

THE Pulse

Issue Number 27
October 2006

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital **NHS**
NHS Trust



Practice makes perfect

Learning clinical skills with the doctors of tomorrow



Home next day

Paediatric surgery team wins prize for teamwork

Viewpoint

The day we looked disaster in the face - by Simon Watkin



Inside the Big C

A day in the life of the new cancer support centre



We're all going green. . .

Why recycling our waste makes good sense

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital

Colney Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7UY
Tel: 01603 286286 www.nnuh.nhs.uk

Restaurant

West Atrium Level 1, open daily 7am-2.30am
Serco cafe bars

Outpatients West and Outpatients East,
open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

WRVS coffee shop Plaza (East) open Mon-Fri
7am-7pm, weekends 11-5pm

WRVS shops East Atrium, open 8am-8pm
Mon-Fri and 10am-6pm weekends

Plaza (West) open 7am-8pm Mon-Fri
8am-6pm weekends

The Stock Shop (ladies' fashions) open
9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri and 12-5pm Saturdays

Serco helpdesk (for housekeeping, porters,
catering and maintenance). Call ext. 3333

IT helpdesk (for tel./computer faults): Refer
to the online call-logging facility on the
intranet home page

Security Call ext. 5156 or 5656

Reception

East Atrium Level 1: ext. 5457 or 5458

West Atrium Level 1: ext. 5462 or 5463

Outpatients East Level 2: ext. 5474 or 5475

Outpatients West Level 2: ext. 5472

East Atrium Level 2: ext. 5461

Travel Office Ext. 3666

For car parking permits, ID badges, keys to
the cycle sheds, use of pool cars and the Trust
bicycle. Also information about buses and
other transport services

Bank

Cash dispensers in East Atrium Level 2
and in WRVS shop (west)

Chapel

Open to all. For details of services or to
contact the Chaplains, call ext. 3470

Sir Thomas Browne Library

Mon, Wed, Thurs: 9am - 5.30pm,

Tues: 9am - 8pm, Fri: 9am - 5pm

Holiday Playscheme

At Blackdale Middle School during school
holidays for the children of Trust staff.
Contact Christine McKenzie on ext. 2213

Cromer Hospital

Mill Road, Cromer NR27 0BQ

Tel: 01263 513571

Restaurant 7.45am-6.45pm

Other departments are based at:

- **Cotman Centre**, Colney Lane, Norwich Cellular Pathology, (Histopathology and Cytology), Radiology Academy

- **Norwich Community Hospital**, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich NR2 3TU, Tel: 01603 776776: Breast Screening, Health Records Library, Pain Management

- **Aldwych House**, Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NR: Occupational Health (ext.3035): Outpatient Appointments, Training, Nursing Practice, Choice team, Norfolk Research Ethics Committee, some IT services

- **The Norwich Central Family Planning Clinic**, Grove Road, Norwich NR1 3RH. Tel: 01603 287345.

Prize for 'home next day' team



Working together to achieve a safe homecoming for children: the paediatric team was led by Mr Azad Mathur and Dr Michael Pfeil of the UEA (pictured back row, centre and second right)

A **MULTIDISCIPLINARY** team led by paediatric surgeon Mr Azad Mathur and UEA Midwifery lecturer Dr Michael Pfeil has won an international prize for a research project to find out whether children could safely leave hospital the day after having their appendix removed.

Traditionally, those who undergo a straightforward appendicectomy (around 70 per cent of cases) stay in hospital for two to three days, but the Norwich project has proved they can safely go home the next day.

The research study involved a total of 75 patients, with 25 being visited at home by

a children's outreach nurse within 24 hours of leaving hospital. This was followed up with telephone calls to check on the children's progress over the next 10 days.

Mr Mathur commented: "We work to very strict criteria to ensure that our patients receive the best of care, and this project demonstrated that many children who undergo uncomplicated appendicectomies can be safely discharged the day after surgery."

The Grant Memorial Prize was awarded jointly by British Association of Paediatric Surgeons and the Association of British Paediatric Nurses.

WELCOME

...to **Dr Hutan Foroutan-Sabzevari**, histopathologist, who recently joined the Trust.

