

freestyle

Keep up to date with the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust

March/April 2004

Strike up the band

The Friends of the Royal Free celebrated their 30th birthday in style with a rousing, foot-stomping jazz concert by Humphrey Lyttelton and his band. "I've been here before!" quipped the 82-year-old broadcaster and band leader.

This was the sixth year running that Humph and the band had given up their time to play at the Royal Free. They do it, he said: "because we enjoy it. They're a lovely audience and it helps the hospital. We look forward to it." The feeling is mutual – many of the audience this year were regulars, too, and the band certainly gave them what they wanted.

As well as great tunes, we got great gags between each number. Humph, resplendent in natty tartan trousers and matching red shirt, was on good form. People love his concerts as much for his wit as his music.

A highlight of the evening was when the veteran musician introduced four highly talented rising stars, from the Haringey Young Musicians' big band, who played two numbers to a rousing ovation.

The evening, which included a reception afterwards to which all members of the audience were invited, raised over

£4,000 for the Friends LIFEPAK appeal. The appeal aims to raise £35,000 to buy five state-of-the-art cardiac defibrillators. Prompt use of these when somebody suffers a cardiac arrest can be life-saving. The appeal has already had a kick-start: one patient, who wishes to remain anonymous, donated £7,000 to buy one machine.

- Fundraising events continue throughout this anniversary year. Contact the Friends' office (020 7830 2091; or ext 4094) for more details.

Rising stars . . . from Haringey Young Musicians' big band, with jazz legend Humphrey Lyttelton



Simply the best

Royal Free staff achievement awards 2004 (page two)

Can we help you?

Advice on pensions and benefits – now at the Royal Free (page three)

Open day

News on treatments and trials for cancer (see page five)

Flipping marvellous

Children from Devonshire House school in Hampstead had great fun tossing, turning, flipping – and, of course, eating – pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. It was all in a good cause: raising money for the Royal Free's children's wards.

Devonshire House sponsors a different children's charity each year, explained Lisa Deaner, who co-runs the school's VIP (Very Interested Parents) with fellow parent Maria Garcia. This year, they decided to choose a local cause that everybody knows - and the Royal Free's children's wards were close to everyone's homes and hearts.

"Maria's daughter spent a lot of time on Malcolm ward and my son's best friend was on Riddell ward for a couple of months after being injured in a hit and run accident," said Lisa. "I went to see him every day. The nurses were marvellous and the orthopaedic staff did an amazing job - he's back at school now and doing well. Having seen it for myself, I realise how difficult it is to keep children amused in hospital. We'd like to be able to help them pass the time a little more enjoyably, and take some of the strain off the nurses. We thought we could donate televisions, videos, toys, or equipment: we'll discuss with the staff what they need."

Pancake day was just one of several fund-raising events planned throughout the year. "In previous years we've raised close to £20,000 for charity," said Lisa. Watch this space.

Out of the frying pan . . .

Children from Devonshire House school toss pancakes for charity



Star performers



There were no plunging necklines, red carpets or tearful acceptance speeches at this year's Royal Free achievement awards. Just well-deserved recognition of those members of staff who have gone beyond the call of duty, improving the quality of our care and services, demonstrating dedication to patients and generally making an outstanding contribution to the trust. Here are the winners . . .

Individual winners



James Charles, support services, works tirelessly keeping the grounds of the hospital clean. His hard work and dedication to his job and to the trust ensures that both staff and visitors' first impression as they come into the hospital is a good one. He always has a smile and a cheery word for everyone, and is always willing to assist visitors and patients.

Jane Cooper, radiotherapy receptionist, has transformed the care of patients attending the hospital for radiotherapy, and the morale of all staff. Nothing is too much trouble for her and everybody praises her work and dedication. She exudes warmth and professionalism and goes out of her way to make patients feel at ease, displaying a genuine interest in them and their welfare.



Porter **Steve Downer** came to the rescue during the snowstorm in January. By early evening the whole lower ground floor area, near A&E, was full of people who couldn't get home. Steve was so concerned that people were getting cold and hungry that he sought approval from the site manager to lay on tea, coffee and sandwiches. His care and initiative was recognised by a patient, who wrote to praise Steve's "kindness and thoughtfulness for us weary patients." He added: "He helped us all over the long hours till way after midnight."

