It's coming your way

The jewel in the crown of the world’s universal health services celebrates its diamond anniversary

Anthem looks at the history of the NHS and features some of the people who’ve helped to make it
A model nurse says goodbye – and hello - to North Tees and Hartlepool

A very experienced member of nursing staff, described as a model nurse by her colleagues, has retired from the University Hospital of North Tees. Anne Harrison’s 38 year experience nearly didn’t happen. Back in 1970 her mother gave her a week as an auxiliary nurse because she thought she would be too soft to do the job. In her retirement presentation she was surrounded by colleagues old and new. The gathering, including physician Alex Dellipiani who was a budding endoscopist when she worked for him in 1973, heard of Anne’s achievements - setting up the 13 mile midnight walk for Their next night time feat was a funny way of showing it. On walking at night they have for London moon walk

Three intrepid mammographers from the University of North Tees braved a moon light walk in aid of breast cancer research. It might have been midnight but they weren’t alone. Seventeen thousand people, 2,000 more than last year, walked the testing 26.2 mile circular walk which started and finished in Hyde Park.

The three – Anne Reay, Ananda Logishetty and Elizabeth Walton - from the breast unit at the University Hospital of North Tees made it back just as the clock read 8.21am, and raised an impressive £1,300 between them. Anne said: “It was a relief in a way because it was a bit chilly so we had our t-shirts on. Normally people go round the circuit in their bras, the whole idea being to highlight issues of breast awareness and breast cancer as well as raise £6m for breast cancer research.

“It might have been midnight but it wasn’t a final farewell for Anne however – she is returning on flexi-retirement to the medical directorate to support work on discharging patients from hospital.

A man who was almost part of the furniture at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has bowed out after a long and distinguished career. Deputy director of operations Barrie Kirton worked in the NHS for 38 years and is the man behind many of the buildings and patient facilities we see in right across Teesside. In 1980 Barrie was the hospital engineer for South Cleveland Hospital (which later became The James Cook University Hospital).

Engineers’ club

He was the last junior engineer to join the hospital engineers’ club whose motto was nonus builders allowed us. Barrie was made a lifetime member of this exclusive club in April. He joined what was then North Tees 18 years ago and took on trust-wide responsibilities for facilities and estates after the merger in 1999. One of his latest achievements was the new emergency assessment unit at the University Hospital of North Tees. Its innovative design and focus on patient safety and comfort have attracted envious colleagues from all over the country to come and see it. Barrie has always set his sights on the comfort and safety of patients and he puts his success down to excellent team work from cleaners to clerks and maintenance men to managers. It says something about the affection in which he’s held that so many colleagues, old and new, gathered to hear chief executive Alan Foster give Barrie a farewell speech to remember.

Apart from the building and facilities we see around us Barrie will also be remembered for introducing a charity donation initiative, which had grown from strength to strength in recent years. One charity which benefited from this generous gesture was TEAR Fund which works to bring safe drinking water to people in the developing world. Barrie plans to spend more time working with TEAR Fund, starting with a trip to Nigeria later this year.

Barrie said: “I have been really proud to work with such a dedicated team of staff. We’ve worked hard and we’ve played hard. Thirty eight years of helping patients, working with some amazing people and being part of a wonderful team. I’ll always have very fond memories of these times.”

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Training continues apace for the group of intrepid trust staff featured in the last issue of Anthem who have entered into this year’s Great North Run. At a recent training event held at Billingham Synthonia sports ground the group were once again put through their paces with a timed mile to see how they had improved from the last time in February and then a two mile run around Billingham, which involved some quite steep hills.

Nurse practitioner in the spinal unit at the University Hospital of North Tees Ann Halewood, a keen runner and member of Billingham and Marsh House Harriers, is helping with the training. She said: “The training is coming on in leaps and bounds. Almost everyone has improved their time over the mile, some of them quite considerably. “A lot of the runners have surprised themselves as to what they were capable of achieving in a relatively short space of time. It is not just their time that has improved, but there has been a marked increase in their general fitness levels.”

Hospital chaplain Lynn Purvis who admits to having been quite fit to start with said: “I am really enjoying the training. When I was at college I used to swim every day, but I had never really done any running. Over the last week I have run 20 miles and swum 40 lengths as well as putting in some time in the gym. “I have to admit that I feel a lot better for it and am looking forward to the run itself.”

Just to prove that it is not all hard work consultant in accident and emergency Dougal Southward and physiotherapist Mike Geritz organised some general fitness games at the end of the session, including tug of war wheelbarrow and leapfrog relay races.

Dougal said: “I think everyone is enjoying the training and they are all on course to complete the run. “I would like to say a big thank you to Billingham and Marsh House Harriers, and also to Blakeston School in Stockton and Hartlepool Catholic Club Boxing Team who have provided us with training facilities.”

Fat controller steams into children’s ward

Young patients on the children’s ward at the University Hospital of North Tees were paid a surprise visit when children’s favourite Sir Topham Hat aka the fat controller from the popular TV series Thomas the Tank Engine visited the ward.

Sir Topham, played by actor Dean Nolan, was in the area as he was appearing in a live version of Thomas at Billingham Forum. He spent nearly an hour chatting with patients, distributing gifts and being interviewed live on Radio North Tees.

Hospital play specialist Sandra Jackson said: “The children were overjoyed to see the fat controller. Being in hospital and away from home is a difficult time for children and the visit really cheered them all up. They are all big fans of Thomas the Tank Engine and thought he looked a lot bigger in real life than on the TV.”

A bridge too far? ... not likely!

Anaesthetic department bids farewell to Sue

A highly valued member of the anaesthetic department has retired after more than 30 years’ service. Staff grade doctor Sue Padmore joined the trust in 1977 as a clinical assistant in anaesthetics. She became a staff grade doctor in 2002.

Clinical director for anaesthesia Peter Broadway said: “She was a highly valued member of the department and got on well with all her colleagues. She will be missed by all.”

The runners cross the red bridge in Billingham

Play specialist Sandra Jackson, fat controller Dean Nolan and seven-year-old Marek Strak from Billingham with mum Anne

Fat controller with Sandra and Marek

Sue Padmore with the flowers from friends and colleagues at her retirement
Our vision, our future – how the North East intends to lead world healthcare

In May, doctors and nurses launched their blueprint for how north east health services will improve life chances in the region, prevent ill health and become more convenient for patients, through the creation of a healthcare system to compete with the best in the world.

Over 350 people attended an event at Newcastle Racecourse to hear how services will be transformed over the next decade and beyond. The Our vision, our future report celebrates the achievements of the NHS in the North East, which is consistently rated as the strongest performing NHS region in England. The vision also sets out how services will be developed even further to make sure that care and treatment is amongst the best in the world.

The report’s content is based on the expertise and priorities of many of the region’s top doctors, nurses and other professionals, and on the needs of patients and the organisations who work in partnership with the NHS.

The document outlines a clear context for change including the facts that: the region has the worst health in England; the use of hospital treatment is higher than any other part of England and that this dependence on hospital treatment limits the resources that are available to prevent ill health and support people who have long term problems.

These facts, coupled with issues such as:

- The NHS is not providing uniformly good enough services to all people in the region at all times across all services, giving a variation in performance.
- There is still too much waste in services and a variation in outcomes for patients.
- People say that their experience of services – while often good – is too often inadequate and does not always meet their expectations.

There is a clear need for significant change if services are to become amongst the best in the world. The review sets out a 10 year vision for the region’s NHS but also identifies improvements to be made now.

This wide-ranging review is the first of its kind to have been undertaken in the NHS. In the North East hundreds of people, including doctors, nurses, patients and the public have been involved in looking to ensure that the NHS of the future is properly resourced, that progress is led by the people who actually deliver the services and that care is centred around patients and based on local need.

Best possible place

Medical director for the North East Strategic Health Authority and for Government North East Stephen Singleton (pictured) said: “Our vision, our future aims to ensure NHS North East is in the best possible place to provide healthcare and is up there with the best in the world. People in the region have a right to access high quality, convenient, effective and safe healthcare, whether that is provided in community or in hospital, and we intend to make sure that they get what they are entitled to.”