FAREWELL

...to the following long-serving staff who have left the Trust since 1 August: **Trudy Garriock**, sister in Dermatology, after 36 years, **Alan Cullingford**, technician in Radiotherapy Physics, and **Elaine Sparrow**, admin team leader in Plastics, both with 30 years' service; **Rita Holmes**, staff nurse at Cromer and **Robert Gregg**, phlebotomist, both with 29 years' service; **Cherry McGuire**, staff nurse in Theatres, after 28 years; **Jane Robinson**, medical secretary, after 27 years; **Tricia Norman**, clerical officer in Occupational Therapy, and **Janet Appleton**, clerical officer in Orthotics, both with 26 years' service; **Robert Scott**, technical manager, after 24 years, **Margaret Paffett**, staff nurse at Cromer, after 23 years; **Nikki Morris**, specialist nurse in Gynaecology, and **Jean Steward**, healthcare assistant at Cromer, both with 20 years' service

Life saving boost for heart patients

EACH YEAR an estimated 400 people under 35 die unexpectedly from heart failure, often caused by a heart rhythm disorder known as an arrhythmia.

Once diagnosed, arrhythmias can be treated with drugs but in some high-risk

cases a device known as an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD), pictured,

may be fitted to jolt the heart back into a normal rhythm.

Until June this year, all local patients needing ICDs would have to travel to Papworth for specialist treatment, but now this can be provided at NNUH. So far, six patients have been fitted with the ICDs at NNUH and there are currently around 90 patients with ICDs living in the Norfolk area. Increasing numbers of these patients attend a clinic at NNUH for follow-up care.



THE 'RATS' from Finance gave an impressive show of strength in the Dragonboat Regatta held on Whitlingham Broad in July, raising £1,038 for leukaemia research and contributing to a total of nearly £37,000 during the day. Sarah Wilkins, deputy finance manager for Division 2, suggested the outing as a "fun day messing about on the river". Far from deserting the ship, the rats powered home to be placed 14th out of 29 teams overall. "We obviously did a very good impression of rats, as we won the fancy dress trophy too," said Sarah. The 'rats' were ably assisted by partners and two former members of the Finance team.

Warm welcome for a four-legged friend

NNUH has won a national award for welcoming 'hearing dogs' for deaf people. The hospital was nominated by patient Barbara Bird, from North Walsham, whose dog, Ceri, was allowed to visit her in hospital.

Denton Ward Sister Kay Marrison (pictured with Ceri and Barbara and other ward staff) says: "Ceri was extremely well behaved and we were happy to welcome her to the ward."

More than 1,200 dogs have been placed by the charity 'Hearing Dogs for Deaf People' since it was formed in 1982. The dogs are trained to recognise specific sounds and lead deaf people to the source.

English for free

SERCO ARE once again providing free English lessons for staff who speak other languages, in conjunction with City College. The course takes place on Thursdays from 3-5pm in the Serco office at NNUH. Call ext 5173 for details (see page 10 for more about learning opportunities).



PICTURE: NURSING STANDARD

Knee reaction

NNUH IS taking part in a national trial to see whether Vitamin D can slow the progression of knee osteoarthritis in people over 50.

Funded by the Arthritis Research Campaign, the researchers will study 800 people with the early stages of knee osteoarthritis over three years to determine whether vitamin D can prevent the destruction of cartilage and reduce pain.

If you would like to take part in this study, call Jackie Tilston on 01603 287 010 or 01603 286 616.

The changing role of hospitals

THERE HAS been a great deal of publicity recently about hospital closures and the impact this will have on local health services. We can take comfort from the fact that NNUH is a very successful acute hospital and will continue to play an important role for patients. But while the building itself is here to stay, there will undoubtedly be some fundamental changes to the way we deliver healthcare in the future.

Cromer Hospital is a good example of this new way of thinking. The new hospital is being designed to meet the health needs of the 21st century, with a variety of services available closer to patients' homes. This, in turn, will enable us to focus our attention on patients who are most in need of acute services at NNUH.

Already the new dialysis unit at Cromer is making a big difference for patients living in North Norfolk. Soon the new radiology unit will make it possible for us to expand out diagnostic services in the same way.

Of course, there is no quick-fix solution to the question of where and how the new Cromer hospital will be built, but I can assure you we are doing our very best to move this project forward as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, I continue to be proud of the commitment and hard work that is going on all around me. I congratulate the teams in Neurology and Medicine for the Elderly for their collaborative efforts to improve services for Parkinson's patients (see page 4). This is a great example of health professionals working with colleagues in the community to put the needs of our patients first.

