

inthe news

The newsletter for Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals

December 2007/January 2008 – Issue 32

New lease of life for Liz

Elizabeth Fry is looking 35 years younger, following a £500,000 facelift and makeover.



Part of the original Basildon Hospital built in the 1970s, the 28-bed ward specialises in renal care. It closed for refurbishment four months ago and reopened its doors to patients on November 7.

Mary Conway, Ward Manager, was presented with a bouquet by staff who praised her tireless efforts to support staff and patients throughout the upheaval. Mary said she and all the team were delighted with the improved ward.

Joyce Aldridge, Medical Matron, said: "Elizabeth Fry Ward has been brought into the 21st century. It is a lovely, bright and airy place – a much better working environment for staff and certainly so much better for patients."



Mary Conway and Elizabeth Fry Ward staff on opening day

Seasonal Message to Staff

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Board of Governors, I would like to wish all staff the very best for the festive season. We can all look back on 2007 as a year of great achievements for the people we serve. We have every reason to look forward to similar success in 2008.

We will be opening the new multi-storey car park early in 2008, resuming the ward upgrade programme in early spring and beginning work to build a new Endoscopy Unit in the summer, to include setting up a new South Essex bowel cancer screening service. We will also begin creating the Orsett Hospital renal dialysis satellite unit, and making much needed improvements to the orthopaedic clinic area at Orsett.

I do hope that over Christmas and the New Year you are able to spend time relaxing with family and friends, recharging the batteries and enjoying this special time of the year. For those of you who will be working over the holiday period, I send a special message of thanks and appreciation.

I appreciate your continuing support to the Trust and your dedication to provide the best possible healthcare services for the people of Essex.

Alan Whittle, Chief Executive



This issue of In The News contains your pull out and keep guide to patient transport.

Applause for breath



The service and care provided to patients by the Trust's respiratory nursing team has been recognised with a prestigious national award.

The Non-Invasive Ventilation (NIV) Service won the British Thoracic Society's Silver Jubilee Award for innovation in secondary respiratory care.

NIV helps patients to breathe with the help of a mask, rather than by inserting a tube into the airway. It has many advantages over the tube method, including patient comfort. It was introduced to the Trust in 2002 in response to professional guidelines, but initially the service was not given high priority.

Concerned staff, led by Respiratory Nurse Specialist Sarah Lincoln, implemented an improvement plan which created a prompt, specialist, 24-hour treatment service for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Sarah Lincoln said: "The service and the award would not have been possible without the commitment and hard work of all the staff involved. We are proud that we achieved this with no extra resources; it shows that patient care can be dramatically improved with imagination and creativity and doesn't always require additional funding."

A&E working with parents

Parents and carers of children attending the Accident and Emergency Department are being asked to help staff with a new assessment procedure that will ensure the hospital meets its child protection responsibilities.

Staff attended a training day, and say that people have responded positively to the form because they can see that everyone is asked to answer the same questions. The assessment has been given the acronym CWILTLED, which highlights the key questions: Condition; Witness to injury; Incident; Location; Time; Escort with child; Description.

The scheme has completed a six-week trial, and there are plans to implement it permanently next year.

Looking great for 2008

The £1.5 million programme to modernise the original parts of Basildon University Hospital will continue in 2008. Fleming and Frank Ahrens wards will be refurbished to the same high standard as Elizabeth Fry and there are plans for the redevelopment of the Endoscopy and A & E departments.

Improvements can only be carried out if wards can be moved temporarily to another location. To provide excellent, modern facilities for patients and staff, and to reduce the risk of infection, it is essential to make the best possible use of beds. Length of stay can be reduced by making greater use of day surgery, and not admitting patients the day before inpatient surgery. We also need to continue focusing on the conditions and procedures that are contributing most to excess bed days. Offering the right care, and using resources wisely, will make the hospital a better place for both patients and staff, and allow us to provide even better healthcare services.

