NEW HEART FAILURE SERVICE KEEPS ALVIN OUT OF HOSPITAL

WIN!
CHRISTMAS PARTY AT MO’ JIVE

ANTHONY’S SUPER HIP: A UK FIRST
Welcome to issue 15 of Connect

In this issue...
SUHT in the news 2
No more heartache for Alvin 3
Anthony’s super hip 4
Service improvement: a patient’s perspective 5
Getting to know...  Jennison Baskerville 6
Golden Stethoscope 7
The Fundraising Connection 8

Tell us what you think...
Let us know what you think of Connect, plus tell us what news and features you’d like to see in future editions.

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Modern birth centre prepares to open its doors

New Forest Birth Centre opened its doors on Monday 1 September, providing local women with a safe home-from-home environment in which to have their babies.

The modern centre at Ashurst Hospital on the edge of the New Forest represents a major step forward in the quality of local birth centre provision. Equipped with two birthing pools and seven postnatal beds, it will also have facilities for women to drop in for breastfeeding support and antenatal education.

Plans for the centre were developed with the help of midwives and local families, following a lengthy public consultation into the future of maternity services across Southampton.

New Forest Birth Centre will be midwife-led, with no doctors on site – suitable for women expecting a straightforward birth and not requiring an epidural for pain relief.

Maria Dore, head of midwifery at Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: “We are delighted to be opening the New Forest Birth Centre. “As well as giving women the best possible support in comfortable up-to-date surroundings, it will provide a much improved working environment for our staff.”

New infection-busting products go on trial at Southampton’s hospitals

Frontline staff at Southampton’s teaching hospitals are playing a crucial role in helping the NHS test new infection-busting products.

Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust is one of seven “showcase hospitals” across England taking part in a major NHS project to evaluate new products and technologies to tackle superbugs and other infections.

The Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs) Technology Innovation Programme aims to reduce levels of infection in hospitals, especially MRSA and Clostridium difficile.

Staff at Southampton General Hospital and the Princess Anne Hospital will be trying out new products in the coming months. These include a hydrogen peroxide vapour system used to decontaminate enclosed rooms and equipment, and a monitoring system which can detect in seconds whether or not surfaces and equipment are sufficiently clean.

Revolutionary heart attack treatment now available round-the-clock

A life-saving treatment for heart attack patients is now available round-the-clock at Southampton General Hospital.

Southampton’s specialist Wessex Cardiac Unit is one of a limited number of highly specialised centres offering primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) to heart attack patients any time of the day or night.

The treatment involves using a balloon and stent to open up the blocked artery. It has a 98% success rate and patients are usually home within 48 hours. This is more effective than other treatments, with a much quicker recovery.

Lembit Opik MP visits Motor Neurone Disease Centre

Liberal Democrat MP Lembit Opik visited Southampton General Hospital in his role as president of the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

Mr Opik met patients and staff at the hospital’s Motor Neurone Disease Care Centre, which is part of the world renowned Wessex Neurological Centre.

The Liberal Democrat MP has been involved with the Motor Neurone Disease Association since 2005, after his father died from the condition.

During his two-hour visit to Southampton General Hospital, he met doctors and nurses from the hospital’s MND Care Centre, which provides advice, support, specialist knowledge and training for patients, their families and health professionals.
No more heartache for Alvin

Grandad Alvin Tull is celebrating a new lease of life after becoming the first patient treated by Southampton’s new heart failure service.

Alvin, who lives in Brockenhurst in the New Forest, had often felt tired and breathless over the past two years. Gradually he had become so unwell he could no longer sleep lying down. He had to sleep in a chair so he could breathe and his legs had also become very swollen. Even getting dressed had become a 20-minute chore that left Alvin, 60, exhausted.

Alvin came to Southampton General Hospital for tests, where he was seen by consultant cardiologist Peter Cowburn.

Peter had set up the new heart failure service and Alvin became the first of many patients to be looked after by Jayne Masters, lead heart failure specialist nurse, and her team.

With their support, he was able to return home that day, without having to be admitted as an inpatient.

The heart failure service is a joint venture between SUHT’s cardiothoracic and unscheduled care departments. The aim is to make the treatment and management of heart failure patients quicker and more effective.

Jayne said: “Heart failure is increasing, and will continue to do so, partly due to the ageing population. Treatment has always been very costly, with prolonged stays in hospital. In addition, we often find that patients are readmitted within a couple of weeks of leaving hospital, because it is very difficult to get the right balance of drugs for each individual.

However, with better treatments and more research now available, it is not necessary for them to stay in hospital for long periods of time. Sometimes, as in the case of Mr Tull, they need not be admitted at all, which gives them a much better quality of life. We also see inpatients, so that we can get involved with their care at the earliest opportunity.”

