



# North West News

*A newsletter produced on behalf of the North West Centre of the UKPHA Summer 2005*

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## **Message from acting Chair**

I have a firm belief that this organisation has an important part to play in the public health agenda and that is the only reason that I am now still here as acting Chair of the North West. Nationally I am now the Chair of the UKPHA council sub group Organisational Management and Development and this will take up a fair bit of my time. This group will ensure that the governance of the organisation is sound and that there is capacity to develop the organisation to meet its goals of combating health inequalities, promoting sustainable development and challenging anti health forces.

As well as working full time in a position implementing the enormous but exciting long term conditions agenda and engaging in the 'Fit for Purpose' PCT's discussions I am starting to feel a bit of an overload. I am therefore appealing to the membership in the North West for anyone who would like the opportunity of taking the helm of the North West branch of the UKPHA. The council themselves are a great group and full of good ideas with excellent administrative support they just need someone to co-ordinate and steer them. Please contact me on 07867780407 if you feel moved to volunteer.

Enough of me, how about the UKPHA? I have attended a UKPHA council two days' away session where the new and old members of the council were able to get to know each other and ensure that everyone was clear about their role and the priorities for the organisation. I came away full of enthusiasm and inspired by colleagues from other areas of the country who are determined that the UKPHA will continue to grow and increase its impact on the public health agenda.

Due to the HDA being merged with NICE the UKPHA is having to find alternative accommodation in London. By the time you read this newsletter they should have moved. Apologies to any members who have had problems with communications. They have had difficulties maintaining their e-mail systems and dealing with membership queries during this time of disruption, not to mention having to deal with working and travelling in London at this traumatic time.

We hope that Angela Mawle, the Chief Executive of the UKPHA, will be coming to the North West on the 23rd November when we are arranging a conference on Fuel Poverty. The flyers will be out shortly and so please ensure they get circulated widely and that you encourage people to attend.

I hope that you as members will actively promote our organisation and ensure that the North West membership continues to be one of the highest.

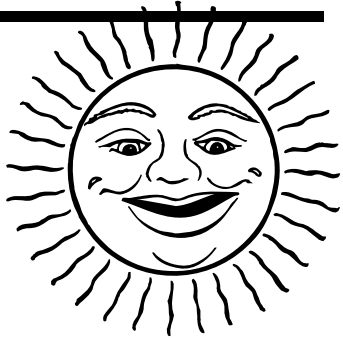
***Jane Spratley***

Acting Chair UKPHA North West Centre

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## Sun Safety Alert

The North West's leading Public Health and Health Protection doctors are urging health professionals and members of the public to heed the Chief Medical Officer's advice and make plans for staying safe in a summer heat wave.



The dangers of a prolonged hot spell were highlighted in Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson's updated Heatwave Plan and in new public information leaflets.

Approximately 27,000 people died in the last heatwave to hit Europe in 2003 and 2,000 of these excess deaths were recorded in England.

Professor John Ashton, Regional Director of Public Health, says that in the event of a hot spell people must take action to protect themselves in the home, on the move and whilst enjoying themselves in the sun.

Professor Qutub Syed, Director of the Health Protection Agency North West, also endorsed the Heatwave Plan and joined Professor Ashton in issuing a 10-point checklist for staying safe in the sun.

Professor Ashton said: "You can't be blasé about the weather in this country. People die in the heat and there is an onus on everyone to take sensible precautions to protect themselves and their families and to look out for the well-being of frail elderly.

"There is also a heavy burden of responsibility on NHS and social care staff and staff in residential homes to take care of vulnerable older people who cannot fend for themselves. More than 85% of the people who died in the 2003 heat wave were aged 75 or over."

Professor Syed said: "Severe heat poses an immediate threat to vulnerable people and can have long-term health consequences for anyone who ignores the risks. Excessive exposure to the sun can lead to skin cancer and premature ageing."

"It's vital that we protect ourselves and our children, particularly babies, from the full impact of the sun and that we look out for the welfare of elderly relatives and neighbours."

The advice is:

- ◆ Make sure that babies and young children have plenty of fluids and do not become over-heated in the home.
- ◆ Check up on the well-being of frail older neighbours, friends and relatives.
- ◆ Avoid travelling and sun-bathing in the hottest times of the day, which are usually between 11.00 am and 3.00 pm.
- ◆ If travelling by car, take supplies of drinking water for the journey and ensure that children are not becoming over-heated.
- ◆ Do not leave children in cars that are parked in the sun.
- ◆ If you must go outside in the hottest times of the day, try to stay in the shade.
- ◆ Wear a hat and light loose fitting clothes, preferably cotton.