Infection rates reduced



There has been a significant drop during the last year in the number of healthcare associated infections at the Trust. From July to September this year, we recorded 51 cases of Clostridium Difficile, compared to 147 cases for the same quarter in 2006. And the number of MRSA cases has reduced by 75 per cent over the same period, from eight to two incidents.

The data includes samples tested here from in-patients but also from people who may not have entered the hospital, such as GP surgery patients. Figures are reported to the Health Protection Agency, the independent body that protects people from infection and poisonous hazards.

Dr Roger Sage, Consultant Microbiologist and Director of Infection Prevention and Control at the Trust, said: "Whilst the latest figures are promising, we are certainly not complacent.

We will work hard to maintain, and hopefully improve, these standards by continuing to be rigorous in our monitoring of the use of antibiotics, cleanliness and hygiene."



Young patient Holly Ross helps School Teacher Veronica Buttigieg (left) and Teaching Assistant Kim Steel (right) to display handwashing posters created by children during their stay at Basildon University Hospital. The posters will be on display throughout the Trust to remind visitors about the importance of handwashing.

Don't give up on giving up

The ban on smoking in public places has been in place for six months now, and as temperatures fall, smokers are feeling even more out in the cold. Quitting is tough, and it's all too easy to fall off the wagon, but there is help and support available.

Marion Baker, who works in Information Security, enrolled on a smoking cessation course last July, run by South West Essex PCT. She managed nine weeks without a cigarette before lapsing at a social gathering on a warm evening. She stopped again in November, and having found the group meetings helpful, is planning to join another course.

"I don't want to smoke, and I feel determined about it," she said.

For information on South West Essex PCT smoking cessation courses, held in the Education Centre, call 01268 464511. For Trust staff, the Occupational Health team give one-to-one advice sessions. For an appointment, call ext. 3591.

Brothers reunited



Bill (2nd left) and Eric (right) with their mother and two brothers in the family garden in Thurrock, about 1961.

There was something familiar about a fellow patient in the waiting room at Basildon University Hospital, but Eric Crowther, 81, could not quite place what it was. But the chance encounter led to a touching reunion between two brothers who had not seen each other for 18 years.

Eric said: "I think I did sub-consciously recognise him, but I dismissed the idea. Then the nurse called out 'Mr Crowther', looked at me and said 'Not you' and I asked, 'Is that my brother Bill?'"

Eric and Bill grew up in Thurrock with two other brothers and one sister. They are the last remaining of their siblings, but lost touch after meeting at a wedding in the late 1980s.

"We didn't mean to drift apart, but you are busy with your own family and life and sometimes it just happens," said Eric, who has been happily married to his wife Joyce for nearly 60 years. "It doesn't seem that Bill and I have been apart for so long, we are very close, and we are not going to lose touch again."

Winning smiles from the porters

A group of porters at Basildon University Hospital are looking forward to treating their loved ones this Christmas following their bumper lottery win. The 34-strong syndicate won £9,576 each, after buying tickets together for just three weeks.

Michael Noakes, head porter, said: "This has really benefited my family because it means my wife can extend her maternity leave."

Tracey Goss said she will be giving her two daughters a very good Christmas, and hopes to buy herself a car. Pauline Jenks is looking forward to a new kitchen, but has already given some of her winnings to her three children.

Roy Seymour said: "I've never won anything before. When I got the call I thought we had won nearly £10,000 between us, not each. Mine's in the bank, but I dare say my wife and grandchildren will take care of it!"



A cheery wave from some of the lucky porters

Happy new year for CTC patients



New Year's Day marks the six month anniversary of the opening of The Essex Cardiothoracic Centre. Since July, over 250 surgical procedures and over 500 cardiology procedures have been carried out. Two patients spoke to In the News about their experiences in the new unit.

When Patricia Orriss's friends remarked on how puffed out she was, with stoicism typical of her generation, she put it down to age. But an angiogram revealed something more serious, and she was referred to The Essex Cardiothoracic Centre (CTC) and admitted on its first day of opening.