Chris Breen, receptionist, is "the smiling face of the Royal Free", as one colleague put it. "She is cheerful, helpful and generally brightens up reception just being there." Chris has shown great dedication in her role and helps many patients and staff on a daily basis. People always comment on how helpful she is.



Charge nurse **Paul Blair** stepped into the breach and took over the running of Garrett Anderson ward for six months when three senior staff members were away. He worked remarkably well during this stressful time, maintaining and developing the excellent standards of patient care on the ward; supporting the team and making every member of the

team feel valued; and putting a smile on patients' faces.

Group winners



The **Acorn group** is a superb example of teamwork in maternity services. The team, comprising Royal Free community midwives, was set up in Gospel Oak to improve access to maternity care and clinical outcomes for women from a very disadvantaged area. Comments from a recent user survey

include: "The midwives in the Acorn team were stunning: they were caring, efficient, thoughtful and brilliant. I cannot praise them highly enough".

Led by **Helen Forth** and **Claudia Clayman**, the teams in physiotherapy, nursing and continence services have improved patient access to continence services by developing a referral pathway for North Camden GPs, for women with urinary incontinence.

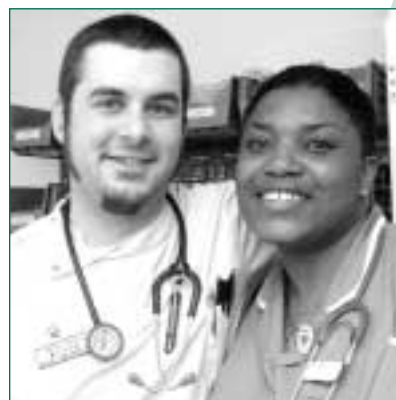


These links with primary care have led to the waiting list for assessment being dramatically reduced. The teams have also worked with the continence benchmark group to develop a continence assessment tool for all patients.

The Royal Free's **accident & emergency team** have really risen to the nationwide challenge to improve patient access in emergency care. Around 90 per cent of patients now spend less than four hours in A&E, compared to 70 per cent just 12-15 months ago. Most people attending A&E have



minor illness or injury problems, and the expanding emergency nurse practitioner service has improved their care. Further initiatives have reduced waiting times for more seriously ill patients who require admission.



Staff nurses **Steve Bunyan** and **Ade Oguntula**, on Langton ward, kept their heads when a very difficult, life-threatening situation arose during the night shift. A patient attempted to smoke a cigarette, and set himself alight. Steve and Ade responded calmly and effectively. The fire was extinguished and

the patient referred to intensive care. Another patient, who wrote in later, said: "I still marvel at their spontaneous reactions. Events moved so quickly and smoothly, it defied the imagination. With fire alarms ringing and a great deal of general panic on the ward, these two professionals kept cool heads and tackled the incident immediately and effectively."

Infection control prize

This annual award, sponsored by the Friends of Coppetts Wood Hospital, goes to the nurses on **Cordwainers and Jex Blake ward**. They have always been proactive in their approach to controlling infection and have worked hard to achieve an environment for patients where the risk of acquiring infection is rigorously assessed and good infection control practice is championed.

Our series about other people's jobs

What do they do all day?

Richenda Leigh, Royal Free chaplain

"Some people have a vision of us as the angel of death," admits Richenda Leigh. Except that the angel of death probably doesn't sport burgundy highlights and maroon-tipped fingernails. Richenda is far from one's usual image of a vicar, and her work involves far more than ministering to the dying.

Warm, fun, theatrical (she has a degree in English and Drama, as well as one in Theology) and larger than life, both her parents are vicars. She didn't intend to go into the family business but, try though she did, she could not resist her calling. She joined the Royal Free in June 2002, as part of a multi-faith chaplaincy which looks after the spiritual care of all patients and staff.

"You never know what's going to happen – no two days are alike, which is one of the things I like about the job," she says. There are one or two constants in the day, however. "I get into work just before 9am and immediately drink some caffeine!

"We don't see patients in the morning as that's when they have ward rounds," Richenda explains. The time might be taken up with admin, but of a very personal nature - perhaps arranging a funeral for a baby, or a training

session for staff. "We deal with many women who have suffered pregnancy loss, and we are involved in staff training, including courses on the spiritual aspects of nursing care and supporting people experiencing loss and grief."

