

Nurse mum was on duty when burnt son was wheeled in

EXCLUSIVE

By Tracey Bryce

trbryce@sundaypost.com

AMY McCABE looked on in horror as her own son was wheeled into the emergency theatre at Yorkhill.

For the auxiliary nurse on night shift at the Glasgow children's hospital, it felt like a bad dream.

But mum-of-two Amy soon realised she was living the nightmare.

While she was working, her four-year-old son Ben had been hit by a firework in a freak accident at a display outside the family home in Cumbernauld.

A rocket misfired, hitting him in the chest, setting his shirt on fire and causing severe burns.

"It was horrific," Amy, 37, said. "Watching sick children come in is hard enough, but there's no bigger shock than when it's your own child."

Husband Alan, 39, family and neighbours had gathered to set off some fireworks.

Ben's on the mend after firework horror



■ Ben and Amy.



Everyone was kept at a safe distance, but one somehow shot right into Ben's jacket.

"Nobody could see where the rocket had gone," Amy said. "The next minute Ben started screaming."

"We can't understand how it happened but the firework went inside his coat and set his shirt on fire."

Alan wrapped Ben in wet blankets until an ambulance arrived.

■ Ben's burns are looking better every day.

But by the time he arrived at hospital, the intense heat had burned through his delicate skin.

He was rushed to theatre where doctors discovered third degree burns on his neck, chest and behind his left ear.

Surgeons performed seven skin grafts to mend the damage.

Ben spent three weeks in hospital, after contracting MRSA — a common infection in burns victims.

When he was eventually allowed home, he needed to be massaged with creams and have dressings changed four times a day.

"We soon realised Ben was very fortunate," Amy, who is now a dental technician, recalled. "Thankfully the burns hadn't affected his respiratory system."

"His burns are looking better every day."

The family had tremendous support from charity the Scottish Burned Children's Club, run voluntarily by firefighter Mark Stevenson.

The SBCC has allowed Ben to spend time with other victims, and get a break from feeling 'different'.

"His confidence has improved tenfold," Amy said.

Now Ben, 6, has agreed to front the charity's campaign warning of non-official firework displays.

SBCC is also lobbying the Scottish Government to change the law so people would have to prove they've completed a course on using fireworks safely before buying them.

Amy said: "Having fireworks banned from retailers altogether would be ideal, but regulating who can buy them is the next best thing."

"We'll never forget what happened — and never stop fighting to prevent it happening to someone else."