She was the second patient to have surgery in the unit, undergoing an aortic valve replacement carried out by Clinical Director and Lead Surgeon, Andrew Ritchie.

"The Centre was absolutely beautiful, and the staff were wonderful," she said. "I was so comfortable, in a side room with ensuite bathroom."

Mrs Orriss went home after nine days, and two months later was completely discharged on the ground of good health. "Mr Ritchie told me he only wanted to see sick people, and that I should go on holiday and send him a postcard."

She followed doctor's orders, and in September went to the Lake District with her family. "Our apartment had lovely views of Lake Windermere. It was quite a steep walk from the village, but I managed it fine," she said. Mrs Orriss not only sent a postcard, but also a donation to the CTC. "I'm so grateful to Mr Ritchie and everyone there," she added.

As a young man, Paul Goodbourn ran away to join the Navy. He was reminded of his seafaring days when he was admitted to the CTC. "It brought back memories of a beautiful ship," he said. "It was so impressive, and so clean. I thought how lucky I was to be there."

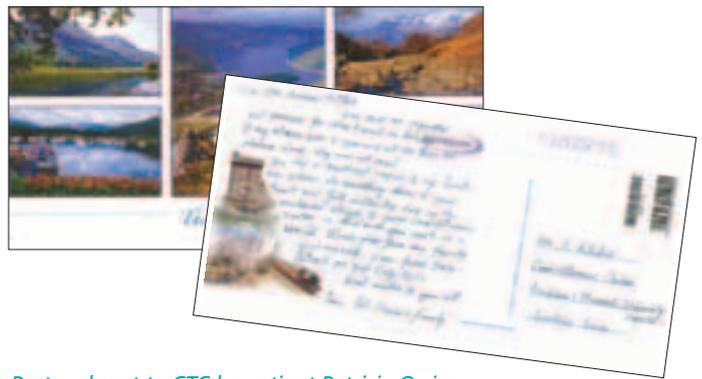
After a varied career, which included a spell in the renowned code-breaking station at Bletchley Park, Mr Goodbourn established his own timber business. "Like most self-employed people, I didn't know when to stop," he admitted.

When he retired at the age of 73, he remained active, working on the new bungalow he moved to with his wife, and also on a boat he bought to enjoy in his leisure time. But he began to feel alarmingly weak and tired, and tests showed he needed a coronary by-pass.

"Fortunately I was referred to the CTC," Mr Goodbourn said. "My doctor, Mr Shah, was charming and explained everything

very clearly. And all the staff were wonderful. They did everything possible to make me comfortable."

He returned home five days after surgery, and has plans for lots more activity. "I know it's a long road to recovery, but I am going to take part in rehab clinic religiously and go swimming when I've got my breath back. And I want to start working on the garden again. I'm not going to make myself an old man by sitting around on my backside!"



Postcard sent to CTC by patient Patricia Orriss

High-tech care for heart patients

A new high-tech imaging system will soon be running at The Essex Cardiothoracic Centre (CTC), bringing further improvements to the care of heart patients.

The IT system will create a picture archive of tests vital for the diagnosis and assessment of heart problems, such as echocardiograms and angiograms. The images will be available at the click of a mouse to clinicians and staff throughout the CTC, provided they are authorised with the secure password.

Previously, test images were on video or DVD, and were only available to one clinician at a time. With the new system, essential information for the care of patients can be viewed simultaneously by medical staff. The images will be backed up in two different locations, to ensure they cannot be lost.

The Trust signed the contract with medical technology provider Medcon on 16 November. The contract, worth just under £300,000, will run for five years and the system is expected to be fully operational by December.

Florence runs a trust-worthy service

After graduating from a prestigious French culinary school, and training at a four star hotel in London's West End, Florence Looi could have chosen a glamorous career. Instead, she left behind the opulence of the premium hospitality business to work in the NHS.