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- ◆ Apply sunscreen and always use one with a protection level of factor 15 or higher.
  - ◆ Use sun glasses that offer 100UV protection to protect your eyes
  - ◆ Take cool showers or baths and splash yourself several times a day with cold water, particularly your face and the back of your neck.
  - ◆ Eat more cold food when possible, particularly salads and fruit, which contain water.

### Notes to Editors

#### 1. Sun fact file

- Skin cancer is the most common cause of cancer in the UK
- Over 57,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with skin cancer every year.
- The cause of skin cancer is nearly always over exposure to Ultra Violet radiation – from the sun or a sunbed.
- Ultra Violet is at its strongest under a cloudless sky, but you can still burn on a cloudy day.



#### 2. The sun safety code in a nutshell

- Take care not to burn
- Cover up
- Seek shade
- Apply sunscreen generously
- Protect children
- Look out for the safety and well being of older people.

**Press release issued by Hugh Lamont, Communications Manager  
Health Protection Agency North West, on 0151-482-5728 or 07764-906508**

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[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)



The Department of Health Forward Plan published on 4th August 2005 focuses on what the Department will do in 2005-06 to lead and support the drive to achieve the Government's objectives for health and social care, and to support Ministers in their accountability to the public and Parliament.

The Chief Medical Officer's report for 2004 was published in July 2005 and is accessible from the website.

On 15th August the Department announced that 12 disadvantaged areas had been chosen as the first to have health trainers. They will offer lifestyle advice and create personalised plans to help local people make healthier choices. Included in this are two from the North West; Tameside & Glossop and Manchester.

'Tackling Health Inequalities: Status Report on the Programme for Action' was published August 2005.

[www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)



Guidance on Local Area Agreements (published July 2005) and evaluation of the pilots is available from the ODPM website

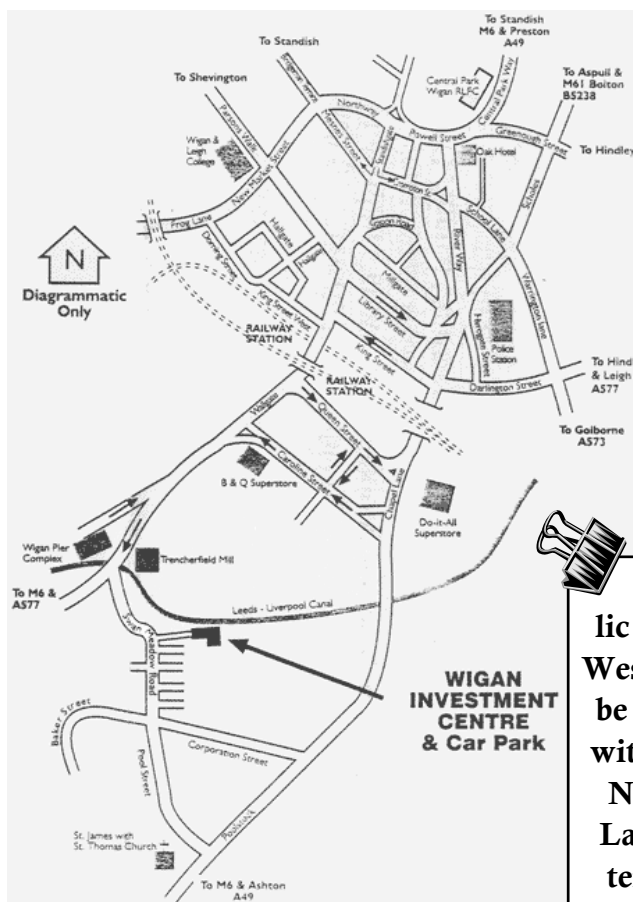
# NOTICE BOARD

## Next council meeting

This will take place on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September, at the Wigan Investment Centre, Waterside Drive, Wigan WN3 5BA.

16.00 – 18.00. All welcome

Please advise Roger Lincoln if you would like to attend:  
r.lincoln@lancaster.ac.uk. See map below or go to mapquest on  
www.mapquest.co.uk



Events are planned for the following subjects, if you would like to suggest any other topics please contact : Roger Lincoln; r.lincoln@lancaster.ac.uk or come along to the next Executive meeting

- ◆ Fuel Poverty (23 Nov)
- ◆ Crime and Disorder/ youth offending

The new integrated public health site for the North West at [www.nwph.net](http://www.nwph.net) is to be launched early next year with road shows around the North West starting with Lancaster on the 13th September at Lancaster House Hotel 10.00am—1.00pm. See the website for more details or contact Jenny Wilcoxon on 0151 231 4454 or email [j.r.wilcoxon@livjm.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.wilcoxon@livjm.ac.uk)

## Cleaner, Safer, Greener...

The quality of local environments is undoubtedly important to the quality of life of those who live in them. While better environments are not unaffected by litter, graffiti etc, they do tend to be more respected and taken better care of while areas suffering chronically from these problems seem to invite more. We are becoming increasingly aware of the interaction between the physical aspects of our environment, as well as social and economic perspectives. Whilst a clean and tidy environment is generally taken for granted, cleaning is traditionally seen as a low level, low impact activity and one which has perhaps been ignored.

