



Rotary Club of Leyland



Report on the Rotary Leyland Health Mela

Saturday 22nd September 2012

Foreword



Terry Webster

President: The Rotary Club of Leyland

I am delighted that the Rotary club of Leyland is able to hold its first Health Mela with the support of the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum and other partner organisations. I believe that it is an excellent way to serve the community. I hope that this model of community engagement will continue to grow further and we will be holding many such events to promote the health and well-being of our society.



Romesh Gupta, OBE, FRCP, MBA.

Chair: Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum

I am delighted to present this account of the first ever Leyland Health Mela. Not only is it a milestone in extending the influence of the 'Health Mela' movement across Lancashire; it is also significant in being organised in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Leyland, part of Rotary International, a partner organisation with a world-wide reputation for promoting health and well-being.

Partnership is the essence of the Health Mela. Organisers, exhibitors, visitors and sponsors engage together to celebrate and promote the health of their community. My thanks go to all involved in ensuring the success of this event.

Introduction and background to the Health Mela

In the Indian sub-continent the Mela, a festive get together involving whole villages or wider areas, has long had a role in promoting community well-being. This is a model that has found a vibrant new home in 21st century Britain where locally promoted Melas are becoming increasingly visible as sources of entertainment and information for local communities.

The Health Mela movement began in Preston. Just over ten years ago, a group of health care professionals and executive members of the Preston Gujarat Hindu Society led by Professor Romesh Gupta and President Ishwer Tailor respectively, set up a steering group to create awareness of health inequalities amongst local ethnic and social groups. 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 success of the 2001 and subsequent 'Health Melas' soon extended way beyond an initial focus on the Gujarat community. It provided a sound foundation for what was to become a popular, multi-cultural, annual fixture in the Preston calendar and a reference point for other communities planning similar events.

For those committed to community involvement in the promotion of health and well-being the 'Health Mela' format has much to offer, not least a proven capability to attract and actively engage local populations in health related activities and health checks. With support from the Preston Steering Group, similar events have been organised in venues across the UK in places as far apart as Bolton, London and Cardiff and interest in the ideals and practical details of the 'Health Mela' movement continues to grow apace.

In this context it is particularly pleasing to present this report on the first Leyland Health Mela held in the Civic Centre on September 22nd 2012,





organised jointly by the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum and the Rotary Club of Leyland. The involvement for the first time of members of Rotary International is significant. Not only do they bring local knowledge, enthusiasm, and expertise to the Mela mix, they also bring a connection to the great Rotary tradition of involvement in health improvement programmes world-wide. These activities range from a highly successful polio eradication campaign to the provision of water purification facilities on a massive scale.

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

Venue and date

The Health Mela was held on Saturday, 22nd September 2012, in Leyland Civic Centre. The venue was made available by courtesy of South Ribble Borough Council. The organisers record their gratitude to members of the Council for the opportunity to utilise the excellent facilities offered in the Centre.

The Civic Centre provided space for around 50 exhibitors together with areas to accommodate the wide range of health checks detailed below. Stage and public address facilities were available for the formal proceedings and entertainment and 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, a valuable amenity for an event such as this. In addition, the free bus service running between the railway station, town centre and Leyland Festival site was routed to provide an additional stop outside the Civic Centre.

As indicated above, the timing of the Health Mela coincided with the first day of the re-arranged Leyland Festival. Judging by the attendance figure recorded below early fears that this might have a negative effect on visitor numbers were unfounded.



Opening Ceremony and Theme

The opening ceremony was performed by the Chief Guest, the Lord Shuttleworth, KCVO, Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire.

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

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 LGHUF gratefully acknowledge the substantial assistance in planning and resourcing the event which was provided by the organisations listed below. Also gratefully acknowledged is the enthusiastic support of the volunteers from the Gujarat Hindu Society and the Health Olympics team. 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 supporting environment. This is an opportunity of great importance in the current climate of change and challenge in the Health Service.

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

- The Gujarat Hindu Society
- South Ribble Borough Council
- Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS Central Lancashire
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust

- Roche, MSD and the scientific staff of the pathology department RTH
- The Health Olympics Team, University of Manchester
- The University of Bolton

In addition cash grants to support the event were received from the Tackling Inequalities in Health Fund (£1,500), Rotary Club of Leyland (£1,000) and LGHUF (£500).

Entertainment was provided by Isis Dance and Celebr8.