One of the first things she did on starting her new post at Basildon University Hospital last June was to change her job title. Responsible for the smooth and efficient running of catering, cleaning, portering, transport, post, switchboard, grounds and gardens at the hospital, Florence felt that Hotel Services Manager was a misleading description.

"It's rather old-fashioned, and people always thought it meant I worked in a hotel, so we changed it to Facilities Manager," Florence said. She does not miss the luxurious environments where she began her career. "It's true that working in the NHS is not glamorous, but there is great reward in the challenge and I like the staff and patients", she says. "There was pressure in hotels to make money, but they did waste a lot, which is something I really don't like. I enjoyed meeting the guests, but there was something about it that seemed a bit unreal."

Florence left Malaysia after her A levels, and studied catering at the Ecole Hoteliere in Strasbourg, which has produced many of the world's Michelin starred chefs. She worked in hotels in Paris and London, including the Metropole Hilton, before joining the NHS in the mid-1980s. Her postings include Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London and Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust in Surrey.

Does she think she has made the right move to BTUH? "Definitely, because any move is about what you put into the job. I am passionate about the services I manage; cleanliness and good nutrition are vital for patients' recovery. I have a very good team here, and we have a great working relationship with the matrons."

Florence often chats to patients to find out their opinion of services, and has a file of appreciative letters praising the kindness of staff and the standard of cleanliness and catering, along with a request for a hospital kitchen recipe.

Florence says: "We are always looking at ways to make things better for patients, and the hardest thing about the job is not having enough time to do everything. But I go home at night feeling we have done a good job."



Florence: 'We are always working to make things better for patients.'

Lasers play role in stones

A group of trainee urologists saw a live surgery demonstration and gained hands-on experience using the latest technology in the field, when they attended a ureteroscopy course at Basildon University Hospital.

Renowned endo-urologist Mr Graham Watson, from Eastbourne District General Hospital, demonstrated his operating skills on a difficult case in day surgery theatre. The 15 trainees practised their techniques on models of the urinary tract complete with stones, using up-to-date lasers, instruments and gadgets supplied by industry. Lasers play a key role in stone disease management.

Mr Anil Vohra, Consultant Urologist and Course Director, said: "Delegates rated the programme very highly and we now plan to run it annually. This achievement would not have been possible without the team effort of the clinical skills centre, urology staff and theatre personnel."

All the latest skills for A&E staff

Staff nurses in the Accident and Emergency Department have had a skills update to ensure they are up to speed with the latest techniques in plastering and suturing. Training sessions have taught the whole team about recent developments in their field, such as the use of different materials.



Last April, the Trust appointed Emergency Care Practice Educators Sam Brightwell and Linda Barry to highlight and provide training requirements for staff. With more people qualified to carry out procedures, patients are receiving quicker treatment.

Sam said: "The last six months have been a whirlwind of activity. We are very proud to provide the necessary support to make a difference in the care and treatment given to patients."

A & E was particularly busy during the summer holidays as a result of accidents occurring on trampolines and 'wheely' trainers, although staff say that many of the victims were adults playing with their youngsters' toys.

Expert patients graduate

A group of patients has reduced the number of time-consuming hospital appointments they have to attend, by becoming experts in managing their own conditions.

Thirteen local people, with complaints which include heart problems and blood clots, completed a course at Basildon University Hospital to learn how to monitor their own Warfarin treatment. If levels of the drug become too high, patients face the risk of haemorrhaging. Monitoring usually involves a weekly trip to hospital, but with training and support, patients can use a machine to check their levels at home.

The free eight-week programme, the first of its kind in Britain, was run jointly by the Trust and South West Essex Primary Care Trust.

Expert Patient Coordinator, Pauline Brown, said: "We are delighted with the way the course has taken off. Our patients come away with the skills they need to cope with their conditions."

Patients who graduated from the course reported a variety of positive benefits. "My breathing is so improved, and my confidence is now much higher and I am much healthier," said one.

Another graduate added: "Over the past few weeks, I have been able to do a lot more exercise. This has been of great benefit to all of us."

