an NWBLL gazebo and dragged Colm over for a nosey. Whilst he was talking bikes to one chap, I was chatting to the lovely Marcel Falloon, R.I.P. Colm didn't know it, but I filled the forms in for the both of us and then told him, I'd signed us up. I did check he was ok with it..... but only after the fact 😊*

*That evening, I had a phone call from the lovely Jen. She had some news which I wasn't happy about. I had only had my full licence for 9 months, which meant, I couldn't ride for the charity for another 3 months. I could however, become a controller. So, whilst I signed up for that, Colm went through his assessment and induction and became a rider, much to my disgust. I attended controller training, which I have to say, I remember nothing of, except my first encounter with the wonderful Duncan Oag and Steve Pugh (or Papa and Mother Goose).*

*For all of you out there who have never done controlling, let me tell you it is one of THE MOST STRESSFUL JOBS, EVER!*

*On 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015, I had my initial assessment, with Graham Miller (in my lunch break from work), rain, rain, MORE rain and a huge dumping of hailstones for good measure.*

*As an experienced rider, Colm has always had far more confidence than me but even he admits, that riding for the charity has stopped him from being a "fair weather rider". What made us far better riders though, was doing our advanced with the IAM. That made us both safer riders and gave me the confidence to believe that I actually could ride and do it well. Amazingly, we both got through it and came out with F1rst, not so amazing for Colm but I was absolutely blown away to get mine. I am certain I wouldn't have managed it without all of those extra hours of practice with the observers from Sefton Advanced Motorists, especially Graham Miller, who, if I'm honest, spent most of the time laughing at my mistakes.*

*Up's & Downs*

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*We weren't the first husband and wife riders within the charity and certainly not the first couple within the charity. Paul and Denise Brooks have always been hugely inspirational and will remain so.*

*Us both being involved in the charity, has definitely strengthened our relationship. Through the ups and certainly through the downs, it has really helped, that we are both involved, and both understand the need to support each other.*



*In 2016, the lovely Marcel was taken too soon. I will always be grateful to him for coercing us into joining. His funeral is one I will never forget, and our first experience of the real camaraderie shared by our charity family. To be part of the cortege was both an honour and a privilege. Of course, the one positive thing to come out of this awful time, was his equally lovely sister Colette joining our Blood Bike family.*

*In the same year, the charity secured National Lottery funding, queue cameras for our campaign and 15 seconds of fame for the charity.*

*We have attended various fundraisers, including the Swim-marathon where, to the amusement of George Korol and Mick Steel, Colm very loudly announced that I had shaved my feet especially for the event.... I can promise you; I have never lived that down!*

*2018 was by far, the worst year we had as a charity and we know it devastated the entire membership when on 5<sup>th</sup> May, we lost our dear friend Russ Curwen, in an RTC, whilst on duty. Again, members of NWBLL astounded me with their camaraderie, friendship and support. Russ's funeral was the toughest of days but we were not on our own. Instead, we were joined by members of our wider blood bike and biking family, from around the UK and Ireland, along with NHS staff and the wider community of Kendal. Everybody supported each other on that day and again, a year later, when we remembered him, we were there in force.*

*At some point and I'm not really sure how it happened, Colm became Deputy Area Manager for Central Area and then, in time, he became Area Manager. For a while, I assisted from the side-lines with emails, until the committee agreed on my becoming his Deputy. Let me tell you, this is the only time I have ever allowed him to THINK he is Boss.*

*I am absolutely sure that every Area Management team thinks that their area is the best, but we really were so lucky with the Central Area riders. Every area has the odd hiccup but generally, things ran fairly smoothly. We did rely a lot on our riders to help moving bikes etc., for service and it became apparent that we needed another deputy, who could support us in that. Enter Mike Hockney stage right.... Mike was a fabulous support, whilst we were managing Central and we are pleased to say, we stitched him up royally and handed over the reigns to him last year 😊. In addition to that, we have without doubt, the best fundraising team, in Becky Newton and Lee Pow (soon to be Mr & Mrs). Becky's Tea Parties are legendary. If you haven't attended one, you really don't know what you're missing! We really hope that at some point in the future, there will be another one.*

*We can honestly say that we have loved every minute of being a part of this most wonderful charity. For my part, working such long hours, over the past few years, I highly doubt I would still be riding at all, if I hadn't been riding for the charity. I have never had 'the bug'*