Publicity

As this was the first 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 and District and in the Village Handbook circulated to a further 6,000 homes in Buckshaw Village, Astley Village and Euxton.
- A broadcast interview on Radio Lancashire.
- An editorial item included in 'Forward', the Newspaper of South Ribble Borough Council distributed to all 49,000 homes in the Borough together with a note of the event on posters distributed to publicise the Leyland Festival.
- A wide-spread leaflet drop conducted by members of the Rotary Club of Leyland.
- Poster advertising in local buses.
- Banner advertising on the Civic Centre and elsewhere in the Borough.
- Targeted press releases sent out before and after the event which resulted in reports in the Lancashire Evening Post, the Leyland 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 offered information, advice, support and a comprehensive range of health checks.

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



Attendance

Approximately 400 members of the public were formally registered visiting the Health Mela although it is possible that a significant number managed to evade the registration process! Post-code analysis shows the majority of visitors were from the local PR25, PR26, and PR1 districts with small numbers from further afield including Liverpool, Warrington, Wigan, Blackburn, Oldham and the Fylde coast.





Comments from visitors and exhibitors

All visitors and exhibitors were invited to complete a feed-back form. A summary analysis of the comments received is shown below.

Visitors

100 completed feedback forms were received. 36 of the respondents had attended previous Health Melas and around two thirds of these claimed to have made life style changes as a result. Visitors were almost unanimous in judging the health Mela to be informative (97%), well organised (100%) and representing time well-spent (94%).

There were many positive Individual comments made with particular reference to the friendly atmosphere and the huge amount of information available.

Exhibitors

46 completed feedback forms were received from exhibitors. Of these, 46 (100%) rated the venue and 43 (93%) their individual display area as satisfactory. 41 (89%) rated attendance at the Health Mela worthwhile and 46 (100%) indicated their intention to participate in the next event in Preston.

Looking to improve future events, one respondent wondered if there had been a lack of young people attending and whether this might linked to the existence of the parallel Leyland festival. However the main concern expressed by exhibitors was the relative lack of space and difficulty of access to stands. Positive individual comments referred to the quality of the venue and to the excellent opportunities afforded for networking.

The organisers are very grateful to visitors and exhibitors for their helpful feedback. All the points raised will be taken into account in planning future events.

Health Checks and Counselling

In total 220 health checks were carried out covering sight, hearing and a general health MOT which included tests for blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol. These figures indicate that a very large proportion of visitors (around 50%) took the opportunity to be tested and counselled. A similar high uptake of opportunities for a health check has been observed at previous events. **The results obtained are summarised below.**



Sight: 19 tests completed; 1 individual identified requiring laser surgery to correct problem after cataract surgery, several individuals with outdated prescription glasses.

Hearing: 58 tests completed; 16 individuals advised to contact GP for further investigation.



General MOT: 143 screenings completed; Subjects with high blood pressure – 1. Subjects with raised cholesterol – 19. Subjects not known to be diabetic with raised blood glucose – 9.

It is to be emphasised that where potential problems were identified appropriate professional counselling was provided to the individual concerned.



Comments from Guests



Chief Guest: The Lord Shuttleworth, KCVO, Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire:

'I enormously enjoyed my visit particularly meeting many hard working people manning a variety of stalls and interacting with the visiting public.

I do congratulate LGHUF and the Rotary Club of Leyland for their initiative in holding this Mela. It looked to me to be a great success and I hope it will be the first of many in South Ribble.

Please do pass on my congratulations to everyone involved with the organisation of the event.'



Honoured Guest: Mr David Simpson, District Governor – Lancashire and Cumbria, Rotary International:

'I am delighted that the Rotary Club of Leyland has taken the initiative to hold this first event in partnership with so many organisations and in particular the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum.

Rotary International is a worldwide organisation in over 200 countries. It prides itself in changing the lives of so many people for the better, especially with the current programme to eradicate Polio from our world.

This Health Mela is a practical and novel way to raise health awareness among our local communities, not only improving their way of living, but in some cases, actively saving lives.'

Future Plans

Building on the success of the inaugural festival, it is intended that the Leyland Health Mela will become an annual event.

Health Melas are arranged for 2013 as follows:

- Preston.....Saturday, 20th April**
- Bradford.....Saturday, 18th May**
- Leyland.....Saturday, 14th September**
- Fylde Coast.....Saturday, 5th October**
- Bolton.....to be confirmed.**

Volunteers from the Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum have already provided advice and support to organisers of similar events in places as far apart as London, Cardiff, Manchester, Chorley, Bolton and Bradford. The Forum is happy to help any group thinking of developing their own version of this event. Please use the contact details below for further information.

Mrs Christine Ainscough, Secretary, LGHUF

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Rotarian Roger Mallows, Chairman of Community and Vocational Committee, Leyland Rotary Club

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