Tributes pour in for Sue

Tributes poured in at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust recently for a general manager who retired after a long a distinguished career in health.

Sue Blowers – who by the age of 12 had already decided she wanted to be a nurse - started her working life as a student nurse at North Ormesby Hospital in Middlesbrough in 1970.

After becoming a state registered nurse Sue moved to Leeds where she qualified as a midwife at St James’ Hospital. She returned to Middlesbrough and within a year progressed from staff nurse to junior sister and senior sister. She worked at North Ormesby for seven years until the hospital closed and services moved to the then newly built South Cleveland Hospital (now The James Cook University Hospital).

During this time she spent six months in Hong Kong and at one time was the personal nurse to the chairman of the Hong Kong stock exchange.

Sue and her family went back to Hong Kong in 1983 for two years after leaving South Cleveland Hospital to have her son. Sue saw a gap in the market; there were no community midwifery services there so she set up her own midwifery service and provided maternity care to many ex-pat mothers in Hong Kong and the new territories.

After returning to England Sue decided to train as a health visitor and worked in Lawson Street in Stockton.

Sue was later appointed assistant director of personnel managing occupational development, postgraduate education, the chaplaincy and the nursery.

In 1998 Sue became divisional manager of family health which included community and hospital based services and following the merger of North Tees and Hartlepool in 1999 Sue took on responsibility for maternity and paediatrics at the University Hospital of Hartlepool. Between that time and her retirement Sue has also managed the directorate of medicine and acted as director of acute services.

Chief executive Alan Foster paid tribute to Sue and the enormous contribution she had made to health services during her career. Sue is not saying good bye to North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust completely. She is working with the momentum pathways to healthcare team on the maternity and paediatric aspects of the new healthcare system.
Bowel screening campaigner Lynn Faulds Wood took time out of her busy schedule to praise the work of the bowel cancer screening team at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Lynn was in the region working on a new campaign to encourage people to take up the bowel screening programme. Lynn, who is a bowel cancer survivor herself, is passionate about saving lives and saving others from this largely preventable disease which can cause so much pain and devastation in people’s lives. She shared her own experience of a totally unexpected diagnosis for cancer and talked about the fear of not seeing her child grow up. Happily she was treated successfully and as a result she has thrown all her energy into ensuring there are excellent screening services available in the UK.

Chairman Russell Hart welcomed Lynn to the unit. It has been open since February 2007 has seen 530 people whose screening tests showed up as abnormal. They have diagnosed bowel cancer in over 50 people, giving those potentially earlier diagnosis than they might have had.

Lead practitioner for bowel cancer Greg Waddup said: “We were delighted to see Lynn. We were also pleased to invite David Mulligan to meet her. A former bowel cancer patient David helped to promote the screening programme launch in 2007. “Lynn’s support, to the unit and to members of the team individually, is much appreciated. Like her we’re passionate about preventing people going through the distress of a late diagnosis for this mostly preventable disease.

“IT gives us enormous satisfaction to know we’re part of a service which is saving lives and making such an enormous difference to people living in our area.”

For further information about the Tees Bowel Cancer Screening Programme please contact: Tees Screening Centre 0800 0151506

Bowel screening champion calls in to promote awareness campaign

Bowel screening campaigner Lynn Faulds Wood took time out of her busy schedule to praise the work of the bowel cancer screening team at the University Hospital of Hartlepool recently reopened and saw its first patient since the refurbishment and installation of a new, much improved scanner.

With the arrival of the new Siemens scanner, the unit, which is run by Alliance Medical, will be able to offer a greater range of services and scan patients faster and with more detail. This will give greater accuracy and allow the unit to see more patients a day, reducing waiting times.

Work began to install the scanner in March and to ensure that there was no break to services for patients from the Hartlepool and Easington areas, those patients were seen at the MRI unit at the University Hospital of North Tees. The work to install and commission the scanner took 50 days (is this right???) and involved removing part of the wall of the unit to allow the old magnet to be taken out and the new one to be lifted into place.

Senior unit manager for Alliance Medical Graeme Strong said: “The new scanner will greatly improve our local service and will offer a far faster scan time. This will vastly aid the scanning of patients who are in pain and have difficulty keeping their movement to a minimum.

“The unit will also be able to undertake high-resolution imaging in patients with cancer and this will allow doctors to plan patient treatment accordingly. This is a new service, not previously offered to the local population and is in line with the government push for earlier and improved cancer diagnosis.”

Clinical director for radiology Matthew Trewhella said: “We are delighted to continue our relationship with Alliance Medical and to see the unit reopen. “The new MRI scanner will be able to undertake all routine and advanced MRI examinations which will result in fewer patients from Hartlepool and East Durham having to travel to the University Hospital of North Tees for their scans.

“In addition to the improved accuracy and faster scanning times we can now offer breast biopsies to aid the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer which is a new service for Teeside.”

The unit will have its official opening later this year.

The new, improved MRI unit reopens for business
Distance learning brings well earned MSc for Andrew

Biomedical scientist Andrew Ward’s hard work has paid off in the form of an MSc in biomedical science. Andrew has paved the way for a new way of studying because he did the course over two years by distance learning at Ulster University. Andrew said: “I did most of my studying in the evenings. I think I am the first member of the department to achieve an MSc in pathology this way. It requires a completely different method of studying – mainly self discipline! – and it meant I didn’t need to take time off work to go to lectures. Clinical director for pathology John Frater said: “While this way of studying wouldn’t suit everyone it’s a tribute to Andrew’s determination that he was successful. He has every reason to be proud of his achievements, as we are of him.”

Craftsmanship and compassion

The chapel at the University Hospital of North Tees now has an additional special place for families to remember the babies and children they have lost. The North Tees League of Friends commissioned a specially designed cabinet to hold the latest remembrance book donated by the league. The book and cabinet were dedicated at the annual memorial service in May. The cabinet has room to keep all of the remembrance books safe. In addition to the regular memorial books being on view, there will also be a new one permanently situated in the chapel. Hospital chaplain Lynn Purvis said: “We’re very grateful to the League of Friends for this donation. We know it helps families to have a special place to record the details about their little one. “I would also like to pay tribute to the skill and dedication of our craftsmen who have made a superb job of the cabinet. It is absolutely perfect and is a very fitting place to display this most important book.”

Clowning around in the children’s ward is just what the doctor ordered

It’s not often you get introduced to doctors called Aristotle Spaghettiyetti and Lulu McDoo but that’s exactly what happened to seven-year-old (pictured below) Harry Duncan from Hartlepool when he was kept in overnight at the University Hospital of North Tees. Doctors Spaghettiyetti and McDoo are just two of the Clown Doctors – a group of specially trained people who are part of a scheme run by Durham-based TIN Arts who enhance the care children receive in hospital. Their aim is make sure each child is still allowed to be a child, and not just a patient, while they are in hospital. They help children to overcome any anxiety that being in hospital might bring. Harry’s anxieties turned to smiles when he had a session with the Clown Doctors. Balloons, squeaky noises and surprise items in the doctor’s bag brought a smile to his face. His mum Leigh was also impressed and said he’d been smiling ever since.

Senior clinical nurse for paediatrics Heather Duckers said: “We were very pleased to have the Clown Doctors on the ward. The children enjoy the experience and it helps to have potentially frightening things like procedures or equipment explained in this way.”

A royal honour for Matt

Congratulations to consultant gastroenterologist Matt Rutter who was recently royal awarded the Goulstonian Lectureship for 2008 by the Royal College of Physicians. The award was founded by a bequest of a fellow of the college Dr Theodore Goulston after his death in 1632. His widow, Mrs Ellen Goulston, gave £200 to the College in the form of an annual rent, for a lecture read by one of the four youngest fellows between Michaelmas and Easter. There is no fixed topic or subject area for the lecture but it was originally to be read on a dead body, which was to be dissected for research, fortunately that is no longer done.

Picture courtesy of the Evening Gazette

Matt Rutter
One day old is quite young to begin your modelling career but Olivia Etherington’s mum Debra and dad Barry were more than happy to let their latest arrival be a good advert for a more environmentally-friendly nappy.