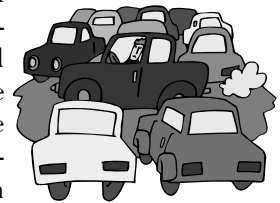
The third annual Local Environmental Quality Survey of England 2005 (LEQSE) has recently been published. This evaluates issues relating to street cleansing, environmental crime and fear of crime, the condition, management and design of pavements, roads, street furniture, litter bins, bus stops, public toilets and the maintenance of landscaped areas. Although the North West region has improved upon previous years, there are a number of areas still requiring significant improvement. For example the condition of paved areas and the obstruction of paved areas. The results of this *ENCAMS* report are used by local and central government to address priorities and to set targets in the environmental arena.

There are a number of overriding Government initiatives designed to address environmental issues, for example the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy and the Sustainable Communities Plan. These also have significant public health associations, both in the short and long term, such as measures to combat the risk of flooding and the increase of certain infectious disease due to global warming.

Specific initiatives are also underway. Last December, the Government launched its five year strategy for the environment - one of the central pillars of this strategy was the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill which gained Royal Assent in April 2005. Contained within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (the Act) are a number of measures designed to improve the quality of the local environment by

giving Local Authorities and the Environment Agency additional powers to deal with fly-tipping, litter, graffiti, noise-pollution, abandoned and nuisance vehicles as well as anti-social behaviour affecting the local environment. A number of examples are cited below. Full details available within the Act itself, [www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/20050016.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/20050016.htm).

Local crime and disorder reduction partnerships will now be required to take anti-social behaviour affecting the local environment into account in developing crime and disorder reduction strategies. Local authorities will have the power to remove abandoned cars from the streets immediately; abandoned cars are not only an eyesore, they are frequently a magnet for attention from children and young people - they are used to play on or in, are vandalised and in more extreme cases set alight.



The new legislation makes it an offence to drop litter anywhere, including private land, rivers, ponds and lakes and gives local authorities new powers to require businesses and individuals to clear litter from their land. The Act also confirms that cigarette butts and discarded chewing gum are litter!

Despite the perception that the imposition of higher charges to dispose of waste by landfill has led to an increase in fly-tipping, there is insufficient evidence to support this. However, the Act still contains a number of measures to address this problem, for example, it removes the defence of acting under employer's instructions (to fly-tip) and increases the penalties if convicted.

Dog fouling is consistently one of the highest sources



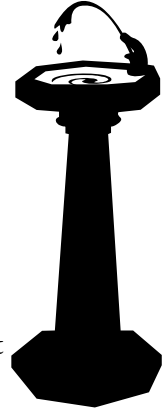
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## Charles Pierre Melly and his Drinking Fountains

Charles P. Melly, the son of André Melly of Geneva and Ellen Greg of Quarry Bank, Wilmslow, was born in Tuebrook Liverpool on 25th May 1829.

He got the idea for Drinking Fountains during a visit to Geneva in 1852. At that time in Geneva, the water was the property of the town authorities and was distributed by them to the citizens through the means of large public fountains. Free of cost, every household would take water from the public fountain and put it in their private cistern, or pay someone to do it for them.

In Liverpool at that time with the exception of two troughs at the docks, water was supplied into people's homes by pipes, only if they paid a 'water rate'. Melly who spent a lot of time at the docks, noticed the working man could not quench his thirst without going into a public house "where they were expected to pay for a stronger and less refreshing drink than they required". He was advised by policemen and working men, that there was a great need for drinking water by the working man and the emigrants from Ireland and the Continent on their way to America and elsewhere. Many of these people were accustomed to public fountains in every town and village of their own country. Some were in such distress, they were glad enough to drink at the horse trough.



At that time the supply of water was limited, and it was not without difficulty that two small drinking taps were put up at Prince's Dock, in 1853; the numbers who made use of it were such, that the ball tap affixed to one of them, and the spring tap by which other was worked, were both worn out in the course of a few months, and it was necessary to devise some more durable way of giving water in the street. So it was decided the fountain should be supplied by a continuous flow of water, day and night.

In March 1854, the first granite Fountain was erected at the south end of Prince's Dock. And three months later the numbers drinking there in the course of a twelve hours period, were carefully counted, and found to be 2336.

Most of this information has come from 'A Paper on Drinking Fountains' by Charles P. Melly, held at the Liverpool Record Office (ref. H 711.68 MEL).