Congratulations also to our 'team of the year' in Theatres for developing a web-based booking system for emergency patients, with the help of IT web manager David Chapman.

Paul Forden

Chief Executive, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust

Standards are judged 'excellent' for patients

NNUH AND Cromer Hospital are the only acute hospitals in the region to offer patients an excellent standard of both food and cleanliness, according to the latest inspection results from the National Patient Safety Agency.

The Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT), which includes members of the public, made this assessment after visiting Cromer and NNUH earlier this year.

The Trust's director of resources Anna Dugdale commented: "These are very pleasing results and it's all down to good teamwork on the part of often over-looked staff who are delivering an excellent service for patients."

"These results are a credit to Serco staff at Norwich and Norfolk County Services staff at Cromer. We are committed to making sure our patients enjoy high standards of catering and cleanliness. We remain determined to keep delivering high standards and improving them wherever possible."

LETTERS

WRITE TO SUE JONES, EDITOR, COMMUNICATIONS TEAM, NNUH

'I'm a dermatologist, get me out of here!'

THE IDEA of 'Going Ape' in Thetford Forest for a team-building social event met with a mixed response in Dermatology. Those with a head for heights were really up for the challenge; others kindly volunteered to do the cooking for the barbecue instead.

In the event, so many people were keen to swing through the trees that we had to divide into two groups.

The Go Ape course involved a high wire 60 feet up in the trees, with four zip lines 140m long and more than 25 obstacles to navigate through. It took a lot of balance, nerves, agility and sweat to get around. It was hard work pulling your own body weight up netting.

Some of us took over three hours to complete the course after getting stuck in tunnels (a doctor). Others had to be coaxed up the rope ladders (a secretary)

Theatre team wins £20,000 prize

THE EMERGENCY theatre team at NNUH has won £20,000 in a national competition for their innovative work in creating a web-based booking system for emergency patients.

Consultant anaesthetist Dr David Wilson-Nunn (pictured second from right) worked with web manager David Chapman and theatre clinical leader Zbys Kaznowski to develop a system to replace the old paper-based theatre lists and provide a more secure and accessible way to keep the lists up to date.

Dr Wilson-Nunn commented: "The new system makes handovers more efficient because we can tell at a glance which patients have been assessed by anaesthetists and which require further investigation."

The competition was organised by the Association for Perioperative Practice and sponsored by Molnlycke Health Care. The £20,000 prize will be shared between the team, to be spent on education projects.



The booking system has now been adapted for the orthopaedic trauma theatre team, to help them categorise fractures according to international guidelines.

Statue is unveiled

A BRONZE bust of the late Hugh Phillips, former orthopaedic surgeon at NNUH and President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was unveiled in the East Atrium (Level 2) in June. The sculptor was the Norwich artist Glen Rolph (pictured) and the bronze is mounted on a plinth made locally from a piece of Swaledale limestone which is thought to be 300 million years old.

Surgeon John Colin, who commissioned the statue along with his medical colleagues, said it was appropriate that Mr Phillips' bust was displayed next to that of Kenneth McKee, who pioneered hip replacements at NNUH in the 1950s.



OBITUARY: ROBIN COOK

IT IS WITH great sadness that we report the death of Robin Cook, a Trustee of Hospital Radio Norwich and its inspirational station manager.



Robin was a regular visitor to the wards at NNUH, finding time for a joke and a chat with patients and collecting requests to help lighten their experience of being in hospital. He was also a member of the Monday evening team of broadcasters.

Robin leaves a widow, Margaret, a son Stuart, twin daughters Ann and Rachel and grandchildren.



and some took ages debating whether they had enough guts to do the Tarzan zip line before chickening out (a nurse, a doctor and a secretary).

The second group had to put up with 'helpful' advice from below on how to get across each obstacle. This was not always welcomed.

In all, it was an excellent team-building event, with everyone encouraging and helping each other, and we all had a good laugh – mostly at each other.

One of the best aspects was that we all achieved something new together that no-one had done before.

We are even planning to do the whole thing again next year, with rounders and cricket games on the green.