Much of the time is spent seeing patients but, Richenda stresses, "We never turn up uninvited. We visit people only if they want to see us or staff have referred them. Sometimes people are just feeling lonely. There are such issues of loss when you come into hospital: you're not yourself, you feel very vulnerable. Just listening, recognising somebody as an individual, can help.

"One of the first call-outs I had when I joined the trust was to see a woman who was very scared and couldn't sleep. I sat with her for a couple of hours. I didn't have any magic phrases, because you can't make it better. Our job is to stay with the pain and the feelings, and help people talk through what is happening to them.

"Everyone has the right to have a bit of us. It's hard to quantify what we do," says Richenda, although the many moving thank-you cards are concrete testimony. "For me, the work is hugely rewarding. I never get used to that feeling of awe that people have invited me into their lives."



Larger than life . . .
Richenda Leigh

Which person or department would you like to know more about?
Send your ideas to laurads@waitrose.com

"Can we help you" . . . ? *The PALS team*



At your service

The Royal Free's highly successful patient advice and liaison service (PALS) is spreading its wings. It has just introduced two new specialist services for patients. Both the Pension Service and Jobcentre+ are holding fortnightly surgeries at the hospital.

"We get huge numbers of patients asking for pensions and benefits advice," said Roz De Silva, PALS manager. "Previously we would just pass on telephone numbers as we don't have that expertise. But after several months of negotiation we now have both surgeries on-site. Working with other organisations will provide patients with a more holistic service, which should be particularly beneficial for in-patients and those who are here for long periods of time."

And if people can't get to PALS, then PALS will go to them. Last November, the team began their 'ward walks'. "A lot of our older patients are not able to get to our office, because of frailty or mobility problems, so we decided to go to them. We go on to the ward, talk to patients to see if everything is all right and pass on any concerns." A pilot scheme on Marsden ward proved so successful that the walks have now been introduced to the other wards for the elderly at the Royal Free and Queen Mary's.

Find out more . . .

PALS provides information and advice to patients and their relatives at the time problems occur. Situated by the entrance to the Royal Free Hospital, it acts as a central point, dealing with other departments within the trust on patients' behalf and aiming to get problems resolved as quickly as possible. Contact: 020 7472 6446 (ext 1471); 020 7472 6447 (ext 1416). 24hr answerphone: 020 7472 6445 ext 1418; email: pals@royalfree.nhs.uk

An eye on India's health

Bridget Mulholland, consultant ophthalmic surgeon at the Royal Free, took her skills halfway around the world to help save the sight of people in some of the poorest parts of India.

This was her second visit to the Sewasadan Hospital in Bhopal, so she was well prepared: "I knew what to expect and what equipment to take." Bridget spent a week carrying out surgery and training local doctors. She was

accompanied by Rob Henderson, senior house officer, and Dr Surendra Upadhyay, clinical assistant.

Ophthalmology, said Bridget, is one area where we can really make a difference. "Cataract surgery, for example, is a routine operation for us now, but in poorer parts of India it can make the difference between being able to see or going blind.

We'll get someone coming to a clinic, with their relatives having to lead them by the hand, and the next day they can see."

In addition to cataracts, Bridget was dealing with

conditions such as corneal scarring; trauma to the eye, as a result of accidents or violence; and those requiring eyelid surgery. The muscles in the eyelid become less taut as we get older, she explained, and this can result in problems requiring surgery. But age is not always a factor. "Some people are born with droopy eyelids if the muscle doesn't develop normally. In young girls of marriageable age, this can be a real problem: if they don't look good, they can virtually become a social outcast.

"I'd like to go over once a year if I could. I found it very rewarding teaching people and knowing that after I've gone, they'll pass on what they've learned to help the local population."



Making a difference . . . *Bridget Mulholland using her skills to help patients in India*

Open day for cancer centre

Improving the quality of cancer care throughout the NHS is essential to improve Britain's cancer survival rates. The Royal Free and University College Medical School is involved in the National Translational Cancer Network (NTRAC), an important national initiative which involves setting up centres around Britain to pool knowledge and resources for the benefit of cancer patients.

The UCL centre, led by Professor Richard Begent, head of the Royal Free's department of oncology, is holding its first open day on Tuesday 20 April, to increase awareness of NTRAC among professionals and the public.