NHS future – have your say

A major review of the way the NHS delivers patient care is underway. Overseen by health minister Lord Darzi, the review wants to hear the views of everyone with an interest in building a better health service.

Our NHS, our future will identify the way forward for the NHS for the next decade and beyond. It's vital that local staff are at the centre of the debate. The NHS has put together some tools to help you get involved, including a film about the aims of our NHS and its future.

The film can be downloaded so it can be shown in team meetings and generate discussion and feedback. The link to the page with all the details, the film download and feedback form is www.ournhs.nhs.uk/2007/10/nhs-staff-get-i.html

Needlestick Awareness Day

Staff were advised on how to avoid the serious hazards of needlestick injuries, and what to do if they occur, through displays run by the Occupational Health Team. Information packs are being delivered to wards and clinical departments, and further training is available on request.



Tracy Bluestone from Occupational Health shows awareness packs to Lorraine Connolly, CTC Outpatients Nurse.

Library returns

After several months of staff shortages Basildon Healthcare Library is back to full strength and normal excellent service is resumed to Trust and other NHS staff.



Library team: Christine Coley, Liz Hunwick, Timothy Ellis, Mary Drury, Sarah Lanney and Diane Alford

Two new librarians and two new library assistants have been recruited to join Christine Coley, Library and Knowledge Services Manager and Sarah Lanney, Resources Librarian.

Mary Drury has been appointed Resources Librarian, and is also the library link for the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre. Liz Hunwick is the new Services Librarian. Diane Alford and Tim Ellis join the team as Library Assistants.

Christine Coley said: "Our remit is to support all Trust staff in their practice of evidence-based healthcare. Providing staff with good information is vital for the care of patients. Please come and talk to us and find out what else we can do for you."

FAQs about Basildon Healthcare Library

I didn't know there was a library. Where is it?

Basildon Healthcare Library is on the First Floor in the Education Centre at Basildon University Hospital. It is open Mondays to Fridays from 8.30am to 9.45pm, and on Saturdays from 9.00am to 12 noon. Full details about services and opening times can be found at www.btuheks.nhs.uk/ On the Home

page click on Knowledge.

Who can use it?

NHS employees and social care staff in Essex, and also University College London (UCL) and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) students based at Basildon and Orsett Hospitals.

How do I join?

You will need to complete a membership form and provide us with proof of where you work, such as your Trust identity card, when you come to collect your library card. Membership forms can be downloaded from the web site above, or collected from the library.

What can the library offer me?

The Library has extensive collections of healthcare materials, and also covers areas such as management, risk, and health and safety. It offers a friendly, quiet environment for study. If you wish to obtain a specific book or journal article you can check the library catalogue in the library, or on the website. If we do not have the item here, we can order it from another library for you.

What can I access on the computers?

The library has 13 computers for use during opening times. The 24-Hour Access Room, which contains four computers, is available at all times to staff with a Trust identity card and IT network username and password.

You can use a range of computer packages and electronic resources including Microsoft Office, Internet, Intranet, Trust email, Medical Masterclass, e-books and e-journals, databases, UCL and ARU access for students.

The library has a PC with a dedicated line from which you can also access web-based email accounts, during staffed hours only.

The NHS subscribes to a large number of reputable quality databases and electronic journals. All of the resources at the Library have been assessed and reviewed by medical, clinical and library specialists. Access to these can be gained from:

National Library for Health
<http://www.library.nhs.uk>

The NLH provides a focal point for all nationally-purchased electronic resources, including evidence, guidelines, electronic books and journals, clinical images and patient information. You will need an ATHENS authentication password, available to NHS staff. To obtain this, go to www.eel.nhs.uk and click on "Get an NHS ATHENS password."

Eastern Electronic Library for Health
<http://www.eel.nhs.uk>

EEL is a portal for Essex healthcare practitioners. It covers nationally and locally-purchased electronic resources, details of information skills training and has contact details for all NHS libraries in Essex.