Sarah Fuller,
staff nurse, Dermatology

Watch your waste-line!

A SCHEME to recycle more of our waste is proving to be a big success at the Cotman Centre and in some of our admin offices at NNUH.

The idea is that 'domestic' waste such as leftover food and wrapping paper is collected separately from 'green waste', such as clean paper, recyclable plastic bottles and cans. The green waste is then sorted off-site by NEWS (Norfolk Environmental Waste Services).

"The green waste costs us less to dispose of and doesn't go to landfill, so it's a win-win situation," explains Jon Hyam (pictured), facilities operations manager for Norfolk County Services, the contractors responsible for waste management at the Cotman Centre.

Serco now operates a similar scheme at NNUH, where products such as cardboard, scrap metal, old computers and fluorescent bulbs have long been recycled through local companies.

Serco's environmental manager Gerry Barber is a keen advocate of recycling to protect the environment and save money: "We used to send 100 per cent of our waste to landfill – now over a third is recycled, which means considerable savings for the Trust. We are asking staff in some areas to help us by throwing away rubbish that can't be recycled into a separate container, and so far the response has been brilliant."



DID YOU KNOW?

- 20 large plastic bottles can be recycled to produce enough fleece material for one jacket
- All our cardboard waste is now shipped to other parts of the world to be recycled under a deal negotiated with Bolton Brothers
- Scrap metal and old machines are collected and recycled through Eastco of Lenwade
- For more information about recycling, call Gerry Barber on ext 5181 or go to www.norfolk-waste.co.uk

There are always one or two people who can't be bothered, but we leave out a 'red card' as a reminder and so far that's worked a treat."

The most important priority for the hospital is to ensure that clinical waste, confidential paperwork and sharps such as needles are safely disposed of. However, with the willing co-operation of staff, it's clear the recycling 'bug' could soon catch on.

• If you would like to join the recycling scheme at NNUH, call Chris Paul on ext. 5131

Hospital Doctor commends work with Parkinsons patients

A TEAM from NNUH has been shortlisted for the Hospital Doctor Team of the Year award for their collaborative work in managing patients with Parkinson's disease.

Staff from both Neurology and Medicine for the Elderly sought the views of patients and carers and worked with colleagues in the community to improve services for all patients with movement disorders.

There are now more clinics providing information and therapy for patients, along with improved inter-professional learning and better communication between specialist teams.

Consultant neurologist Dr Paul Worth said: "This is an endorsement of everyone's commitment to improve our services for chronic disease, and will spur us on to achieve better things. I'm particularly grateful for the hard work of all the therapists who make such a difference to the lives of our patients."



Two winners for Bicentenary prize

FOR THE first time in its history, the Bicentenary Trust Prize for research has been shared between two members of staff. Sharon Crowle and Helen Aitken (pictured with director of nursing Chris Baxter) were each awarded £150 after presenting their findings to a panel of experts.

Helen's research involved developing a genetic test in the lab that could enable drugs to be more closely tailored to individual patients. "We still have some way to go on this research but for the patients it would make a big difference as it would make their treatment more effective," said Helen, whose work formed part of her degree in biomedical science.

Sharon's research focused on the



experience of students and their mentors. "The overwhelming conclusion is that students want to feel part of the team and that mentors can play a big part in that process. However, the mentors also need support to enable them to spend time with the students and understand their educational needs," said Sharon, who has now completed a MSc in health science.

Our first medical students are now in their final year and will soon become fully fledged doctors. Here, senior nurse Barbara Spooner explains the role of the clinical skills resource area, where the students practise their skills on both real and 'dummy' patients

BETWEEN September and July we have a steady stream of students coming through the doors of our clinical skills resource area. Here, in a quiet corner of the hospital, a motley collection of electronic body parts and manikins – including the versatile 'Sim Man' – wait to be activated and used for teaching purposes.

Situated on Level 3 (East block), the resource area consists of three simulated ward areas, a 'laboratory' and several other teaching spaces, as well as a UEA computer suite, all created when the medical school at the UEA first opened in 2002.

The medical students start to meet real patients from the very beginning of their training, working in small groups to study different aspects of a particular specialty. For instance, with respiratory medicine they will spend time with patients in a variety of settings, including GP surgeries, outpatient clinics, the respiratory investigation unit, wards and theatres, as well as X-ray, physiotherapy and occupational therapy departments.