NTRAC's aim, explained Professor Begent, is to translate scientific advances "from bench to bedside". In other words, to get new cancer treatments being developed in the laboratory to clinical trials as quickly as possible, and to increase patient access to these.

"Our main wish is to increase public awareness of the trial register, so that cancer patients who are no longer responding to treatment can put themselves forward to take part in a trial of a new or pioneering drug study," said Suzanne McShane, UCL NTRAC co-ordinator. A list of all experimental clinical trials can be found on the NTRAC website (below).

Patients, GPs, nursing and medical students, healthcare professionals and anyone who is interested, is invited to the open day. Frank Dobson, former health secretary, will be attending.

Find out more . . .

The open day will be held in the Marsden Room, ground floor, Royal Free Hospital, from 10.30-7pm.

For further details, contact Suzanne McShane, UCL NTRAC co-ordinator: tel: 020 7472 6576 (ext. 8720).

Or visit www.ucl.ac.uk/oncology or www.ntrac.org.uk

Bin there, done that

Think before you bin - that's the message from Dave Reavy, the trust's first waste manager. Dave has been appointed to help us manage and dispose of waste in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

Getting rid of any kind of waste – electricity, food, water, heating, packaging – costs money, whether at home or at work. Disposing of clinical waste in the hospital costs around £320 per tonne, whilst domestic waste is £40 per tonne. Last year, up to 50 per cent of the contents of our clinical waste bags were found to contain domestic waste.

We can reduce our waste disposal costs drastically, simply by separating waste more effectively, says Dave. "This is our initial priority. Once people get into the habit of putting waste in the right places, then we can look at eliminating it effectively." A training programme is planned for all staff; new hands-free waste containers, which minimise any risk of infection, are being introduced into wards, with labels to segregate different products; and waste audits will be carried out across all wards and departments.

Everyone will benefit as a result: good waste management helps to protect the environment and minimises the risk to health and safety. And the proven dramatic savings in costs can then be redirected into patient care.



Find out more . . .

For more information, contact Dave Reavy on 020 7794 0500 ext 4530; bleep 71035; e-mail: david.reavy@royalfree.nhs.uk

Win film tickets every month with freestyle

Puzzle it out!

Succulent roast lamb with fresh rosemary; sliced ripe tomatoes with fragrant basil; Greek salad with oregano... No, it's not a new recipe column. We're celebrating herbs - redolent of balmy spring and summer days, picnics and outdoor living. Find the ones listed below and you could be a winner. They might be listed across, down, forwards, backwards or diagonally.

- Angelica
- Basil
- Chervil
- Chives
- Coriander
- Lovage
- Marjoram
- Mint
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Savory
- Sorrel
- Tarragon
- Thyme

How to enter

One of these herbs is not in the grid. Write the missing one on a postcard, together with your name and address, or department, and send to: Spring Search, Press Office, Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG, by 30 April 2004. The first two winners picked out of the bag will each receive a pair of tickets for the

Everyman Cinema Club, Hollybush Vale, Hampstead

Winners!

The winners of Station Search in our last issue were:

- Sarah Davies, cardiology department, Royal Free
- Trefor Gore, liver patients' support group, Royal Free



No flowers, please

Before he died, Calogero Amico, a former oncology patient at the Royal Free, told his family that he didn't want any flowers at his funeral. He'd rather the money was used to do up the children's oncology treatment room. His daughters, Maria and Calogera, were able to honour his wishes and recently donated a cheque for almost £2,075 to the hospital.

"Every time we went to the Royal Free, we used to see children in the cancer unit," said Maria. "It was difficult enough for my dad, but he used to say, 'can you imagine what a long day it is for children having treatment?'"

"He didn't want people to spend a lot of money on flowers that would only last a couple of days, he really wanted it to be used to buy toys and ornaments, or paint the room - whatever would help make the children feel better.

"My dad always loved kids. He waited nine years to have grandchildren - and then my sister had twins last July. He died five months later. We felt he had just been waiting to see them before he died."

Sister act . . . Maria (left) and Calogera Amico, with staff nurse Florence Yildiz



about **freestyle** Freestyle is the newsletter of the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust. It aims to keep patients and staff up to date with who's who and what's happening in the trust. So please help us by letting us know of any stories that you think might be of interest. We'd also like to know what you think of Freestyle.

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