*This article is taken from, the Friends of Liverpool Monuments by kind permission of Patrick Neill.*

*The 'Friends of Liverpool Monuments' (FOLM) are campaigning to initiate the refurbishment of the historic Downtown Drinking Fountains. A number of the drinking fountains remain in the City and the website contains captivating photographs of these and further details regarding FOLM's campaign. (website: [www.liverpoolmonuments.co.uk/index.html](http://www.liverpoolmonuments.co.uk/index.html)).*

**Submitted by Helen Casstles  
Executive Member UKPHA North West Centre**

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## Water Fluoridation: What are the issues?

With the Departmental guidelines on consultation under the 2003 Water Act due out at any time the subject of water fluoridation is once again due to figure as one of significant public controversy. In assessing opposition to fluoridation it is important to distinguish between the real and the ostensible motives of the people leading the opposition. Three arguments are commonly used to oppose the introduction of fluoridation; that it is ineffective, that it is unsafe and that it is unethical. Of the three the one that is the genuine motivating factor of the majority of opponents is the third. They do not believe that anything should be added to the water supply as a public health measure. They believe that the right of individuals to drink water with only its natural supply of fluoride (paradoxically even when that exceeds the public health target of 1 part per million) outweighs the opportunity to make significant improvements in oral health, and of course this is a legitimate argument; but it is not an argument that commands public support. Time and again public opinion surveys have demonstrated that the great majority of the population believe that if fluoridation is safe and effective it should be introduced, so the opponents of the measure try against all the evidence to argue that it is either ineffective or unsafe. The York Review should have settled once and for all that fluoridation works and that there is no good evidence of it having any detrimental non-dental effect but anti-fluoridation zeal has never allowed itself to be deflected by facts and evidence. We can confidently expect a series of pseudo-scientific scare stories in the run up to any consultation on fluoridation and the first has already appeared.



It is the allegation, published in both the Observer and the Daily Mail that research in America has found a link between fluoridation and bone cancer in adolescent males. There has not been time to investigate and refute this argument but its source may give us a clue to its reliability. The story originates from an American lobbying organisation called The Environment Working Group which has a long history of issuing scare stories about various foods, pesticides and other products all of which have on sound investigation prove groundless. The EWG hasn't got a single doctor or scientist on its payroll and yet has since 1993 issued a string of allegations about the health hazards of products as diverse as farmed salmon and baby food none of which were vindicated when examined by the appropriate Federal Agencies.

Since allegations which startle the public are easy to make and take a substantial amount of time and effort to scientifically refute the best response to the stream of scare stories which will undoubtedly accompany any consultation on fluoridation is that EVERY SINGLE ONE of previous scares has proved groundless and that they are brought forward as a fig leaf to disguise the real nature of the opposition to a measure which would have a major impact on the dental health of the community.

**Guy Harkin**  
Executive Member, UKPHA North West Centre

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of complaints by the public to MPs, local councillors and local authorities. Estimates put the UK dog population between 6.5 and 7.4 million, producing 1,000 tonnes of faeces every day. The Act replaces dog byelaws with a new, simplified system which will enable local authorities and parish councils to deal with fouling by dogs, ban dogs from designated areas, require dogs to be kept on a lead and restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person.

The Act also impacts the way that local authorities take action for noise nuisance and extends the definition of statutory nuisance to include light pollution.

There have been a number of criticisms levied against the new legislation, particularly the ab-

sence of comprehensive guidance for regulators, as progress of the Bill was expedited to achieve Royal Assent before dissolution of the last Parliament. Whilst the Act does contain a number of powerful measures to remediate chronic and acute environmental problems, there are concerns in some quarters regarding 'on the spot' fines and conflict with other legislation.



However, for individuals living within communities suffering from environmental blight, the Act provides an opportunity to improve their quality of life, not only by improving the physical environment, but creating an area which engenders a feeling of pride and ownership.

**Helen Castles, Centre for Public Health,  
Liverpool John Moores University**

***Please note the views expressed in this Newsletter are the personal views of the authors and not necessarily the views of the Executive of the North West Centre of the UKPHA***

### **About the North West council**

The council is made up of up to twelve members with the opportunity to co-opt further members as appropriate

Jane Spratley –

*Acting Chair*

Alan Cunningham

Fran Jones

Robert Johnstone

Matt Kearney

Janet Jackson

Pat Johnson

Kevin Morley (Treasurer)

Sharon McAteer

Neil Turner

Cathy Wynne

*Co-opted members*

*Helen Castles*

*Guy Harkin*

*Maureen Shorter*

*Hon President: The Lord Michael Chan*

**In the first instance contact the UKPHA North West Administrative Team at:**

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**c/o Institute for Health Research, C Floor Bowland Tower East Wing**

**Lancaster University**

**Lancaster LA1 4YG**

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**or email: [r.lincoln@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.lincoln@lancaster.ac.uk)**