Here in the clinical resource centre we teach practical skills such as taking blood and giving injections, and the students learn together in small groups, practising on manikins and other aids before they go anywhere near a real patient.

They are regularly tested to ensure they have learned their clinical skills to a high standard, and we host clinical exams called OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Exams) throughout the academic year.

In all, around 32 days will be given over to exams this year – our job is to ensure that the assessors, volunteers and actors taking part, as well as all the equipment and paperwork, are organised and in place so the exams can be conducted without a hitch.

This can be quite challenging as the students are required to move swiftly from one work station to another – sometimes as many as 30 work areas have to be set up for

a single day. All this student activity has to be timetabled by our admin staff – not just for this department but for other areas of the hospital too.

The students rely on patients volunteering to take part in teaching sessions and exams – last year nearly 1,000 patients volunteered, ranging from young children and pregnant women to the elderly. Under the close supervision of senior clinicians, the students gain experience of history-taking and examination away from the time-restricted activities of the rest of the hospital.

Most of the patients come from home, although occasionally we ask inpatient



The clinical resource team, clockwise from top left: Barbara Spooner, Chris Bligh, Sue Norris, Marcia Ward, Joyce Henderson, Lesley Bowker and Jo Durrant

volunteers to take part. The patients really enjoy the experience and often express the view that they are happy to put something back after all the good care they have received.

In September we welcomed 168 new students from the School of Medicine, bringing the total in training to 615. We are very excited about seeing these 'doctors of tomorrow' make progress in their careers. A lot of hard work goes into their training, not least from the many health professionals who contribute a great deal, alongside their day to day work with patients.

Right: Senior technician Chris Bligh checks the simulated arm that is used for taking blood – the vessels inside the 'arm' are filled with coloured water



Consultant anaesthetist Anna Lipp puts students Sukhdev Sohota, Stephanie Peate and Fiona Tumwebaze through their paces with 'Sim Man' as the willing patient



FIONA TUMWEBAZE (above), one of the first intake of medical students at the UEA, described her training so far as 'a fantastic experience'. "It's wonderful to have this clinical resource area, away from the distractions of the main hospital, where you can practise your skills on the dummies and ask questions in a controlled environment.

"I have just completed a placement in a busy London hospital which made me appreciate my training even more because everyone there was so busy – the patients were not prepared to give up their time to take part in teaching sessions. Here, we have had lots of opportunities to role-play with real patients and the problem-based-learning approach is very helpful because it's so much easier when you are working together as a group."

Doctors for TOMORROW



STEPHANIE PEATE (left) another fifth-year student, commented: "In a way we are setting the standard for other medical students and that's a very exciting opportunity. I've been very impressed by the enthusiasm and support shown by the hospital staff and the patients."

SUKHDEV SOHOTA (near left) is also grateful for the support of both staff and

patients. "It's been a great opportunity to work in a new teaching hospital with such excellent IT and imaging facilities," he said.

• If you are a patient and would be interested in becoming a volunteer for a teaching session or an exam, please contact the clinical resource admin team on 01603 286618 for more information.

Although only a few short steps from NNUH, the Big C Centre is a world away from all things clinical. Manager Jill Chapman describes the charity's vision to create a 'safe haven' for anyone affected by cancer, whether they are patients, visitors or carers



THE BIG C CENTRE (above) is built in the shape of two Cs wrapped around each other. The core team of manager Jill Chapman, deputy manager Liz Muniandy and facilitator Wendy Marchant (far left, in reverse order) is supplemented by volunteers, including former patient Pauline Bourke (pictured with medical student Rachel Ahmad) who runs a scarf-tying workshop once a month. "I chose to wear a scarf when I lost my hair through chemotherapy and other patients asked if I could show them the technique," she explained. "I'm just happy to help."

Where C stands for Caring

THE LAST few months have been a busy round of meetings and interviews for Jill Chapman, manager of the new Big C Centre. Cool and serene on the surface, she has been networking furiously to ensure that visitors receive a warm welcome in the calm and relaxed surroundings of the new centre.

"My vision is that it will be seen as a safe haven where cancer patients and those close to them feel able to ask questions and talk about their concerns," she says. "It may take a bit of courage to walk through our doors, but our visitors are usually glad they made that first step."

