



Katie Scarbrough and daughter Sophie, and (below) the former champion ice-skater in action

I must be strong for my kids ... former ice queen Katie on the fight of her life



EXCLUSIVE
BY AMANDA POOLE

KATIE Scarbrough once inspired with powerful sporting talent, as a champion ice skater who competed on an international stage. Now the Belfast mum is proving a greater inspiration with her irrepressible attitude to battling terminal cancer.

The former figure skater opened her heart to the Belfast Telegraph about a devastating diagnosis which could leave the 31-year-old with just weeks to live.

The British junior ice skating champion — who has two young children — was told by doctors last September that she had just six months left.

But since the moment the shattering news was delivered, the east Belfast woman has moved friends and family with her determination to make the most of life.

The Gilnahirk sportswoman has also inspired thousands of strangers with her drive to raise cash and vital cancer awareness through an online blog detailing her experience of the disease.

Katie now lives in the Staffordshire village of Fradley with her husband Stuart and their two children Sam (8) and Sophie (4).

She was first diagnosed with bowel cancer in June last year — before being told in September the disease had spread beyond control.

Describing the moment she was told her illness was terminal, Katie recalled: “I could see it

in the hospital consultant’s eyes; he was upset.

“He said he was sorry and explained to Stuart and I that I had a tumour and it was on my perineum, bowel, ovaries and liver. It was devastating.”

Then just last month a scan revealed ongoing treatment wasn’t working, her liver tumour had grown and the cancer has spread to her bones and back.

Despite this, the young mother decided doing nothing “was not an option.”

She’s currently going through chemotherapy once a week and maintains a remarkable attitude, while enjoying life with her young family, including trips to Euro Disney and London.

“Until Christmas I was doing normal things, but two days before Christmas Day I started not feeling well,” she said.

“At that point I knew in myself that something wasn’t right. I didn’t need a scan to tell me, but you don’t want to believe it, you want to have hope.”

Sam and Sophie are aware their

online donors hail bravery

- “Your strength and resolve says it all. With our love, Mum & Dad.”
- “You are an inspiration and a light to the world. Sharing your story is a gift to us all. Keep shining, you’re a star xx.”
- “I just recently heard about your blog and want you to know how inspirational + amazing you and your young family are.”
- “Katie, you have such strength and positivity.”
- “You will never know how many hearts you are touching xx.”



DREAM VISIT: Katie and Christine Bleakley

mother is unwell and that she is receiving medicine to try and make it better.

A few weeks ago, Katie was told by her medical team that “time is running out” if her latest treatment doesn’t work.

“I can’t control the cancer going on inside me, but if I can control the symptoms, it can only make me stronger,” she said.

“I need to try and stay as normal as possible for my kids and myself. It keeps me positive. I didn’t ask to have cancer, but I’ve got it and I write every-

thing down on my blog about what is happening.”

Since beginning her blog last June, Katie has gained online support from people all over the world, including comedian Matt Lucas, and Dr Christian from Channel 4 show Embarrassing Bodies.

Katie said: “There are times when I cry uncontrollably and think I’ve done something wrong. That goes through your head, but I get it out of my system and find something else to focus on.

“In the last couple of weeks Twitter, Facebook and the blog have taken off and that’s what inspires me.

“If anything positive can come out of me having cancer, by raising money for charity and awareness in young people,

then that’s what I want to do.

“That’s what keeps me motivated and going.”

Katie is a former British Junior ice-skating champion and a one time Belfast Telegraph young sports person of the year nominee.

She recently paid a dream visit to ITV’s Dancing On Ice studio with Stuart and had a good chat with the show’s presenter Christine Bleakley.

Meanwhile, family, friends and former school mates from her days at Grosvenor Grammar have rallied to support her cause.

In the last couple of weeks over £2,000 has been raised for Bowel Cancer UK and Cancer Research UK in Katie’s name.

A fundraiser is being arranged at Dundonald International Ice Bowl, plus coffee mornings, a frock swap party evening, a Belfast to Dublin Maracley and a climb up Slieve Gullion.

She doesn’t want to frighten other young people with her story, but rather inspire people to be mindful of their health and remember how precious life is.

Follow Katie on Twitter @katiescarb and read her blog www.katiescarbrough.co.uk. To make a donation to Bowel Cancer UK and Cancer Research UK please visit <http://uk.virginmoney-giving.com/team/Katiescarbrough>

Pensioner (90) hurt in handbag snatch bid

BY ANNA MAGUIRE

A 90-YEAR-OLD pensioner who thwarted two men as they tried to rob her has been treated in hospital for her injuries.

Police are searching for the men who tried to snatch a handbag from the frail woman at 12.30pm yesterday at Donegall Place in the centre of Belfast.

The brave woman, who managed to hold on to her bag, was knocked to the ground and injured her mouth.

She was treated at the Royal Victoria Hospital and was discharged yesterday afternoon.

Appealing for information, a police spokesman said: “Shortly before 12.30pm two men approached the woman, who is aged 90, at Donegall Place and tried to snatch her handbag before they ran off towards City Hall.

“The woman fell to the ground but held on to her bag. She sustained a mouth injury.

“Both are believed to be in their late teens or early 20s.

“One was about 5ft with brown hair and was wearing a baseball cap, a hooded top and blue jeans. The other was 5ft 10ins, had blond hair and was wearing a baseball cap and a T-shirt.”

Views on new road were ‘not ignored’

BY ALAN ERWIN

LOCAL community interests were not ignored in assessing the impact of a £330m dual carriageway project, the High Court heard.

A lawyer representing the Department for Regional Development argued that people affected by the planned new route between Londonderry and Aughnacloy, Co Tyrone, were given a proper chance to have their views heard.

David Elvin QC also described the project as “the most important road scheme Northern Ireland has had for many years.”

Farmers, businessmen and landowners have joined under the Alternative A5 Alliance grouping in a legal bid to block the carriageway. They claim an adequate environmental impact assessment was not carried out.

Responding for the department, Mr Elvin argued the purposes of the assessment process was to bring out the views of others, rather than to “secure perfection” in the environmental statement.

He told Mr Justice Stephens: “The community is not ignored and community interests have been considered under a series of headings.”

The hearing continues.

Close bond: Katie before her illness with her husband Stuart and children Sam and Sophie

