

GP NEWS

.....keeping you in touch with Ashford & St. Peter's

Trust CEO to take up permanent position at Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells

It has been announced that Glenn Douglas, Chief Executive at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust is to move permanently to Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust as their Chief Executive.

Clive Thompson CBE, Chairman at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals said: "We are reluctant, but not surprised, to lose a first class Chief Executive. We have all learned a lot in the last five years and now Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells will have the benefit of Glenn's guidance and expertise. Our congratulations go to Glenn and we wish him success in his new post. During Glenn's time at Ashford and St. Peter's we moved from a zero to three star Trust and our performance has steadily improved. It is very much business as usual for Ashford and St. Peter's. Whilst we are disappointed to lose Glenn, we have a strong management and clinical team led by Paul Bentley."

Good News for Stroke Services

New Stroke Ward Opening on Cedar Ward at St. Peter's Hospital

"4TH APRIL 2008" 9.30am – 4.00pm

ACUTE STROKE AND BRAIN INJURY UNIT
"GRAND OPENING"& STROKE STUDY DAY in
the Post Graduate Centre
Lunch will be provided!

Key Note Speaker: **Dr Tony Rudd**

National Stroke Strategy & RCP Stroke Guidelines

Poster/Stalls from across the Stroke Pathway Ambulance Service/GP's

Community Stroke Services & Thrombolysis

Stroke Research Update

Full Programme to be announced

All Welcome

For further details contact Elspeth Caldwell

01932 722924

A Useful Snippet on Gallstones

If your dyspeptic patient does not respond to anti-ulcer medication, consider gallstones. Of the adult Western population, 10 to 15% will develop gallstones, with between 1% and 4% a year developing symptoms. The incidence of gallstones increases with age, with family history being an important risk factor.

People with asymptomatic gallstones develop gallstone related problems at a rate of 1% to 4% a year, with small stones being more dangerous than large, as they can cause pancreatitis.

Percutaneous Cholecystostomy is a good treatment for patients at high surgical risk.

Day Case Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy has been shown to have a high acceptance rate and very good patient satisfaction with no difference in complications.

In the acute, out of hospital setting, Diclofenac and an Opioid or Anti-Spasmotic like Buscopan are very effective, when used in combination, for relieving pain.

Mr Neville Menezes, Consultant General & Upper GI Surgeon

Formal Recognition well deserved for popular Ashford & St Peter's Hospital Colorectal Unit as it achieves classification as a "Specialist Training Unit"

The Department of Colorectology is going from strength to strength at Ashford & St. Peter's Hospitals. All four Consultants, Nurse Specialists and the Secretarial Staff are delighted to hear that the Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain & Northern Ireland has formally recognised the training experience provided by the team. The full array of Colorectal Services available include: Cancer work, treatment of inflammatory bowel disease, Laparoscopic Surgery and Pelvic Floor Work. Unusually for a District General Hospital, the Unit has been classified as a "Specialist Training Unit" accredited for senior level training of Coloproctology SPRs. "SPRs have always been keen to come to ASPH for Colorectal training and this recognition now means they will want to come here even more!", said one Consultant on behalf of the Unit Staff.

Choose and Book (CAB) release 4.0

We hear that there are to be significant changes to the Choose and Book software which will be introduced in April 2008 to support free choice in accordance with the principles outlined in the NHS Operating Framework 2008/09. For more information, the CAB site is available to NHS web users. **Link:** www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk/staff/future/Release%204.0. We will keep you updated about how this will affect us locally and if there are to be any changes to the Ashford & St. Peter's Services. Any concerns to raise or if you have any questions, please contact the Choose and Book Manager, Matthew Tambling on matthew.tambling@asph.nhs.uk

To place an article in GP News, or if you have any ideas or comments, please contact the GP Liaison Manager, James Perrin on 01932 723716 or at james.perrin@asph.nhs.uk.

PLUS LOOK OUT FOR THE NEW 2008 SERVICE DIRECTORY: MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR COPY!



Trust and Texas learn from each other!

The Senior Specialist Nurse in Wound Management at the Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust, Sue Harris, who was one of only six UK nurses out of 75 applicants to win an educational scholarship. One of aims of the scholarship was for the UK nurses to see the versatility of the vacuum assisted closure (VAC) equipment with its negative pressure wound therapy, together with the special foam dressings. The negative pressure encourages new blood vessels to grow and so brings extra oxygen to the bottom of the wound to help it heal. Sue also learned that there are 750 hyperbaric oxygen centres in the United States where patients have up to 30 "dives" which can last up to two hours. Again, the added pressure results in more oxygen being brought to the affected wound area, resulting in increased healthy cells being reproduced to help the wound heal. Sue gained a lot of knowledge and she is looking forward to sharing with colleagues for the benefit of patients.