"We want to give the impression of being away from all things clinical so no-one at the Big C Centre, whether staff or volunteers, wears a uniform of any kind.

"We are not here to take over the services provided by the hospital but to enhance the patients' cancer journey by working alongside clinical staff. We do not have access to patients' notes and there are many issues – around consent and treatment, for instance – that must be discussed with medical staff.



"Patients are full of praise for our staff, but research shows that some take in only around 50 per cent of what they are told when they are first diagnosed – it's not until much later that they think of all the things they should have asked. We can listen to these patients' concerns and point them in the right direction."

Jill completed her nurse training at Peterborough District Hospital and met her husband Mike, an antique restorer, while nursing in Johannesburg. They have two children: Rebecca 17 and Oliver, 13.

Her last role was deputy manager of the Quidenham Children's Hospice, where she

stayed for 15 years: "People assume it was a sad place but it was very much alive and thriving, with lots of laughter," she says. "Yes it was highly emotional at times but you got to know the families really well and it put things in perspective – you couldn't worry too much about trivial day-to-day things when children were so ill and dying."

Jill aims to mould the Big C Centre around the needs of cancer patients:

"We don't assume to know what patients want; instead, we are asking them. Cancer is still a taboo subject for some people, even though some prognoses are excellent. The patients may want to talk about dying or funerals but feel unable to broach this with their family, or vice versa. Or they may have practical concerns such as how to get benefits or organise holiday insurance.

"We don't claim to have all the answers; sometimes there *are* no answers, but we listen hard and do as much as we can for people. All our discussions are completely confidential – one of the biggest gifts we have to offer is our time."

Facts about the Big C Centre

THE BIG C Centre is open to visitors Monday to Friday from 9.30 - 4.30 and until 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month. The focus is on adults with cancer, although children may be seen as part of a family where a parent has cancer.

- The £1.2m centre was built with funds raised by the Big C charity and all running costs are currently being met by the charity. Eventually the Centre will be run by the NNUH Trust, with some financial help from the Big C.
- The Centre has a circular sitting area, plus private rooms for one-to-one discussions, meetings and therapeutic activities. An up-to-date library of books and leaflets is available, along with videos and DVDs, CDs and details of useful websites.
- A professional counsellor and former Macmillan nurse, Ruth Porter (right) is available to cancer patients for up



to six counselling sessions, free of charge.

- Each month a 'themed' display area is devoted to information related to cancer. In October the theme is breast awareness, in November lung cancer and in December fundraising for the Big C.
- Advice for cancer patients on benefits, housing and finance is available from the CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) on Wednesday afternoons from 1- 4.30pm. Call 01603 286112 for details
- The Look Good, Feel Better cosmetic charity offers make-up sessions for cancer patients every month (Call 01603 286113 for an appointment), followed by a scarf-tying workshop on a drop-in basis, led by a former patient, Pauline Bourke.



Volunteers at the Big C Centre, from left: David Sinclair, Sue Sharland, Mary Dolding and Sandra Baker

THE BIG C'S management team is treading carefully to ensure that services offered at the Centre are appropriate and sustainable for the longer term. It is hoped that complementary therapies may include acupuncture, relaxation classes and hand and foot massage, with introductory 'taster' sessions provided free of charge to cancer patients.

The LEARNING zone

ACCORDING TO an ancient Chinese proverb, "learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere" – and that's the principle behind a new initiative at NNUH.

"With more than 5,000 staff in our organisation we already have a wealth of resources and skills just waiting to be tapped," explains senior biomedical scientist Martin Woolnough, a learning rep for the union Amicus. "But lifelong learning is not just about qualifications or vocational training, it's more about having the opportunity, encouragement and support to continue with learning – basically, a chance to fulfil our potential."

Martin Woolnough and Debbie Wright (pictured) are helping to implement the KSF (Knowledge and Skills Framework) as well as being union learning reps. They point out that the principles of lifelong learning complement the core requirements of KSF.

"Whether you have a yen to make the perfect soufflé, join an architectural dig or be a winner at chess – it really doesn't matter what you learn or would like to pursue," says Martin.

"The important thing is that the benefits of tackling a new skill or activity can spin off into other areas of your life. Even seemingly highly qualified people can benefit from this opportunity.