Library staff offer a range of courses covering basic search skills to using specific databases. We are also happy to help staff on a one-to-one basis.

For any further information please contact Liz Hunwick, Librarian Services on 0845 155 3111 Ext 8272 or liz.hunwick@btuh.nhs.uk.

Signing off in style

Letters and emails from the Trust look more professional if we all use the same style. Remember to sign letters with your name, title, the new telephone number 0845 155 3111 plus your extension and email address.

Emails don't automatically carry the name of the Trust and its address, so include those details in your electronic signature.

The following is a good practice example of how to sign off your email:

Andrew Brown
Heart Failure Nurse
Basildon and Thurrock
University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust
Nethermayne, Basildon, Essex
SS16 5NL
Tel: 0845 155 3111 Ext: xxxx

Patient's charity drive

The Endoscopy Unit has received a donation of over £3,000 raised by a sporting patient. Mr Robin Miller-Fletcher was diagnosed with gastro-intestinal cancer in June, and has since undergone surgery.

Mr Miller-Fletcher, who is captain of the South Essex Golf Club, organised a charity golf day and presented a cheque to staff from the unit on 11 November. Helen Mould, Endoscopy Manager, said: "We are extremely grateful for this generous donation, which will go towards new equipment and staff training to help improve patient care."



Mr Miller-Fletcher on the green with Endoscopy Unit staff and friends

New ways of working

It's often the way that the best plans are the simplest and most obvious ones. That is certainly true of the reforms in education and training for health and social care professionals that have been adopted in Essex.

Professionals, who previously trained and worked in isolation, are being brought together for preparation sessions to help them gain better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. The aim is to deliver a better coordinated quality care service for patients and clients.

Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) training days allow health and social care practitioners to learn about and from each other, and strengthen their working relationships. A much greater emphasis is now placed on essential aspects of care, such as communication, teamwork, accountability and professionalism.

All acute Trusts within Essex deliver a number of preparation days for staff including adult and child nurses, physiotherapists, radiographers, midwives and operating department practitioners. Support is provided by experienced staff who act as mentors and educators. The training helps learners to prepare for clinical placements such as community, acute care and management experience.

The reform of the education of health and social care professionals followed the Kennedy report on children's heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, and the Laming report on the death of Victoria Climbié.

Alison Williams, Practice Education Facilitator, said: "Thanks to the enthusiasm of the Trust and involvement from practice staff, we look forward to continuing to develop inter-professional learning and improve the service we provide."

If you are interested finding out more, please contact Practice Educator Facilitators Alison Williams on 07770 647653, or Claire Sadler 07776 164954.

Thank you to all our fund raisers

A host of generous individuals, businesses, organisations and schools have raised nearly £200,000 for the Trust since April 2007.

Charitable donations include £1,000 given each week by the Basildon Hospital and Community League of Friends, raised mainly from the proceeds of the hospital snack bars. A further £6,000 has been donated by the Orsett League of Friends.

The WRVS has raised £82,000 since January from its three hospital shops. It has donated £27,000 to the community, for services including Meals on Wheels and Darby and Joan. The remainder will be used to buy equipment for the Trust.

McDonalds has donated £20,000 for the accommodation house for parents and carers of children in-patients, and the Ileostomy Society has given £10,000 for medical equipment.

The League of Friends and the WRVS rely on volunteers who generously give up their time to work in snack bars and shops. If they had to pay wages, the charities would not make a profit.

Trust Chairman, Michael Large, said: "Every single person who donates or raises money makes a difference to the quality of care that we are able to provide to our patients. It is impossible to overstate how much we value and appreciate the kindness and selflessness of all our donors."

Designed to keep you in touch with what's happening at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, In the News has regular features and information on service developments, staff achievements and profiles, Trust performance, new appointments and much more!

We want the newsletter to be a great success, but we need your help to do that. If you have an idea or article for a future issue, please get in touch with: Luenne Featherstone (extension 3057) or Pat Trinnaman (extension 3063) – we'd love to hear from you.

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