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*like Colm but what I have had, is the passion to give something back to our great NHS. Had it not been for them, I wouldn't have my wonderful husband.  
So here we are, (as I said at the beginning) March 2021, house packed up and bikes ready to ship to the Emerald Isle.....  
But this is not quite the end.....*

*We have forged new friendships with Michael Noonan (Blood Bikes Dublin) and Fergus Lennon (Leinster Blood Bikes) over in Ireland, so who knows where that may lead. We are hoping to remain members of NWBLL and that the charity will continue to be the largest (and best) Blood Bike Charity in the world. We will be back to visit regularly (you don't get rid of us that easy!) and hope to see some familiar faces, paying us a visit, in our new home.*

*After all, we are only an hour away from some of the best scenic routes in Ireland.....*

*Karen & Colm Carton.*

*Ed: We Love you and we'll miss you both. Take care and live your new life to the full.*

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## **A Day in the life of a Blood Bike Rider:** *From Richard Evans BBR 262*

### **A normal day at the "Office" ☺**

*"I am a Kendal rider; my usual runs are to take samples from Westmorland General (WGH) down to the Russell Curwen Blood Sciences building at Royal Lancaster (RLI) or to bring meds back from the RLI pharmacy to WGH. Nearly all of my runs have been uneventful and unmemorable. Our system works well, all credit to our wonderful controllers who do the hard work whilst we do the fun bit.*

*However, one run last November has stuck in my mind because of what happened. I was on the Saturday afternoon shift for Kendal, 1pm to 7pm. It seemed to be a quieter day than usual and I got my first call about 3pm. This was to take several samples down to Lancaster.*

*When I dropped them off at the Russell Curwen building the woman there asked if I was now taking some samples over to Furness General. I initially said no it would be someone else but rang the controller (Duncan) to see what was happening. He had not been told anything about those samples and said he would get back to me. A few minutes later he rang to say neither the Barrow nor Lancaster rider was currently available. I agreed that I would do the run, picked up the samples and set off on the 90-mile round trip about 4.30. It was of course dark by that time and I was glad that it soon stopped raining.*

*The first reason I remember this run is that, about halfway to Barrow, and in the middle of nowhere, I inadvertently hit the hazard lights button whilst dipping the headlight. I fumbled around trying to switch them off for a minute or two then gave up and pulled into the side of*

the road. It was pitch black (in that part of the world it really does get black) and I had to get my phone out and turn its torch on to see the hazard light button.

### ***So why was it hard to find?***

*This photo shows the controls on the left handlebar and I can't understand why I couldn't press the hazard button straight away. It looks easy enough and I am familiar with the bike, I've had it for over seven years. My bike is an NC700 automatic Honda.*



*The second reason for remembering this run is that when I got to Furness General (FGH) the only person I could find was the security guard. He told me that Pathology was down the corridor and first door on the right. The door was locked and there was no answer to the buzzer, I ended up leaving the samples on a hatch. I expect Barrow riders are used to this, it's a few years since I delivered there.*

*I assume staff were, understandably, too busy to be able to leave what they were doing. On the way out I told security what I had done and also rang Duncan who would try to contact them via the WGH switchboard. I had an uneventful ride back home.*

*Runs at that time of year reminded me that the low winter sun really picks up scratches in your helmet visor, particularly when there is dirty spray off the road as well. As a result, I bought a new visor and it's surprising how much difference it can make. The cost of around £50 came as a shock. I'm now hoping I don't have to also get a new Pinlock insert."*

### **What a difference a new visor can make.**

Many of our readers and non-riders don't always realise the cost of proper bike gear, e.g. Helmet approx., £500, Clothing either leathers or fabric (incl boots & gloves) up to £1,000, and all has to be renewed at some stage. Then of course there's the bike, anywhere between £6k to £20k, and that's only 2 wheels and no heater, but we love it 😊

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## **Faecial sample - less than 4 hrs from Shetland to Birmingham:**

Thanks to member Steve lithgoe.

Blood Bikes do it again, and the cost to the NHS "£0". Click the Link:

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/islands/2924677/vital-faecal-matter-transported-from-birmingham-to-shetland-in-less-than-four-hours-thanks-to-blood-bike-volunteers/>

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## Domestic abuse & Covid Lockdowns:

The freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)

Or **999** if it's happening now!



Women's welfare groups warned that the lockdown would result in an increase in domestic abuse and violence. Nineteen days after lockdown began, the government announced it would give an additional £2m to domestic abuse helplines, and launched a social media campaign to encourage people to report domestic abuse.