Do you have a desire to try something new? If so, our 'learning reps' can help you take the first step. They are creating a new web-based 'Learning Zone' to help foster a new enthusiasm for learning throughout the Trust



What is a learning rep?

Learning reps are trained and supported by their unions to provide free information and advice for staff. However, you don't need to be a union member to benefit from their help.

The aim is to create a 'Learning Zone' on the trust intranet to highlight the role of learning reps and to encourage anyone, whatever their role in the organisation and

whatever their educational background, to make the most of the opportunities on offer.

Learning reps can encourage and direct staff to learning opportunities such as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), literacy, numeracy and computer skills, as well as leisure activities.

What are the benefits?

Even if it's a world away from work, you may find that learning a new skill could increase your self-esteem, help you to meet other people and provide a springboard to further study or towards a new qualification, if that is your wish.

Do YOU have a skill you could share?

Another aim of the Learning Zone is to match staff who are willing to share their skills or expertise with other colleagues. So if you have the time and the inclination, our learning reps would like to hear from you.

What next?

Please complete our 'Learning Zone Survey' to let us know what kind of opportunities you might like to explore. Just click on the blackboard on the Trust intranet or look out for the survey in our Monday communications circular.

What next for the Knowledge and Skills Framework?

THE KNOWLEDGE and Skills Framework (KSF) is designed to support NHS staff in their professional development, linking this with future service needs.

Led by a small but dedicated KSF team, most ward areas have now finished writing their KSF job outlines which set out the key requirements for each post. Other departments will follow over the next few months, .

The job outlines will be used for appraisals, which are essential to assess current performance and to enable any training and development needs to be

identified. If you need appraisal training please contact the Training Department on extension 3375 to book a place.

KSF advisors provide support for staff in their own areas. They will be meeting in the Gooch Hall on 9 November from 2-4pm to discuss any issues and receive updates on KSF.

If you do not have an advisor in your area or would be interested in becoming one, please contact the KSF team on ext. 5049.

• If you have any concerns about KSF please contact Lynne Middlemiss (ext. 2211) or Judi Roper (ext. 2231) or by e-mail.

"I was lucky to have the support of my colleagues"



TERRY DAVIES, chairman of the NNUH branch of UNISON, is living proof that a slow start to learning is no barrier to success. He left school with no qualifications and was a porter at NNUH when he became a union rep.

"At first I was reluctant to go on courses because I was a slow learner – it was really hard to stick at it but I am really glad I did. I've noticed a huge difference in every area of my life. At home I can understand more about finance and help my children with their homework, while at work I have the confidence to hold my own with people at all levels.

"I was lucky to have a lot of encouragement from colleagues and I have tried to follow their example – I've learned you can move mountains with enthusiasm and determination."



"My self-esteem went up 200 per cent"

DEBBIE WRIGHT joined the Trust in 1974 as a healthcare assistant on Buxton ward and was recently supported by the Trust to attend a part-time course in counselling for children.

"Professionally and personally, this marked a real turning point for me," says Debbie. "Not only did I gain knowledge to help me in my work, but my self-esteem went up 200 per cent. My personal development was immense and my new-found enthusiasm rubbed off on my colleagues."

• YOU CAN contact the learning reps in complete confidence by emailing 'Learning Zone' on the global address list, or call ext. 3631 for more information.

THE DAY WE LOOKED 'DISASTER' IN THE FACE

Respiratory consultant Simon Watkin describes what happened when he faced the biggest 'crisis' of his career



IT HASN'T happened yet but anything is possible and now I have some idea what to do if it does... I refer, of course, to a local disaster on a scale that would require our 'Majax' (major incident) plan to be set in motion.

The red folder normally sits on a shelf in my office and contains instructions for all key hospital staff. As the duty medical director, my pre-defined role is that of 'hospital controller' - which sounds fun but in 'reality' is rather more scary.

The 'reality' sank in during a two-day simulation exercise led by "Emergo-Train" and the University of Coventry Disaster Management training team.

This was designed to ensure that all acute hospitals test their Majax plan and prepare for a disaster that will hopefully never happen.

The scenario? A (potentially poisonous) chemical tanker collides with two cars at Thickthorn roundabout, while at Norwich Station passengers are trapped when an intercity express crashes into a commuter train.