During Real Nappy Week North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is delighted to work with Stockton Council to promote a greener and cheaper way of nappy changing. The maternity ward at the University Hospital of North Tees has free packs to give away to demonstrate to parents that there is a stylish and cheaper alternative to disposable nappies.

As mum Debra rested after the delivery dad Barry showed he was a dab hand at changing by getting Olivia ready for the photo shoot. After a short bout of crying to show her displeasure at having been disturbed from her sleep Olivia was happy to pose in the soft and comfortable nappy.

Mum Debra said: “We hadn’t used them for the others but we might give them a go now.”

Head of midwifery Janet Mackie added: “We’re keen to do anything we can to help parents know what’s out there in terms of nappies. When you think you might change your baby’s nappy between 4,000 and 6,000 times by the time he or she is potty trained it’s worth knowing what you can do to keep expenses down and be kinder to the environment at the same time.”

For more information about real nappies you can call Stockton Council’s recycling officer on 01642 527181.

Dr Vishwanath Ramchander 1941 - 2008

Emotional tributes have been paid to a popular paediatrician who has died from cancer.

Vishwanath Ramchander (pictured) worked on the children’s wards at the University Hospital of Hartlepool for more than 10 years where he helped hundreds of youngsters overcome illness. The doctor, who has been hailed as an inspiration for devoting his life to sick children, passed away on Monday 21 April, aged 66.

His son, Randhir Ramchander, said his father will be missed by many people across the town. “He was a very loving man, happy and care-free and he loved life,” said Randhir, who works as a GP in the town’s health centre.

“He considered Hartlepool his home and loved the town and the people. His job and his family were his life. He loved all his staff and he will be sorely missed.”

The family have received several bunches of flowers and a poem from staff at the hospital describing him as a much loved doctor.

“He was the reason why I got into medicine and is the inspiration in everything I do in life,” added his son.

Vishwanath was born in Hyderabad in India in 1941, where he went to university and got his first job in paediatrics.

In 1971 he moved to Trinidad and Tobago where his two sons Randhir and his younger brother Ranjit were born. He also gained a step-daughter in Rani.

The family moved to Greenock, in Scotland, in 1994 before arriving in Hartlepool in 1997 where he lived at Nightingale Close, Bishop Cuthbert, with his wife Suneeta.

Dr Ramchander’s hobbies included travelling. He had recently visited the Grand Canyon and Thailand and had also visited India shortly before he died.
Fertility service appoints principal embryologist

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust’s fertility service, based at the University Hospital of Hartlepool, has appointed a principal embryologist and business manager to further develop the work of the unit.

Dave Gibbon, who is also an inspector for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), joined the trust from South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust. Dave, who started hospital life in pathology, moved into infertility services in 1995. Work is currently underway on refurbishing the fertility unit at UHH. When complete, the new unit will boast state of the art facilities to rival any unit in the country.

Dave, pictured here with the trust’s design and development manager Steve Taylor inspecting the work in progress, said: “It’s a real privilege for me to join the trust at such an exciting time.”

“Fertility techniques are advancing all the time, as are the requirements of the HFEA. To provide the best service we must ensure we are at the forefront of science and clinical medicine. It’s what’s what local people deserve.”

“We have an excellent team of people, with vast experience, who I know are well regarded by patients and their families and now we can only go from strength to strength in the months and years to come”. The refurbished fertility unit is due to open in the summer. Once the unit is open the service will be scaled up to meet local demand.

Fertility patients meet the consultants at their latest support group

Fertility patients had the chance to meet the newest member of the medical team at their most recent support group. Consultant Mohamed Mostafa will join North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust from Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. He was joined at the meeting by consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Iona Macleod. The third member of the medical team Bano Mahroo was away learning about some of the latest fertility techniques which will be used in the unit in future.

Principal embryologist and business manager Dave Gibbon said: “We’re very lucky in fertility because we can really get to know our patients and partners. It’s important for people going through what can be a very difficult time to get to know the whole team”.

“I was delighted that our newest appointment could join us and I’m sure everyone at the support group enjoyed having the opportunity to get to know him.”

“A thriving support group is a vital part of every successful fertility unit. I am very pleased with the way the group is running and everyone involved in benefiting from it. It’s important that people can share their experiences and invite in speakers to talk about items of interest to the group.”

The fertility support group meets at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday of every month at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.
More matrons put safety, hygiene and patient dignity at the top of trust agenda

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has responded to the government’s request for more matrons by expanding its matron complement to 34. The trust had 10 matrons, but this development has more than trebled the number of matrons who carry out such a fundamentally important role in patient care.

Acting director of nursing Cath Siddle said: “We’re very excited about this development. Nurses have always been champions of patient care but this has allowed us to take another look at the role and give our matrons specific priorities - infection prevention and control, privacy and dignity of patients, cleanliness and patient safety.

“Our 10 existing senior clinical nurses will continue to also be visible in their matching white blouses and suits. We’ve stuck to traditional navy blue uniforms for our matrons but added distinctive red epaulets so they are easily identifiable. We also putting posters up in ward and department areas so people can see who the local matron is and what she is responsible for.”

The government asked hospital trusts to more than double the number of matrons because the public like to be able to identify one person who is in charge of a ward or department.
If anyone thought human resources (HR) was just about hiring and firing they had the chance a few weeks ago to see all things which make up what we used to know as the personnel department. Like many departments in a busy hospital trust, human resources are the back office staff whose work is little seen or even, more importantly, understood by most people working in the trust. Director of human resources and information Graham Evans said: “We were having a discussion in the department about how we could explain what we do in human resources, occupational health, organisational development as well as the complementary services offered by the staff records team. “My original idea was a series of road shows, but thankfully Janine talked me out of it and the idea of the open day won! It gave the department an opportunity to explain what we do our trust colleagues and provided a forum for people to put faces to names and to see some of the things that go on behind the scenes.” So the normally very quiet corridor on the third floor of the North Wing at the University Hospital of North Tees became a buzzing environment for the day. Everything from what actually does happen in the recruitment process, how staff are paid, what services occupational health can offer, how HR helps the trust meet its duties on diversity, staff and industrial relations, child care information and organisation development was on show for all to see. A very welcome addition was a chance to chat over tea and scones at the end of the tour. Head of HR Janine Lutz said: “It was great to be able to put faces to names and tell people about the services we offer which support their work. We were delighted to have staff side representatives with us to talk about the partnership work we’re doing. It was incredible to see so many people on the day and I know from the feedback I’ve had that it has helped people understand what happens in the department.”
First baby arrives at the new birthing centre

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust’s new birthing centre - based at the University Hospital of Hartlepool - has had its first arrival. Alisa Summer Tobin-Gardner was born at 6.55am on Friday 27 June weighing 7lb 8oz. Mum Lisa Tobin and dad Alan Gardner live in Lamont Grove, Hartlepool.

Midwife Catherine Measor - who also delivered the first baby in the maternity unit at the University Hospital of North Tees - delivered the baby. Senior midwife Julie Woollaston said: “We’re absolutely delighted to welcome Alisa. Being the first baby born in the new birthing centre, which only opened yesterday, makes her arrival even more special.”

The centre offers women whose labours and deliveries are expected to be straightforward one-to-one care. Birthing rooms and delivery bays each offering different equipment to encourage women to move around in labour and provide alternative delivery positions. The unit is staffed with highly trained midwives experienced in caring for women during labour and delivery. They are also trained to recognise abnormalities and deal with adult and neonatal emergencies and life support. Maternity care assistants will support the midwives in providing care for women in labour and after the baby is born. The midwives wanted some bespoke artwork for the centre and commissioned degree students from the Hartlepool campus of Cleveland College of Art and Design. The ceramics and jewellery students have produced unique artwork which has been photographed by the photography students. Judith Stout, who is the lead of the birthing centre, said: “We’re delighted with the work done by the students. We wanted to work with local students on their local birthing centre. We have something very special here which will complement the décor and facilities of the new centre.”

Johnny swaps the stage for the training track to raise money for national charity

A member of staff from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has donned his training shoes to raise money for Macmillan.