In March 2020 2.3 million Domestic abuse cases had been reported over a 12 month period and because of Lockdowns over the last 12 months that figure is likely to have risen considerably.

**Don't forget this may not always be physical, it may be psychological, and all ages and ALL sexes, can be subject to domestic abuse, it is not just confined to women.**



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## Special item for Big Bike lovers:

Honda, like them or loath them: (click the link)



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR2JMiltVRezHcGRTrciiAyGN2Hs\\_S0L-q8Gr5u-ArZiLEsyqgH\\_5HBSuU&v=6CCjnpNjn-w&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR2JMiltVRezHcGRTrciiAyGN2Hs_S0L-q8Gr5u-ArZiLEsyqgH_5HBSuU&v=6CCjnpNjn-w&feature=youtu.be)

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I put a cartoon picture in the February Newsletter as a joke, but this was a car stopped by Police in Dundee. Unbelievable.



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## Contacts:

Now we have some idea of the future following the pandemic, if anyone wants a talk or is having an event they would like us to attend, please use the following contact Email address's explaining what is required:

[talks@nwbb-lancs.org](mailto:talks@nwbb-lancs.org) or [events@nwbb-lancs.org](mailto:events@nwbb-lancs.org)

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## Finally, something for your kids:

To everyone with kids old enough to have mobile phones get them to download the **HOLLIE GUARD APP**. If they are walking home late and/or alone, they can switch it on and you can track them. If someone approaches them and they feel unsafe they can simply shake their phone. It sets off a high pitched alarm from the phone and also messages an alert to you (or whoever's number is entered as guardian). Brilliant idea.

<https://hollieguard.com> Not only does it have "Man Down" activation, you can keep an eye on your kids whereabouts and if they have it on a violent shake of the phone will result in you receiving a text to tell you they are in trouble. Certainly worth a look. Gloucestershire Police have set up a Trust for it.

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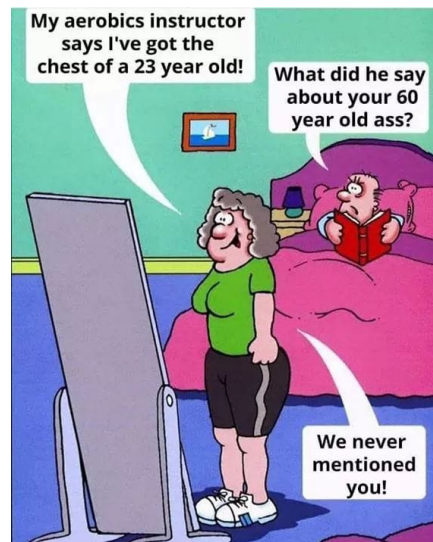
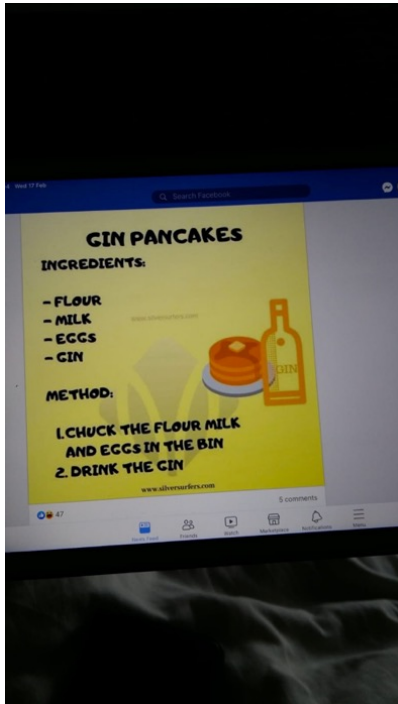
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## Bit of Fun:

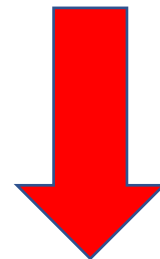
Tried this and it works well 😊



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### FUN FACT!

Because the platypus both lays eggs and produce milk...  
It's one of the few animals that can make its own custard!



**Please Remember**

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## Your thoughts, your ideas, your stories, your Newsletter:

North West Blood Bikes Lancs & Lakes was built on **thoughts and ideas** and they are still as vital today as they were 9 years ago. Best practice always wins, so if you have any good ideas, speak to your Area manager. Likewise, your stories about Blood Bikes or even personal stories if you are willing to share them. If they are personal, [the Editor](#) will contact you before any publication unlike the National Press people 😊

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## **STAY SAFE AND PROTECT OTHERS**

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