So how does this happen without bringing the hospital to a standstill? The secret is a clever combination of whiteboards on wheels and Euro-people (sic), ie magnetic cartoon characters made from laminated cardboard.

Euro-patients and Euro-staff are moved around the whiteboards by real-life hospital staff – around 80 of us in all, brought together by Operations Manager and 'disaster-master' Ray Nash - during the day-long simulation exercise.

The patients come with ready-made diagnoses: "Multiple trauma", "sucking

chest wound"; "two broken legs". The walking wounded arrive by the handful and are rapidly triaged and moved on, while the seriously injured are taken by cardboard box to 'theatres' and allocated to surgeons.

A good game, you might say. Well, it soon starts to feel real... the plastic people 'die' if you don't get to them in time; the



theatre recovery area is quickly blocked if beds are not made available on the wards. Down the corridor, the 'rest of the world' is at the end of a telephone

line manned by a versatile Emergo-train 'official'.

By the end of the day we had dealt with 61 casualties, 17 of them serious. Only one patient died and – thanks to a rapid reorganisation of resources – we never ran out of beds. We even had a few Euro-staff left over.

A debrief followed and soon we will have the formal report from the Emergo-train team. Our Majax plan will be reviewed and adjustments made... but for now we will all go back to our day jobs. Home in time for tea!

The Viewpoint column is written from a personal perspective and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Trust. If there is a subject you feel strongly about, please send your contribution to Sue Jones, Editor, Communications dept, NNUH (sue.jones@nnuh.nhs.uk)

Negotiations for new hospital continue



THE REDEVELOPMENT of Cromer Hospital has not been forgotten. While negotiations regarding the Norwich Road site continue, two other options are currently being explored. One is the feasibility of redeveloping the existing hospital site in Mill Road, while another possibility is to build on the football ground opposite (pictured) and sell the existing site for homes. The latter option would require an alternative site to be found for the town's football ground.



Shorter hours for Minor Injuries Unit

CROMER'S MINOR Injuries Unit (MIU) is closing earlier at night after an audit showed that very few patients make use of the service after 8pm.

In the year to April 2006, only 449 people used the service between 8pm and 10pm (just over one person each night) and all of those patients had developed health problems earlier in the day.

There will be no reduction in staffing levels so more nurses are now available at the busiest times, leading to shorter waiting times for MIU patients.



A stitch in time

CELEBRATING 40 years' service with the NHS is former dressmaker Vivienne Curson, now a ward clerk and receptionist at Cromer Hospital. Vivienne began her career making nurses' aprons at the old N&N and was the sewing room supervisor for 30 years.

"In the early days everything was made to order, from the nurses' uniforms to the surgical gowns. We also made the shrouds and all the hospital curtains," she recalled.

"The nurses were issued with only two cotton dresses for their first year. Each bodice had to be lined and tucked on to a waistband so it could be adjusted if the nurses gained or lost weight – I remember one of the sisters had a 56-in waist!

"Everything was embroidered with the name of the hospital and each surgeon had his own set of numbered surgical sheets which would be used for up to 50 operations. When a new type of operation, such as the hip replacement, was introduced, the sheet had to be redesigned with holes cut out of the fabric in the appropriate place."

Holidays a busy time for staff

THE BUSY holiday season, combined with superb weather in July (whatever happened to August?) resulted in record activity in the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) and ensured that Cromer remains key in ensuring that targets for emergency treatment are being met.

The MIU is not the only area where our staff have been working hard. Here is a selection of our activity since April 2006. So far we have:

- Seen 7,700 patients in Outpatients
- Taken blood samples from 6,678 patients
- Treated 2,834 adults and 1,097 children in the Minor Injuries Unit
- Cared for 55 patients following surgery at NNUH
- Carried out surgical procedures on 379

patients in our day surgery theatres

- Carried out 773 procedures in the Endoscopy unit
- Carried out more than 770 cataract operations in our Ophthalmology theatres.

Since April we have also received countless thank you letters (some accompanied by chocolates) and only eight written complaints which have all been resolved.

I am sure all will agree with me that this shows we are providing superb clinical care in a friendly, familiar environment. Cromer continues to deliver!

Helen Lloyd

Service Manager, Cromer Hospital



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Please send your contributions for the December issue to Sue Jones by 9 November 2006.

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