

**LASERS HELP**

**SMOKERS KICK THE HABIT**

**LIGHT RELIEF**



**STUB IT OUT ...** Anne Penman with the laser

**FORMER barmaid Anne Penman could hold the key to beating one of Scotland's biggest killers.**

Bubbly Anne, 44, turned to laser treatment to stop smoking after husband Ron suffered two major heart attacks and almost died. He had no choice but to stop, and Anne wanted to support him by giving up her own 60-a-day habit. She tried acupuncture, nicotine patches – the works, all to no avail. Then she heard about a Belfast clinic which used laser treatment and Anne hasn't looked back.

After learning all about the treatment, and devising her own method of after-treatment counselling, Anne and Ron moved to Glasgow where they set up in business themselves. Now, six years later, the word is spreading faster than ever – and 52 per cent of her patients have kicked the habit. The average with other methods is five per cent. And she added: "Unlike traditional acupuncture techniques, laser therapy doesn't involve needles. "A cold beam of light is applied to energy points on the nose, hands, ears and wrists. They promote the release of endorphin into the system, which has a natural calming effect on the body. "The client experiences a feeling

of euphoria and wellbeing, which helps to reduce dramatically the cravings that come with giving up smoking". Anne was initially based at her clinic on the south side of Glasgow, and she got plenty of business after telling the *Daily Record* all about her treatment. She said: "I've never had to advertise yet – the story in the *Record* helped me so much." The results of a study into the laser treatment at Monklands Hospital, in Lanarkshire, are now being made available to health boards across Scotland. Now Anne's sought-after therapy has become the talk of hospitals across Scotland. Staff at Glasgow Royal Infirmary,

treatment could help save hundreds of lives every year. "We will be looking at the results of the study more closely over the next few months. Preventing the onset of smoking-related disease is far more beneficial to the individual and more cost-effective to the NHS." Anne, of Newton Mearns, near Glasgow, now has a network of therapists working with across Scotland – in Lanarkshire, Dunbartonshire, Dumfries and Fife. And the message has even spread south

of the Border. Anne said: "All of the therapists have been smokers who have given up after trying the treatment." Those who use the treatment privately pay £80 for the entire package. That includes the initial session, the two booster sessions, and counselling and advice from Anne and a special helpline. Anne said: "We give them advice and tips on how to change their routines and cope with different circumstances like going to the pub, or wanting a cigarette first thing in the morning. "We tell them that the minute you stop smoking, the body starts to feel better."

Stobhill, Law in Lanarkshire, and South Ayrshire Hospitals, are experimenting with the laser treatment on staff. Monklands was the first in the UK to use it on the NHS for patients.

**T**HE first session takes 35 minutes, followed up by two booster sessions of 20 minutes a time if required. Jim Currie, chief executive of Monklands, is excited by the success rate. He said: "In the long term, this



**CASE OF ANNE**

**P**ENSIONER Annie Westhorpe, right, smoked 30 a day for 46 years before starting laser therapy. Grandmother Annie 67, from Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, knew she had to stop after suffering a heart attack in November. She tried patches but found herself continuing to smoke. Annie said "Friends told me I would end up overdosing on nicotine unless I either stopped the patches or gave up smoking. "The people at Monklands General Hospital suggested I try laser therapy, and it was marvellous. I haven't had a craving since. I wish they had this treatment 20 years ago. "It's not a miracle cure. You have to be very committed and really want to stop, but the benefits to your health are well worth the effort. "In my case, I was told I had angina and decided enough was enough."



**CASE OF CATHERINE**



**M**ONKLANDS nursing assistant Catherine McVey, left, will soon be off the weed for a full year – thanks to laser treatment. She smoked around 15 a day for more than 20 years – and even more when she was in the pub. But now the cravings have virtually gone and she is confident that never again will she smoke. "Like many other people I had tried patches, but found after two weeks I wanted to smoke. The laser treatment was fantastic and absolutely pain free. In fact it was very relaxing." Catherine, 42, from Chapelhall, who is married with two grown-up daughters, had the three laser sessions included in Anne's package – and that did the trick. "Now and again, when I see someone else smoking I get a wee urge. But now the urges are easier to resist."

PICTURES: DAVID CRUICKSHANKS