The new service has been running since April 2008 and sees patients as day cases, to prescribe and adjust their medication. These patients may have already had a stay in hospital as a result of heart failure, or they may be referred direct from community nurses or cardiologists.

In the first three months of the service, the average length of stay, number of readmissions and patient mortality has dropped.

Jayne said: “We have been fortunate to have so much support from our medical colleagues in cardiothoracic especially the staff working in the pacing clinics and the echo technicians. Without their flexibility in seeing patients quickly, we could not have had the same impact.”

When a heart failure patient leaves hospital, they receive an appointment to attend the heart failure clinic and will also be given a phone number for emergencies.

Alvin said: “I came in to see Jayne every two or three weeks. She was fantastic, always available and happy to see me whenever there was a problem. I’d just pick up the phone and arrange to pop in whenever I needed to.”

Alvin was also a suitable patient to have a specialised bi-ventricular pacemaker and defibrillator fitted, which has the potential to improve the way the heart contracts. He had the operation in August and said: “I was amazed at how suddenly I felt well again. The surgery was done under a local anaesthetic and by the next day I was already feeling better than I had in a long time.

“When I first came to the hospital, my wife Pam had to take me in in a wheelchair. I had to plan my life around how tired and breathless I got, making sure there was a bench on the route if I had to walk anywhere. Now I walk a mile each day and am gradually getting my fitness back.

“I will be forever grateful to the team for giving me a new lease of life.”

Fred is a ten and a half stone, three year old Irish wolfhound. Along with his owner, Karen Scott, Fred will be visiting ward G5 at Southampton General Hospital each Wednesday.

G5 is an elderly care ward and patients, visitors and staff will be able to stroke and talk to Fred.

Kim Sutton, voluntary services manager, said: “Patients can feel isolated and I have seen even the most withdrawn seem to open up and let their barriers down when the PAT dog is visiting.

“Fred’s size is great because the patients don’t have to bend down to stroke him. The staff and patients absolutely love him.”

Pets as Therapy (PAT) is a national charity that helps organise therapeutic visits to hospitals and care homes. All PAT dogs are temperament assessed and health checked, plus have two character references. They are registered with Pets as Therapy as well as via the volunteers office. PAT dogs and their owners wear a distinctive uniform so that they can be easily spotted around the hospital.

Fred is one of two PAT dogs currently volunteering for SUHT. Cognac and his owner Sue received a certificate from the Mayor of Southampton in January this year for over 100 hours volunteering in a year. Cognac and Sue visit Ocean ward, E1, Victoria House and Neuro on Wednesday afternoons.

The voluntary services team have recently released their 2006/07 report. This gives detailed information on the three areas they are responsible for:

- voluntary services
- work experience
- interpreters service

It also includes some great feedback from those who have been helped by volunteers and the volunteers themselves.

For more information on volunteering or for a copy of the report, contact Kim Sutton, voluntary services manager, on 6062 or kim.sutton@suht.swest.nhs.uk
The severity of his condition meant that he faced the prospect of amputation and prosthesis to try and improve his mobility. However, two-year-old Anthony has become the first person in the UK to have a ‘super-hip’ operation to reconstruct his leg. Now his dad, Ian, is looking forward to them being able to play football in the park one day. Anthony’s mum, Kenny, found out about his short legs at an ultrasound scan, when she was 22 weeks pregnant. There were concerns that there might be more serious complications and she was referred to the fetal medicine unit at Princess Anne Hospital. Anthony was born in Guernsey, where the family live, but he was transferred to Southampton General Hospital at just 10 days old, to be seen by Professor Nick Clarke, an orthopaedic consultant. Once Anthony’s hip joint started to form, Prof Clarke realised that there might be an alternative to amputation and prosthesis. He contacted an American surgeon, Dr Dror Paley, to see if he would visit the UK and carry out a ‘super-hip’ procedure. Dr Paley agreed to perform the surgery and along with Prof Clarke he spent nine hours in theatre, reconstructing Anthony’s right hip and leg. His hip was broken and a custom-made plate inserted across the defect. Six weeks after the operation, Anthony and his family flew back to Southampton to have his plaster cast removed. He was fitted with a specially made splint, which he will need to wear for about eight weeks while he gets the movement back in his leg.

Prof Clarke said: “In about a year, Dror Paley will return to the UK and we will repeat the surgery on Anthony’s left leg. Our aim is for his legs to be symmetrical, with normal hip and knee function. “Once that has been done, we will also be able to perform a limb lengthening procedure, so that he will hopefully be a good height. It is a long process, with several years of treatment, but the results should be worth it for Anthony.”