When porter Johnny Doyle isn’t walking the floors of the University Hospital of North Tees you’re likely to find him with microphone in hand singing old favourites and original material composed by him and fellow band members. After a number of charity performances to raise money for Macmillan he’s swapped the stage for the training track and running round Preston Park and raising £200 in the process.

Johnny said: “I’ve had friends who’ve had cancer and that why I think Macmillan is such a good cause. I decided to do something different this time and I’m getting in shape thanks to Fitness First trainer Jackie Kitchen. Apart from losing weight I’m feeling much fitter and up to the challenge of a run.”

Julie is new director of clinical services and compliance

Julie Henderson has been appointed director of clinical services and compliance. Julie, whose background is in performance and planning, originally trained as a nurse in Sunderland. She has held a number of senior nursing and managerial posts. She was head of strategy and planning and acting director of acute services before her appointment. She played a pivotal role in the NHS foundation trust application and achieving authorization in December 2007.

Her role will be to ensure North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust continues to perform well and raise the trust’s performance where necessary to meet increasingly challenging performance targets. She will be the trust’s lead director for all areas of compliance including meeting emergency care targets, 18 weeks and cancer targets. She is also the lead director link with the independent regular Monitor, an essential role in an NHS foundation trust.

She said: “I’m delighted to have been appointed to this role. There is an excellent team here and I know everyone is totally committed to further improvement.”

Chief executive Alan Foster added: “Julie’s nursing background and sound managerial experience will ensure that patient care, quality, accountability and lean principles are the driving forces behind the way she both leads and conducts the work of the directorate. I would like to congratulate her and welcome her formally to the board of directors.”
Rapid cleaning control joins the fight against infection

A new weapon has been added to the armoury in the fight against healthcare associated infections (HCAI). The trust has joined forces with Hygiena International and introduced a swab testing device which can measure how clean surfaces and even hands actually are and can provide rapid means of monitoring cleaning performance.

The device works by detecting the levels of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), a biochemical found in all living organisms and biological residues. If ATP is detected on a cleaned surface it means the cleaning was not effective and the surface is a hazard for the spread of germs.

Quick and simple
The ATP method is quick, simple and easy to do. A swab is taken of the area to be tested using a sampling device which is then inserted into the hand held instrument. The result is interpreted automatically and can be displayed as a simple pass, caution or fail display.

Head of domestic services Nick Clements said: “We are delighted to be working with Hygiena to introduce this system. "The ATP monitor provides immediate feedback on the efficiency of our cleaning and allows us to provide the best possible service.”

The devices are carried by domestic supervisors and used to check areas that patients may come into contact with that may otherwise be overlooked.

Nick said: “We use it to check areas such as under tables where a patient may hold it to pull it towards them. If we find an area on a particular ward where there are high readings then we use the information to check similar areas on other wards.

“The device can also be used as an aid to test the effectiveness of handwashing. Doctors will sometimes ask us to check their hands to see if they are washing effectively which as well as promoting good handwashing techniques gives a good example to other staff and patients.”

Rapid response teams
Meanwhile, the need for cleaning cover at nights has been addressed by employing rapid response cleaning teams at both the University Hospital of North Tees and The University Hospital of Hartlepool.

Steve Bentham, Peter Nugent and Maureen O’Hara cover UHH between 9pm and 6.30am while UHNT is covered from 9pm until 7am by Narelle Dixon and Bev Payne.

As well as being able to carry out cleaning at a time when there are not so many people around, the teams are on call to deal with spills that otherwise would have to be dealt with by nursing staff.

Acting deputy director of nursing Barbara Carr said: “The scheme is a success and the nursing staff really appreciate what the teams are doing during the night.”

Domestic supervisor Lynne Wintersgill swabs the hand of visitor Frida Galloni

Narelle Dixon and Bev Payne in the emergency assessment unit

Steve Bentham cleaning the corridors on the ride-on scrubber/drier

Maureen O’Hara and Peter Nugent, part of the rapid response team
Happy 60th Birthday...
The anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on major developments which have taken place over the last 60 years, paying tribute to the NHS staff and volunteers who help shape the service and look to a future vision of the NHS which is fair, personalised, effective and safe for all.

The NHS came into being on 5 July 1948. For the first time prevention, diagnosis and treatment were brought together to create one of the most comprehensive health services in the world. A health service based on the founding principles that healthcare should be universal, tax funded and free at the point of delivery.

Medical progress
Over the last 60 years, the hard work and skills of the NHS staff, coupled with medical progress, has helped continually improve the standards and quality of care for millions of people. People are now living on average at least 10 years longer than they did in 1948 – deaths from cancer and heart disease have fallen dramatically and Britain is one of the safest places in the world to give birth.

Secretary of State for Health Alan Johnson said: “The NHS was founded on the belief that healthcare is not a privilege to be paid for but a fundamental human right. Its creation has enhanced countless lives over the past 60 years.

In July, we will commemorate the incredible achievements of the NHS, particularly the huge contribution made by staff. We must also look to the next 60 years and continue with our programme of improvement and reform as we move from a sickness service to a health and wellbeing service.”

Transformed
Chief executive of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Alan Foster said: “As with any big birthday this is a time for taking stock and for looking forward. There’s no doubt that the NHS has transformed and saved many lives. We’re joining in with the national events as well as marking the occasion by having events of our own.

A number of trust staff who celebrated their 60th birthday in July join North East Strategic Health Authority’s chief executive Ian Dalton for a special lunch. They were theatre administrator Linda Jenkins, clerical officer/receptionist Margaret Fryer, domestic assistant Lynda Noble, senior radiographer Sue Richardson, radiographer helper Delia Wastell, sterile supplies assistant Linda Leek, all from the University Hospital of North Tees.

Radiology information and systems manager Mark Macdonald and clinical director for paediatrics Kailash Agrawal are invited to Westminster Abbey for a special service of celebration.

Babies born on NHS Day - 5 July - receive a special gift pack to commemorate the day.

9 July – thank you event for volunteers and retired staff, University Hospital of Hartlepool.

10 July - thank you event for volunteers and retired staff, University Hospital of North Tees.

How we celebrated
Look our for August’s issue of Anthem for more stories and pictures about we marked this very special birthday.

John looks back on half a century of health care
Hospital welcomer John Lavanchy might not be able to look back to the past 60 years of the NHS but can look back for 50 of them.

John – a familiar face at the University Hospital of North Tees – started his NHS career as a charge nurse on a geriatric (elderly care) unit at Burnley General Hospital. In 1964 he became a theatre superintendent in Lancaster and in 1970 he joined social services as a mental health welfare officer. In 1982 he moved to working in the community.

He said: “It was real hands on nursing in those days. You hear stories about matrons like Hattie Jacques but I really had one like that. She used to run her fingers along all the surfaces to make sure they were clean, and woe betide you if your beds weren’t made properly – she’d make you do them again.”

John, right, with staff at Burnley General

John today with receptionist Lynne Joice, who has recently retired from the trust and welcomer Win Dutton

North Tees and Hartlepool joins in with the birthday celebrations

The NHS marks its 60th anniversary this year, providing a unique opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the past and look forward to the future.
We can see clearly now... the changing face of imaging

A man who has seen a revolution in imaging techniques during his career is clinical director for radiology at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Matthew Trewhella (above). He says in the span of his 30 year career he has diagnostic imaging has taken centre stage in patient care. Matthew said: “Around 100 years ago we had the first x-rays. We've used them to pick up fractures, diagnose kidney stones and used them with barium to look at problems in the gut. Angiograms have allowed us to take a close look at veins and arteries.

“In themselves all of these techniques have helped us diagnose illness and injury very effectively but two major advances have revolutionised what we can do in terms of looking closely at the body.”

Cross sectional imaging (like ultrasound, CT and MRI) scanners allow the health professional to see two dimensional slices of the body. They rely on computing power to produce images. The combined power of the imaging technology and the computer has made cross sectional imaging a force to be reckoned with.

From being a facility which was used for half a day a week the two CT scanners at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust are working flat out to keep up with the demand. The same can be said for MRI scanning in the last decade, and there is no sign of any slackening in the rising use of diagnostic imaging.

