



## Open Day

Saturday 15 November 2008  
12pm - 3pm

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# 'Don't be silly, get checked out'



by Helen Clifton

**B**REAST cancer survivor Jenny Cowell is living proof that regularly checking for signs of cancer saves lives.

The 46-year-old Miles Platting-based NHS worker first noticed something was wrong in April 2005 - and quickly remembered the advice she had been given.

"I saw that a small lump on my breast was casting a shadow. I knew from the work I did on breast awareness that I should check on the other side, and there was nothing there," she explains. "I remember thinking, 'This doesn't look too good!'"

She visited her GP, and within two weeks she had an appointment for a mammogram.

"The consultant who examined me said it didn't feel like anything sinister. But they felt the need for further investigation, and I had a biopsy. Waiting for the results was the longest week of my life. I really struggled, I couldn't concentrate on anything."

"It was really strange - I work for the NHS, but I had become a patient. I was scared. But my family were really supportive, and I carried on going to work. You've got to be positive, and just carry on as normal. It was only a small lump."

But, on May 16, 2005 - coincidentally, the day after Kylie went public about her battle with the breast cancer - Jenny was told that the lump was malignant. She had low-grade cancer.

"I was devastated," she says. "I went with my husband to see the consultant,

who asked me how I was. I knew straight away. It was dreadful to actually hear the words breast cancer. I blamed myself. Even as a health professional, I thought I had caused it."

She was then transferred to Christie's Hospital, where they removed the lump and some surrounding tissue.

"I had to wait three weeks for the results to see if the cancer had spread. It was an agonising wait, but I eventually got good news. I have a really strong faith. My prayers got me through, my family and friends at church kept me strong. It was such a sense of relief."



Following three weeks of radiotherapy sessions, Jenny says her life is finally back to normal, and that the experience of surviving has permanently changed her outlook.

And, she adds, her personal experiences - as well as her professional knowledge - have taught her it is vital people visit their GP as soon as they have any concerns

about cancer.

"They are not being silly - that is what the GP is there for. And if they are not happy, they should go back to see their GP again. These days, because of all the awareness that is out there, doctors will listen and encourage you to do that."

"I don't let things worry me as much as I used to. It has put life into perspective. You have got to be thankful that you are alive. It has also changed the way I look at my job promoting health programmes. It has made me more aware about the importance of going to the doctor early, because I have been through it myself."

**ABOVE: Jenny says it is vital you perform regular checks on yourself and if you have any worries consult your GP straight away**

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**ACROSS Harpurhey, Charlestown, and Cheetham Hill, Manchester Primary Care Trust (PCT) is encouraging people to check for symptoms of the three biggest cancers - breast, bowel and lung. Around a dozen community volunteers are raising awareness any way they can, through wearing pink cowboy hats for events in local pharmacies, to donning shorts with plastic bottoms on the back as part of bowel cancer projects.**

Project manager Clare Clarke says people get involved for a variety of reasons. Some have had cancer themselves, some have lost relatives to cancer, while others are simply interested in helping out.

Clare says: "I think there is quite a lot of fear around cancer that isn't the same as other health issues. Although I think people can shy away from receiving information, the one-to-one conversations that the volunteers have around not being worried and going to your GP really can make a difference to individual people."

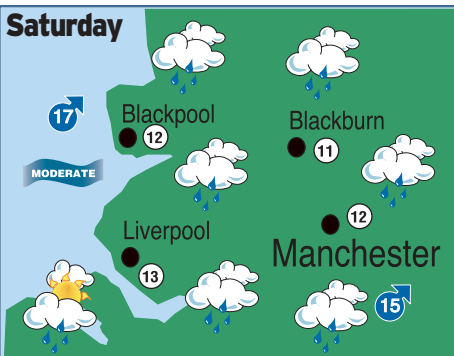
For more information about the Healthy Communities Collaboration project, and how to get involved, call Clare Clarke on 0161 861 2900.

PLEASURE BEACH  
BLACKPOOL

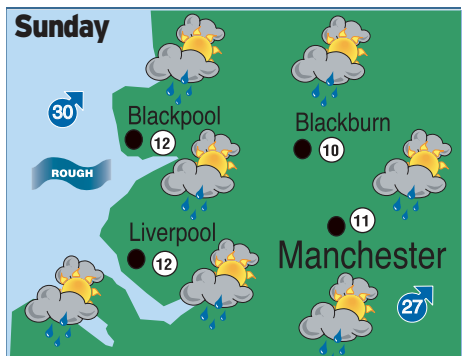
# WINTER WEEKENDS

Sats & Suns  
8th - 30th Nov

## Weather



There will be some bright spells for a time, then turning cloudy with scattered showers, these merging to more persistent rain in the afternoon. Freshening south-westerly winds. Max temp 12C (54F).



A windy day. Bright for a time, then cloudy once more with heavy showers. Longer spells of rain expected during the afternoon with a risk of thunder. Strong south-westerly winds. Max temp 12C (54F).

## UK Outlook

### Saturday

It will be an increasingly windy day. There will be some bright or sunny spells for a time, but turning increasingly cloudy with showery rain spreading eastwards through the day. Max temp 14C (57F).

### Sunday

Windy across much of the UK, but particularly in the north. Bright spells are likely for a time, but cloudier later with heavy showers or longer spells of rain, especially in the west. Max temp 14C (57F).

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