Mo’jive is offering up to ten members of staff a table at one of their Strictly Christmas Party Nights, worth £200, plus a free bottle of champagne. The Strictly Christmas Party Nights are taking place throughout December and early January, with a Christmas buffet, DJ, bar and dance cabaret, at the Mo’jive club in West Quay Road, Southampton. To nominate a team email connect@suht.swest.nhs.uk by 17th October and tell us why you think they deserve the prize. Additional tickets can be bought for £20. SUHT staff can also get £1 off the normal entry price to Mo’jive, on production of their staff badge. For more information call 023 8022 6439 or visit www.mojive.com
Service improvement: a patient’s perspective

Robin Arnell knows more about orthopaedic surgery than most patients, having had both knees and a hip replaced, three back operations and more than 15 knee operations.

He was just 18 when a bad fall in judo left him with two dislocated knees and six damaged vertebral spaces. He was only a week away from becoming a black belt, but the accident left him with a lifetime of problems caused by arthritis.

Now, at 63, he is helping SUHT make improvements in the orthopaedic surgery processes, to help the Trust meet its 18 week target and give patients the best possible care.

In early 2005, Robin needed a hip replacement and, due to various problems and the complexity of his case, he had to wait 17 months, eventually having the operation carried out privately.

Initially, he was sent to Salisbury to have his operation, but it was too complex and he had to be referred to Southampton instead, where his waiting began again.

He said: “I was approached by Sue Marshall in SUHT’s patient advice and liaison service (PALS) to see if I would like to be involved in the orthopaedic service improvement work, because of my experience waiting for my hip operation.”

Since Robin got involved, he has seen many changes in the service, with shorter waits for elective orthopaedic surgery. He also feels patient communication is vital and has made many suggestions to help improve this.

The changes have ranged from rewording all patient letters to increasing weekend working. Another improvement has been the introduction of text messaging services.

Patients who give their mobile numbers now receive a text message reminder for outpatients and pre-assessment appointments. This has helped reduce the number of patients missing appointments. In orthopaedic pre-operative assessment, the percentage of missed appointments has fallen from 11.9% to 8.2%, although there is still more improvement to be made.

Text messages are also being used internally, to help surgeons locate their patients.

Rachel Bailey, service improvement manager for orthopaedics, said: “We found out that the surgeons and anaesthetists were spending up to 40 minutes each day trying to find their patients, as they’re not always located in the same place. Now each surgeon and anaesthetist who has signed up to the service gets a text message in the evening, to tell them where the following day’s patients are.”

A spot audit in June showed that this text message service has led to a 20 per cent decrease in wasted surgeons’ and anaesthetists’ time.

Rachel said: “We’re looking at the whole process, from the booking centre and pre-assessment to theatres and follow-ups.

“I used to be a ward manager and I know that when you work on a ward it can be difficult to spot problems in the system or to have the protected time to step back and solve them. To have someone like Robin talk to us about a patient’s perspective is really valuable.”

Thanks a...
Tell us a little bit about your background
I grew up in Devon but moved to study archaeology at the University of Winchester. When I finished my degree, I decided to stay in Hampshire to work in archaeology, which is clearly why I ended up working as a fraud investigator for the Department for Work and Pensions! Once I’d got a bit of experience under my belt (not to mention having had my eyes opened a little) and had gained my professional qualification as an investigator, I decided to move on. That’s when an opportunity came up in the NHS.

Who do you have at home?
My wife Sue. We don’t have any children. She sometimes comments that one big kid in the house is quite enough. I’m sure I don’t know what she means.

What do you get up to in your spare time?
I like to get back to Devon as much as I can where we spend time yomping across Dartmoor in all weathers. I’m also a Special Constable in the Hampshire Constabulary where I get the opportunity to perform the normal duties of a full-time police officer. ‘Specials’ don’t get paid, but the reward is being able to put something, however small, back into the community.

What’s the best book you’ve ever read?
Actually it would have to be a pair of books by Pete McCarthy; McCarthy’s Bar in which he writes about a six month journey around Ireland and The Road to McCarthy which was the follow-up book in which he wrote about an international journey. Pete had a fantastically dry sense of humour and made some hilarious observations.

Favourite film?
Well, this week it’s Casino Royale (not the one with David Niven). Last week it was a Star Trek movie. Is it time to get my anorak?

What three items would you take with you on a desert island?
An extensive supply of everything to make a decent cup of tea on demand (does this count as one item?), my i-pod and a solar charger so that I could use the first two items whenever I wanted.

Who has inspired your career?
My bank manager.

Why did you choose to work for the NHS?
I refer you to my previous answer. Otherwise I’d be on the desert island you asked about!
The Golden Stethoscope

Are SUHT consultants in a world of their own – or are they keeping it real?