The other type of imaging which has gained ground in the last 40 years is physiological or functional imaging which looks at how an organ works.

Matthew added: “Although the developments in these two areas are little short of revolutionary, an even more exciting prospect has emerged in recent years; so-called fusion techniques. These allow two separate computer generated images to be combined (or fused) so health professionals can see what a structure looks like and how it is performing at the same time. PET/CT is the first widely available example of this. This technology is advancing all the time and new developments are just around the corner.”

Matthew says the other major development in his career had been picture archiving computer systems (or PACS). Images are now stored digitally and displayed on flat screens, completely doing away with films, film libraries and all the associated film handling paraphernalia. Images can be seen on the ward, in theatre, and in x-ray at the same time, can be discussed by health professionals wherever they are. They’re also much more difficult to lose!

Matthew said that even after having PACS for only a couple of years, the idea of having films processed in chemicals seems positively archaic.

In summing up the revolution which has accompanied his career Matthew concluded: “In a single professional lifetime, not only have x-ray departments changed out of all recognition, but advances in imaging have made this developing technology essential to virtually all areas of healthcare.

“It's not everyone who can say they’ve been part of a revolution to improve care for patients. I'm pleased and proud to be part of it.”

The NHS, then and now

It’s easy to forget that the standards we now take for granted were once novel.

• In 1948, a cataract operation meant a week of total immobility with the patient’s head supported by sandbags. Eye surgery is now over within 20 minutes, and most patients are out of hospital the same day.
• In 1958, hip replacements were so unusual that the surgeon who invented them asked patients to agree to return after death. The NHS now carries out 1,000 of these replacements every week.
• The first UK heart transplant patient in 1968 only survived 46 days. The procedure is now common enough for two dozen to be carried out in the same period.
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• The world waited until 1978 for Britain to produce the first test tube baby; 6,000 are now born here annually.
• The introduction of NHS Direct in 1998 launched a pioneering alternative to GP services that currently handles more than half a million calls a month.

Win £60 worth of gift vouchers!

Answer these 10 questions about the history of the NHS and win £60 worth of gift vouchers

1. When was the first kidney transplant performed?
2. In which year were the first sextuplets born?
3. In which year was the first operation performed by keyhole surgery?
4. When were the first CT scans introduced?
5. In which year were the first NHS trusts established?
6. When was the first test tube baby born?
7. When was breast screening introduced?
8. When were prescription charges first introduced?
9. When were polio and diphtheria vaccinations introduced?
10. In which year was the contraceptive pill made available?

Email your answers to communications@nth.nhs.uk. If more than one person has all the answers right the winner will be the person whose name is first out of the hat. Good luck!

See the next issue of Anthem for the answers.

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• The world waited until 1978 for Britain to produce the first test tube baby; 6,000 are now born here annually.
• The breast-screening programme introduced in 1988 now saves the lives of 1,400 women a year.
• The introduction of NHS Direct in 1998 launched a pioneering alternative to GP services that currently handles more than half a million calls a month.
A lifetime of nursing

It was early 1964 when a young Sue Henderson decided that she wanted to be a nurse, and it was only a few years later when she wondered if she had done the right thing! Sue, now nurse specialist for acute pain, explained: “It was my first experience of the operating theatre as a newly qualified nurse. Gordon McNaught, who many people will remember, was doing a leg amputation and singing “Onward Christian Soldiers” at the top of his voice.

“He explained that my duty was to catch the leg when it came off, but to be careful not to drop it on the floor as it would be very heavy.

“I was nervous enough, but when I was sent to turn the x-ray machine off at the crucial moment, I broke into a panic.” It was of course one of the pranks that were played on young inexperienced nurses at the time and everything worked out right in the end.

Sue said: “Nursing was very different in those days, a lot of duties were performed by nurses that are now the jobs of other staff. We were expected to sterilise equipment in a large bowl which was then placed in formaldehyde. After her early experiences, did Sue have any regrets about becoming a nurse? “None at all,” she said: “I have loved every minute of my life as a nurse.

“It may have been tough in the early days, but it was like one big happy family, with the stern figure of the matron or sister in charge to make sure everything ran smoothly, and now I am that sister.

“It has been a very interesting and exciting period in the development of the NHS and I am really proud to have been a part of it.”

A vote for the League of Friends

The League of Friends of the North Tees Hospital is 60 years old.

It is a joint celebration this year as the NHS shares its 60th birthday with the League of Friends who run the coffee shop in the outpatient department at the University Hospital of North Tees.

The League of Friends of the North Tees Hospital Group as it was then known was formed on the introduction of the NHS in July 1948 by a committee made up of representatives of Toc H, local businesses, the ladies sewing guild and hospital management committee.

They initially served Stockton, Thornaby, Portrack and Durham Road hospitals and the Robson Maternity Home. The name was changed to The League of Friends of the North Tees Hospital when The new hospital opened in 1968.

The league is one of the oldest in the country and initially provided amenities that were not available through the NHS. Edna Anderson who runs the coffee shop along with a small but dedicated band of volunteers said: “The league supplied things that you wouldn’t see in hospitals these days, flower vases, bed trays and even caged birds for the elderly in Portrack hospital.

“A weekly service was also organised at Portrack selling sweets and biscuits, which continued as a trolley service to the elderly care unit when it opened at North Tees.

“In the early days one of the duties of the volunteers was to make sure that at visiting time there were no more than two visitors to a bed.”

Garden parties were organised in the grounds of the hospital to raise money, the first one raising the grand sum of £100.

As the money rolled in it was used to provide televisions for the patients and eventually to buy much needed equipment.

When the outpatient department was opened, the league were invited to run the coffee shop and still do to this day providing a service which is greatly appreciated by patients, visitors and staff alike.

Edna, who has been a volunteer for 40 years, 35 of them as a committee member said: “I was inspired to become a volunteer when my late husband was in hospital and I saw the valuable work that was done by people giving up their own time to help the sick and elderly.

“I worked in a newsagent and I arranged to do the early morning shift so I could come and work at the hospital in the afternoons. I believe that time is the most precious thing you can give and I have enjoyed every minute of it.” Not that she is about to give up just yet. “I don’t know what I would do if I didn’t have the league.” She added.

A debt of gratitude

It was of course one of the pranks that were played on young inexperienced nurses at the time and everything worked out right in the end.

After her early experiences, did Sue have any regrets about becoming a nurse? “None at all,” she said: “I have loved every minute of my life as a nurse.

“It may have been tough in the early days, but it was like one big happy family, with the stern figure of the matron or sister in charge to make sure everything ran smoothly, and now I am that sister.

“It has been a very interesting and exciting period in the development of the NHS and healthcare in general and I am really proud to have been a part of it.”

Pam Butler

Hospital with Diane Edwards and Sue in the 1966 at Hartlepool General

Sue Henderson today

Region works together to mark

birthday milestone

Right across the North East we’ve been celebrating this important milestone and sharing stories about the people who’ve helped make history. Organisations right across our region have contributed to a special publication called Happy 60th Birthday NHS. Copies are available in hospitals, clinic and GP practices across the region. You can also find a copy by visiting www.northeast.nhs.uk.
New healthcare system for Hartlepool, Stockton and parts of Easington and Sedgefield - formal consultation underway

A public consultation on an improved health care system for people living in Hartlepool, Stockton and parts of Easington and Sedgefield began on 2 June. The consultation is being carried out by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, North Tees Primary Care Trust and Hartlepool Primary Care Trust who, as required by law, have formed a joint committee to oversee the consultation.

The NHS joint committee will meet in public again when the consultation is finished – in late September or early October - to consider the feedback and make the final decision about the outcome of the consultation.

During the three month consultation people living in Hartlepool, Stockton and parts of Easington and Sedgefield are being asked for their views on:
• having health services in or as near their home as possible, with only things which need to be done in hospital taking place there;
• where they think Stockton and Hartlepool’s community services should be and on which site they feel the new hospital for Stockton, Hartlepool and parts of Easington and Sedgefield should be built; and
• how best to bring in all the changes needed to build this new healthcare system.

