



# Health Melas 2002 to 2014

## A Story of Community Health Fairs

The first ever Health Mela took place in Preston in 2002, when the chief guest was **Professor John Ashton CBE**. A staunch advocate of the Health Mela approach to promoting public health awareness, John is President of the UK Faculty of Public Health and we're delighted that he will be visiting us again as chief guest at the 2014 Leyland Health Mela. Anticipating his visit John said,

*"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."*

Professor Ashton's return affords an excellent opportunity to show just how much the Health Mela concept has developed in the intervening years. Over the following pages, we'll take a look at how the events themselves have changed and we'll examine some of the key events and supporters that have helped to shape their progress.

Though it began as a simple discussion amongst a small, voluntary team, the Health Mela concept has grown beyond all expectations and has achieved widespread public and professional recognition. This includes endorsement by many leaders in the public health service and NHS.

Today, the Health Melas receive favourable mention in government reports and are supported by some of the most eminent names in the fields of healthcare, equality and human rights.

We are particularly pleased that **Professor Dame Sue Bailey**, immediate past President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2011-14) and Chair of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, will be chief guest at this year's Fleetwood Health Mela which has, as its theme 'the Mental Health of Children and Young Adults.'

The National Forum for Health and Wellbeing is grateful to all supporters, past and present, who have contributed to this continuing success story.



Professor John Ashton CBE



Professor Dame Sue Bailey



## Message from NFHW Chairman

Professor John Ashton's return gives me a welcome opportunity to reflect on the activities and the success of the Health Melas over the past thirteen years.

During his visit in 2002, John picked up on the characteristics that made that inaugural Health Mela special - its particular emphasis on accessibility, community engagement and empowerment. Looking back, I'm delighted to see that the novel ways in which we set out to promote health and awareness have proved so successful and that the same model is now expanding well beyond the North West.

We can be especially proud of our ever-strengthening links with universities, with teaching hospitals and with Rotary. These and other valued partnerships are greatly enhancing the value of our work. Together, we have the capacity, the skills and the commitment to build and improve the Health Mela concept so that we can continue to bring lasting benefits to local communities across Britain and beyond.



Professor Ramesh Gupta  
OBE MD FRCP