CAPTION: Sue Harris, Senior, Specialist Nurse in Wound Management at Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust pictured showing her report on her Texan visit to Consultant Surgeon Mr. Douglas Donaldson



Mr Frederick Littley (having his blood pressure checked), Mrs Marian Littley and Stroke Specialist Nurse, Elspeth Caldwell (from left to right)

On my travels this month

The Trust has a thriving Stroke Club (or 'Klub' as its called), linked to the Chaucer Ward Stroke Rehabilitation Unit. The group meets on the 3rd Monday of every month and is open to patients whom have suffered strokes as well as their relatives, carers and friends. This month, the Stroke Risk Clinic came to Stroke Klub and Mr Frank Foreman, the Surrey PCT Stroke Co-ordinator, spoke about lifestyle modifiable risk factors, including diet, exercise and medication. All of the members were given a pack of information in which they could record their blood pressure history and store useful handouts. This was part of a focus for this particular meeting on Stroke Risk, and the group and guests alike were encouraged to have their blood pressure checked and be accurately weighed to help with general awareness of their own level of risk. The club has a very friendly and supportive atmosphere and the sharing of knowledge and personal experiences was useful and informative. There was clinical advice on hand and members of the club spoke highly of the support that Ashford had provided to them and their families - sometimes over the period of years from some long serving members like Mr Cecil Holland, pictured right with Lynn English from Chaucer Ward. **If you would like to refer a patient to the Stroke Klub then contact Frank Foreman at Walton Hospital on 01932 414189 or frank.foreman@surreypct.nhs.uk.**



Lynn English from Chaucer Ward with Stroke Klub Member, Mr Cecil Holland

On the 21st February, I spent a shift with the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb), based at Chertsey Ambulance Station for the day. I was able to attend the scene of '999' calls as an observer with the Ambulance crews. I took with me a list of questions that have been raised over recent months, mainly around the topic of communication for either non-urgent call outs from GPs or the need to be able to contact GPs from the scene when patients are unable to communicate their special needs, current medical status or locating a Next Of Kin. Some of the questions and their answers are listed below:

- **Who is the local Ambulance Trust now?** - Since the restructure, the local service is provided by the South East Coast Ambulance NHS Trust (SecAmb), with ambulance bases across the region. The local ASPH bases are at both Chertsey and Ashford
- **For a patient who needs to go to A&E, can a GP make a 'non-emergency' request for an ambulance to take a patient to hospital?** - Yes, a crew will attend within 2 hours
- **Can patients go straight to MAU, SAU or the Walk in Centre?** - Yes, depending on clinical need and the patient's history
- **Do crews always take patients to hospital?** - No, about 50% on average are taken to hospital, the rest are advised accordingly
- **Do patients use the "Message in a Bottle" Scheme?** - Some do, but often do not have up to date information included
- **Who makes the decision as to which hospital the patient is taken to?** - Usually its down to geography, but control can recommend alternatives depending on numerous factors. Patients can also make a preference and if appropriate and safe to do so they can be taken to alternative venues on request
- **Are there any specialist ambulance services?** - Yes, there are Fast Response Paramedic Units using four wheel drive vehicles as well as specialist Maternity Units
- **Do the crews ever need to speak to a patient's GP?** - Yes, Control can sometimes request information from the surgery and on occasions the crews need to speak directly to GPs.

I attended a number of scenes that included both injuries from accidents as well as sufferers of possible stroke and paediatric collapse. Two very similar cases involved elderly patients falling and sustaining significant injuries. As a Trust we have excellent working relationships with our referring GPs. As part of ongoing work to improve communications we would like to remind GPs and Practice Staff just how vital their role can be when they are contacted by Ambulance crews or their Control Centre when requiring extra information from emergency scenes. The use of the "Message in a Bottle" scheme is soon to be re-promoted by the Trust Pharmacy Team and once again this extra set of information can often be of the most vital importance.

I was hugely impressed with the way that the Ambulance crews were able to take active control of every kind of situation and provided medical and practical support to the great relief of relatives and bystanders at the scenes. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the crews on their professionalism and high standards. Many thanks for an informative and worthwhile day. James Perrin