Carole Langrick, who is heading up the momentum: pathways to healthcare programme, said: “This is an important issue for people living in our area. We’re talking and planning today for the kind of health service we want for tomorrow.

Living longer
“Tomorrow’s health service needs to be different so we can provide the type of services people want. Our health services need to change because though people are living longer many people are also living with medical problems such as heart disease, chest disease or diabetes. From surveys the government has done in the past we know that people want to stay independent and healthy for as long as possible and, when they do need to use the health service, they want convenient services which fit in with the needs of their lives, not the needs of the health service. “Tomorrow’s health service needs to be different so we can provide the type of services people want. “Through the momentum: pathways to healthcare programme we’ve had more than year of discussion already with patients, carers, patient representatives, health professionals and managers; this is how we have arrived at many of the ideas set out in the consultation document.

“However it’s still vitally important for people have their say during this consultation and we’re providing a number of ways for people to do this.”

Public meetings

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<tr>
<td>Monday 21 July 10am-12pm</td>
<td>Historic Quay, Hartlepool</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 23 July 6-8pm</td>
<td>Billingham Forum, Billingham</td>
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<td>Monday 18 August 10am-12pm</td>
<td>Stockton Baptist Tabernacle, Stockton</td>
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<td>Wednesday 20 August 2-4pm</td>
<td>Hartlepool Borough Hall, Hartlepool</td>
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You can find out more about momentum: pathways to healthcare by visiting www.momentum-consultation.org.uk and fill in on line questionnaire. You can send your comments to comments@momentum-consultation.org.uk

The members of the NHS joint committee are:
Steve Wallace, chair of Hartlepool Primary Care Trust – who also chairs the NHS joint committee
Jonathan Erskine, non executive director of North Tees Primary Care Trust
Chris Willis, chief executive of North Tees Primary Care Trust and Hartlepool Primary Care Trust
Cath Purdy, non executive director of Hartlepool Primary Trust
Graham Prest, chair of North Tees Primary Care Trust
Dr Carl Parker, who chairs the joint professional executive committee of North Tees Primary Care Trust and Hartlepool Primary Care Trust
Russell Hart, chairman of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
Alan Foster, chief executive of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Positive report for inpatient survey

High levels of care and positive patient feedback at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust are reflected in the findings of the national inpatient survey 2007. Nearly 60 per cent of those asked responded to the survey which was carried in 2007. Seventy seven per cent of patients rated their overall care as excellent or very good. Patients also rated North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust in the top 20 per cent in the country for:
• being given enough privacy when examined in accident and emergency
• short waiting times to receive help from staff after using the call button
• single sex accommodations
• information about medicine and what to expect after leaving hospital

Food for thought
Patients thought the food could be better. Director of operations Kevin Oxley said: “This survey related to a period during July of last year, since that time we have introduced a new food system which provides piping hot appetising evening meals, served at the patient’s bedside. The response from patients has been encouraging. People much prefer the new system. We’re hoping to see a much better result in the next inpatient survey.”

Making things better
Patients told us they wanted:
• more privacy when discussing their condition or treatment
• even more respect and dignity (though 76 per cent of patients said they were treated with dignity and respect)
• better discharge arrangements when leaving hospital
Chief executive Alan Foster said: “We welcome these surveys because they tell us what’s important to patients and help us focus our efforts on improving things.”
Third annual celebrating excellence conference a showcase for good practice

Conference organiser for North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust’s celebrating excellence conference Shirley Hetherington writes...

A big thank you to everybody who contributed to the success of the Celebrating Excellence Conference which took place in the teaching centre and the University Hospital of North Tees. This self funded event was chaired by consultant physician Jean MacLeod, who is also an associate medical director and chairs the audit and clinical effectiveness committee and consultant paediatrician and director of research and development David Symon.

Good practice

Director of human resources and information Graham Evans opened the conference which was a demonstration of the good practice taking place throughout the trust in research, clinical effectiveness and quality. The overall standard of presentations was high. The day is also the opportunity to present the annual audit prizes which went to...

1st place: Audit of emergency Caesarean sections against NICE, RCOG, local and maternity CNST standards for the time taken to undertake category 1 and 2 emergency Caesarean sections. Presented by Janet Alderton, midwife and clinical governance co-ordinator for family health.

2nd place: Does the two week rule work? A retrospective audit of two week rule referrals for suspected upper or lower gastrointestinal (GI) malignancy over a three month period which demonstrated that the two week rule system has speeded up the care of patients referred with suspected GI cancer. Presented by Dr Laura Clipsham, Foundation 2 doctor.

3rd place, and the prize for the best oral presentation of the day, was awarded to Helen Jones, operational services manager, pharmacy, for the allergy audit. This was a one day audit of medication Kardex to identify the compliance of completion of allergy information in line with recommendations from summary of good practice, annex 1, with the aim of prevention of inappropriate administration.

The prize for the best poster display was jointly awarded to:

Mel McEvoy, nurse consultant in cancer and palliative care and lead cancer nurse for his display on service improvement leads for cancer – making the system work.

Gregg Waddup, lead bowel cancer screening practitioner, for his work around bowel cancer screening.

The remainder of the programme provided a wide range of interesting topics:

Research to determine the prevalence of carriage of three multi-resistant bacterial pathogens in a community population, carried out by specialist biomedical scientist Andrew Ward as part of his MSc degree in biomedical science.

Stroke information sharing sessions developed by the North Tees community stroke team over the past 18 months in line with the NSF for older people, national clinical guidelines for stroke and the national stroke strategy. Presented by Mrs Nicola Reynolds, Clinical team leader for neurology.

The development of the clinical ethics advisory website. This is a radical interactive intranet site being developed so that staff can explore their own ethical uncertainties, and gain assistance and support. Presented by nurse consultant in cancer and palliative care and lead cancer nurse Mel McEvoy and clinical effectiveness advisor John Blenkinsopp who is also the clinical ethics advisory committee web editor.

Practice improvement. A demonstration of how reduction in the incidence of hospital acquired infections associated with the use of peripheral cannulae and urethral indwelling catheters has been achieved through improvements in practice. Presented by practice improvement nurse Shaun Cunningham.

Improvements

An overview of the lean management process and its implications for the trust was given by assistant director organisation development George Allen.

Consultant in emergency medicine Dougal Southward presented an ongoing project to train North Tees and Hartlepool staff to run in the Great North Run 2008, an initiative based on evidence linking fitness to reduction of illness and aiding in chronic disease, together with the benefits of exercise to a working population and the suggestion that providing exercise for employees increases productivity and reduces sickness.

Key note lectures were given by:

Professor Rudy Bilous, professor of clinical medicine, The James Cook University Hospital and director of the Durham and Tees Valley comprehensive local research network, who presented developments and opportunities in line with the implementation of the UK clinical research network and regional networks, in conjunction with the Department of Health best research for best health guidance.

Trust research advisor Eileen Scott gave a humorous presentation on the origins of Research Governance, and the implications for trusts.

Watch out for next year’s event in May 2009! Advertising will start January 2009, including a call for papers.
Point of care testing road show calls in at University Hospital of North Tees

A road show to explain the importance of accurate point of care testing has called in at the University Hospital of North Tees. Consultant clinical scientist Helen Verrill explains: “Point of care testing is the term used for any test done outside the laboratory and examples in this trust include glucose, pregnancy tests, blood gas and urine dipsticks.

“The road show was devised by the North East pathology point of care network and visited hospitals including North Tyneside, James Cook and South Shields. It aims to raise awareness of what tests are available, common pitfalls staff come across when testing and to promote use of the laboratory as a source of advice and good practice. “The road show was well attended by staff including health care assistants, ward clerks, nursing and medical staff and also attracted staff from the community and ambulance service.

“Some patients also wanted to discuss using their glucose meters to monitor their diabetes.”

More than 50 staff filled in a short questionnaire about point of care testing for the chance to win £30 of gift vouchers. Rita Siberry of the pain clinic was the lucky recipient. Second prize of a tin of chocolates went to Charlotte Grainge of Patientline.

Big birthday - but it’s business as usual for Ron

You might think an 80th birthday would be a time to relax and be made a fuss of – but that’s not what hospital volunteer Ron Vale thought. Far from spending the day as the centre of attention it was business as usual for Ron. He was at work as usual in the outpatients departments at the University Hospital of Hartlepool at 7.30am ready to greet the first patients and take them where they need to go.

Ron, a porter at the University Hospital of Hartlepool for 17 years, has clocked up 23 years as a volunteer in the outpatients department. He’s described by the staff as invaluable in his role of welcoming patients and making sure they don’t get lost on their way to other departments.

Outpatient supervisor Gill Nelson said: “Ron might not have wanted a fuss but we wanted to him to know just how much we value his work on this very special day. He’s such a well known face around the hospital. He’s an absolutely fantastic person and well known and liked by patients, staff and visitors.”

Ron puts his years of voluntary work down to his wife Ada. Interviewed at the volunteers’ thank you party last year he explained that when he retired she didn’t want him under her feet.

Ron said: “She puts me out of the door at 7.30am every day so I’m pleased to be able to make good use of my time and help people in the process. I wouldn’t keep doing this unless I really enjoyed it. The staff are excellent and we’ve built up a good working relationship over the years. I have thought about retiring but they won’t hear of it!”
The fifth annual national survey of NHS staff was conducted between October and December 2007. The survey looks at the attitudes and experiences of NHS staff both nationally, because of the importance of the NHS, and by individual trust, so that employers can review any issues with their own staff and take action.

Almost 156,000 employees from all 391 NHS trusts in England responded to a questionnaire asking about their views and experiences of working for the NHS. The number of staff surveyed within North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust was 850, of which 446 staff completed and returned a survey questionnaire. The trust’s response rate was 53 per cent which places us above average nationally, because of the importance of these areas.

The trust's response rate was 53 per cent which places us above average for hospital trusts. The survey results will be used by:

- Employers – to inform improvements in working conditions and practices at a local level
- The Healthcare Commission (HCC) – who will use the survey findings in their annual health check, as part of NHS organisations compliance with Department of Health core standards
- The Department of Health – and other national bodies, who will assess the effectiveness of national NHS staff policies, such as training and flexible working practices, as well as to inform future developments in these areas
- Our trust – learning from our good practice and developing on this and putting measures in place to improve issues raised

Nationally there were a number of positive developments in these areas

- None of the issues fell into the bottom 20 per cent for hospital trusts.
- Our scores showed a significant improvement in:
  - percentage of staff using flexible working options
  - percentage of staff appraised
  - percentage of staff appraised with personal development plans
  - quality of job design
  - support from immediate managers
  - percentage of staff witnessing harmful errors, near misses or incidents
  - staff intention to leave jobs
  - there were four areas where we have identified a need to get better
  - increase the number of staff having health and safety training
  - reduce the numbers of experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from patients or relatives
  - improve job satisfaction
  - improve the extent of positive feeling

Human resources manager Vicky Lloyd said: “We have a number of things already in place to improve job satisfaction like the personal responsibility framework, staff mediation sessions, thank you awards and organisational change resource packs but we’d appreciate people’s thoughts and ideas on making further improvements.”

The full report on the staff survey findings for the trust is available on the HR pages of the trust intranet site or by visiting www.healthcarecommission.org.uk.

The action plan resulting from the findings from the 2007 staff survey is in the process of being agreed. This has been finalised, it will be available to all on the trust intranet site.

If anyone has any comments or suggestions on how we can improve on the issues raised though the staff survey, please email staffsurvey@nth.nhs.uk.

Medical illustration manager Paul Rodgers said: “We are the first trust in the region to introduce this system and are pleased to work alongside WABA Medical Technology and our IM&T department with the

Medical illustration has the golden touch

The department of medical photography and illustration has hung its more traditional film cameras and switched to digital to coincide with the launch of a new photographic database. The Medical Image Database Archive System (MIDaS) is a web-based image database that allows staff to access photographic images on any workstation at any time that is convenient. The system is already in use in some of the largest teaching hospitals around the country, namely Great Ormond Street, Addenbrookes and Barts.

Medical illustration manager Paul Rodgers said: “We are the first trust in the region to introduce this system and are pleased to work alongside WABA Medical Technology and our IM&T department with the development of MIDaS. “The system allows users to browse for the right image themselves in their own workplace which makes the task easier for them and frees up our time to get on with the job of taking photos.” At this time, MIDaS is being used to upload images taken by medical illustration, this is to allow a period of familiarisation. The intention is eventually have all photographic images taken by trust staff stored on the system building up a large user friendly database.”

The system is presently accessible via the trust intranet directly from the home page.

For more information relating to MIDaS and any other medical photography and illustration enquiries, please contact the department on 4271 or 2573.
While little Mason Thompson White slept soundly his friends and family, along with members of Primrose Hill football club brought games and DVDs to the children’s ward at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Young footballers from Primrose Hill and North Grange football clubs raised around £200 to buy items to keep children entertained while they’re in hospital.

Dressed in their strips seven year old Blake Burlison, Mason’s brother Graham (eight) and auntie Chelsea (seven) brought gifts to staff nurse Leann Raynor who gratefully accepted them on behalf of the ward.

Graham White who, as well as being a relative, helps to coach both football teams, said: “Mason has been a patient on the ward for much of his short life and we wanted to find a way to say thank you to the staff who looked after him. The teams enjoyed raising the money for such a good cause.”

Leann said: “We’re very grateful for these gifts which will make a real difference to children on the ward. It’s a very nice way to say thank you for the care Mason has had while he’s been with us.”

Successful measures produce a significant drop in falls

A major feature of caring for older people is preventing falls. And, thanks to a number of measures introduced across North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, there has been a significant drop in the numbers of falls.

In one year the numbers of falls has gone from 1,672 to 1,441 – a drop of about 15 per cent.

Consultant physician Rebecca Leigh, who led falls awareness week in 2007, said: “Falls have a devastating effect on older people. Apart form the immediate injuries which can be bad enough they can result in a loss of confidence which means an older person may not feel safe, even in their own homes.

“In our hospitals we have a number of measures and effective risk assessment to ensure we put the proper safeguards in place. This is obviously making a difference and it’s very pleasing to see a drop in the falls figures.”

Consultant physician Christopher Ward added: “As an elderly care physician I often see people in hospital who have had a fall at home which has been caused by an underlying illness. Frequently when a patient comes in after a fall we find out they have osteoporosis. “Falls can lead to ill health, pain and broken bones but they also have serious psychological consequences such as anxiety and the fear of falling again. We used falls awareness week again this year to show people both at home and in hospital how falls can be prevented in the first place and how, if someone has already had a fall, they can really cut down the risk of falling again.”

In the UK one person dies every five hours as the result of a fall; falls remain one of the biggest causes of accidental death for older people.

Rebecca added: “A lot of falls prevention is common sense and many of us do it every day without thinking about it, nevertheless it remains the country’s top cause of accidental death for older people so we can never become complacent about fall prevention.

“Obstacles, slippery surfaces and litter on floors can all lead to a fall. If we see a hazard it’s vital not assume someone else will sort it out. Prompt action could prevent someone falling.”
Consultant physician David Bruce

Strokes are the leading cause of severe adult disability and the third biggest killer in the UK. Every year, an estimated 150,000 people in the UK have a stroke. Most people affected are over 65, but anyone can have a stroke, including children and even babies. More than a quarter of a million people live with disabilities caused by stroke. People understand heart attacks but less is known about strokes which are, basically, brain attacks. In four out of five people they happen when a clot clogs up an artery in the brain. In one out of five people they happen when a weakness or bubble in the artery bursts.

In the North East two thirds of patients (compared to one half nationally) spend at least half of their time in dedicated units after suffering a stroke where they receive specialist care, and work is underway to increase this figure. More patients in the north east than the national average are treated within 24 hours of a transient ischaemic attack (a serious condition caused by a temporary reduction in blood and oxygen supply to part of the brain), which lessens the chances of their condition developing into a full-blown stroke.

Improvements

At North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust stroke services have been good but consultant physician David Bruce and his team of doctors, nurses and therapists are bringing in changes which will make a significant difference to the way the hospital cares for patients who’ve had a stroke. David said: “Hospital care for stroke patients was mostly about rehabilitation rather than intervening immediately after the stroke. We now know early treatment makes a difference to the way a patient recovers so we’re putting as much as if not more emphasis on this end of the care. “Thrombolysis – or clot busting drugs – have been used for people with certain types of heart attack and have been found to be beneficial. It’s a bit more difficult with strokes because not all patients benefit and to get the best results you need to give the clot busting agent within three hours of the stroke happening. However we’re now looking at better acute assessment and treatment including giving the clot busting drug where appropriate. It’s a useful tool to have in our armoury. “Once a patient comes into the ward and we’ve had the opportunity to fully assess their condition we carry out what we call active physiological monitoring. Put simply this is checking their ability to swallow, their oxygen levels, temperature, blood pressure and whether they’re well hydrated. We also get people up on their feet as quickly as possible so we can start to move into recovery and rehabilitation.”

All of this activity is reflected in the ethos of the stroke unit which has moved from simply rehabilitation to a much more active treatment of the patient. The result is a hospital stroke service which will have a better outcome for the patient and a seamless transition into the community stroke team to allow further recovery and rehabilitation.

Support group donation helps recovery from stroke

An unusual donation was recently made to the stroke unit at the University Hospital of Hartlepool. Members of the Young Stroke Group donated a Nintendo Wii games console to consultant physicians David Bruce and Balakrishna Kumar. David Bruce said: “We would like to thank the group for their generous donation, I know it will be put to very good use.”

“Unlike most computer games, the Nintendo Wii involves acting out all the physical movements involved in normal sports such as tennis, golf or boxing. This can help to rewire the brain after it has been damaged by a stroke. “We will be using the console in physiotherapy and occupational therapy as a way to teach stroke patients everyday movements they used to take for granted. We know the brain can make changes if we give it lots and lots of practice.

The Young Stroke Group was established in February 2006 and currently has around 20 members, the youngest being aged only 40. The group’s aims are to be a social support group for people who have had a stroke and to encourage people to resume a normal life.

Pauline Wallis, a carer from the group said: “After discharge from hospital it can be a lonely existence for both the carer and the patient, our group is trying to get around isolation, by increasing the confidence of patients to go outside and get out and about.”

David Bruce and Balakrishna Kumar receive the Nintendo Wii from Pauline Wallis watched by Sister Josie Robinson and patient Peter Dobson.

Promoting stroke awareness

Tuesday May 13 was Stroke Awareness Day and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust threw its full weight behind backing the campaign. Stroke Awareness Day is held by The Stroke Association each year to raise public and media awareness of stroke, including prevention information, risk factors and symptoms. Staff from the stroke unit staffed stands in the main concourse at both sites and gave advice on ways in which the risk of stroke can be reduced, the first symptoms and signs and what to do if you suspect someone is having a stroke.
Trust gives medical students a taste of what is to come

A group of medical students from Hartlepool Sixth Form College recently had the privilege of being the first to undertake a new work experience programme.

The undergraduate department at the University Hospital of Hartlepool has introduced a pilot scheme for medical students in the Hartlepool area. The week long scheme allows students to experience working in a health setting in a classroom environment.

Teaching fellow Dawn Noble, clinical lecturer Anne Lamb and undergraduate administrator Lynn Laidler are the team behind organising and delivering the new scheme.

Lynn said: “During their week with us the students are able to try out practical procedures such as blood pressure monitoring, suturing, ECG sessions, looking at x-rays and basic ophthalmology, all under expert guidance in a classroom environment.”

Teaching sessions the students get the opportunity to speak to senior doctors from varying specialities to get an insight into roles, duties and expectations of a newly qualified doctor within hospital medicine. They are also given information about universities offering Batchelor of Medicine, Batchelor of Surgery (MBBS) medicine as an undergraduate degree and an explanation of how the MBBS course runs and an overview of life as a medical student.

They don’t go away empty-handed as they are all given instruction in basic life support and if they demonstrate the necessary competence are given a BLS certificate.

Careers adviser from the sixth form college Jane Gemmell said: “The students thoroughly enjoyed their placements at the hospital and they learned a great deal from the whole experience.

“It is important they gain this experience as the universities expect the students to have had a visit to a hospital or hospital department before they apply.”

To qualify for the course students must be 16-18 years of age and currently studying for A-level exams within the Hartlepool catchment area. They are expected to have an interest in applying for a place on a medicine MBBS course and must provide references of expected A level grades to ensure a career in medicine is academically possible.

The second week is due to take place from 28 to 31 July 2008. Anyone interested in applying for a place on this, or any future courses should contact Lynn Laidler on 01429 522107 or email lynn.laidler@nth.nhs.uk.

Tackling stress hits the road

As featured in the last edition of Anthem the trust has set up a group to identify the main causes of stress within the trust and in which directorate or division they occur.

Prolonged stress can have an impact on people’s physical or psychological health or their behaviour. It is vital to identify stress and to do something about it. People under stress can make mistakes and this means patients could suffer.

As part of raising awareness about stress, what help is available and what you can do to help yourself two road shows were held in April.

They consisted of posters, information leaflets and stress-relieving toys and were staffed by people from estates, occupational health and health and safety who were on hand to give advice.

Health and safety manager John Bushnall who spent time on both stands said: “The road shows were very well attended. People are naturally worried about being under stress and a lot of staff found the information very useful.

“The stress busting toys went down particularly well.”

Everyone should now have filled in the stress questionnaire which was attached to the April payslips.

Once the data from this is reviewed there will be a series of focus groups set up to look at strategies for reducing work related stressors in specific departments and a trust-wide action plan drawn up for dealing with wider corporate issues that often contribute to work-related stress.

Accommodation manager Val Facchini, staff records officers Barbara Lowther and Sharon McLean and health and safety manager John Bushnall on the stand at the University Hospital of North Tees.
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**Get back in touch with the seasons the River Swale way**

Do you find yourself returning from the supermarket week after week, with the same perfectly formed fruit & vegetables? Are you finding yourself wondering why you are eating strawberries in December and parsnips in July? Shopping in the supermarket could have prompted you to lose touch with the seasonality of food; but one local box scheme is paving the way to encourage you to get back to your roots.

River Swale Organic Vegetables is a brand new box scheme, modelled on Riverford, its sister farm in Devon, whose award-winning box scheme has been running for 14 years. Made up of 7 local growers in Yorkshire, which deliver a wide variety of fresh, seasonal, organic vegetables across the county, direct to people’s homes. They are growing a huge variety of fruit and vegetables, all selected purely for performance in the kitchen; knowing that their customers are more interested in the flavour and seasonality of their vegetables, over cosmetic perfection and year-round new potatoes. Your local friendly River Swale Swale face in and around Middlesbrough is. Simon says “I will be delivering seasonal produce, with a choice of 8 boxes, designed for all sizes of household and with prices starting from only £7.90 including delivery, you can be sure there is a box to suit you. You can even visit the website www.riverswale.co.uk to check the box contents for the following week”.

He went on to say “it’s so fresh, much of the produce is delivered to our customer’s doorstep within two days of being picked in the field – it’s like having a virtual allotment, but without the digging!”

We all know how easy it is to walk into a supermarket and pick up some prepacked mange tout, perfect for adding colour to a stir-fry. Would you stop and think twice about buying it, if you knew that a tonne of mange tout grown in Kenya for the supermarkets swallows up a tonne of aviation fuel on its journey to the UK? If the answer is yes, then it’s time to start thinking about where your food comes from. Discovering the benefits of eating with the seasons really will make you wonder why you didn’t start ordering a River Swale vegetable box earlier. There are a number of good reasons to eat seasonally; when ‘food miles’ are kept low, the energy and CO2 emissions needed to grow and transport the food we eat is lowered, it helps to support the local and regional economy and most vital of all; seasonal food is fresher and so tends to be tastier and more nutritious.

If you want to start eating seasonally, now is a perfect time to start, as there are some truly delicious vegetables around at the moment; perfect potatoes – just like your granddad used to grow. Why not try a vegbox?

Call the farm on 0845 367 1155 – it may well be the kick-start you need to take you back to your roots.

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