Facing the 10-question challenge this time is consultant cardiologist Dr Iain Simpson.

Can you name three celebrities in this year’s Strictly Come Dancing line up?
I can, I’m actually a big fan of Strictly. John Sergeant, Austin Healy, Rachel Stevens, Jodie Kidd... I think I could name most of them!
Score: One point

Who is your favourite X-Factor judge?
I don’t really watch it but obviously I do know who the judges are and I would have to say Dannii Minogue is my favourite. As you can see I have a life-size cut-out of her sister here in my office.
Score: One point

How much is a loaf of bread?
Absolutely no idea – but I know a woman who does.
Score: Zero points

When was the last time you caught a bus?
That’s an easy question – 1978. I would still recognise one if I saw one though.
Score: Zero points

Would you rather read Heat or the HSJ?
What’s the HSJ? Heat magazine every time.
Score: One point
(Editor’s note: Iain does, of course, know that the HSJ is the Health Service Journal. He’d still rather read Heat though.)

Builders brew or Earl Grey?
I’m more a coffee man but it certainly wouldn’t be Earl Grey.
Score: One point

REM at the Rosebowl or Last Night of the Proms?
REM at the Rosebowl, Opera is like the Emperor’s New Clothes to me. My favourite song is Shang-A-Lang by the Bay City Rollers – I think that says it all.
Score: One point

Where did you buy your shoes?
I bought them online from a shop in Liverpool. I have been wearing the same brand, colour and style of shoes for about 12 years. I always buy Sebago loafers, always in burgundy.
Score: Zero points

Do you know who or what Bebo is?
No idea!
Score: Zero points

What was the last film you watched at the cinema?
Casino Royale at the cinema in LeisureWorld.
Score: One point

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Sally Affleck from cancer care and Diane Kettell from cardiothoracic, who are the latest nurses to become non-medical prescribers. They completed a six-month course at the University of Southampton and are now qualified to prescribe drugs to patients.

For more information on non-medical prescribers contact Rosemary Chable or the relevant divisional lead.

Mark Maffey who has been appointed as acting trustee for Southampton’s Radio Lollipop.
Mark has also been invited to become a director of Radio Lollipop, which is an international charity.
Mark has been working with some of the other Radio Lollipop stations across the UK, including designing and project managing the delivery of the new Lollipop HQ at London’s Evelina Hospital.
This scheme involved closing Lambeth Palace Road to crane in essential parts of the studio structure. Mark also worked with a specialist plastics company to form the presenter’s desk, which he designed to be made entirely from perspex.

Christmas with Heartbeat!
Have your special Christmas get together ‘all wrapped up’

Christmas Lunch Don’t leave it to the last minute, book a lunch table with us and then relax
Venue: The Heartbeat Education Centre, North Wing, Level F.
Dates: Thursday 11th, Friday 12th, Wednesday 17th, Thursday 18th or Friday 19th December 2008
Timings: 12 midday, 12.30pm or 1pm.
The sumptuous four-course Christmas lunch costs £19.50, including a glass of seasonal fruit punch (non-alcoholic). House white & red wine is available to purchase at £8 per bottle. Please either email Nadia Kian on hec@heartbeat.org.uk, phone directly on 023 80795907 or visit the reception desk at Heartbeat Education Centre.

Departmental events
We are also taking group bookings for lunchtime and evening Christmas events. For further information please call Tina Richardson on ext 5907 or tina@heartbeat.org.uk NB: A minimum of 30 people is required for these events.
Southampton Hospital Charity has launched a weekly Lottery scheme to raise funds to benefit patients at Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust.

The Lottery’s slogan, ‘It’s Your Chance!’ explains the message the Charity wants to spread across the city and beyond. By joining the weekly Lottery, supporters can donate to their local hospital as well as having the chance to win one of nine fabulous cash prizes.

The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment (PWRR), the South’s local infantry regiment, was drafted in to give the Lottery launch a big push when they visited Southampton General Hospital. Along with launching the Lottery, local soldiers serving with the PWRR officially kicked off their adoption of Southampton Hospital Charity. This is part of a regional charity initiative that will involve all five TA Companies based in the Home Counties and their Regular counterparts raising valuable funds for their local charity of choice. Soldiers from the regiment also hosted an information stand outside the main entrance throughout the day of the launch.

Captain Keith Roberts said: “We’re delighted to be able to help the Charity launch this new and exciting fundraising initiative and are looking forward to working in close partnership with them in the future.” Southampton Hospital Charity’s Lottery, which is open to everyone over the age of 16, will be drawn every Friday. Each entry will cost just £1 and will give supporters the chance of winning up to £100 once the Charity has recruited 2,500 players. Supporters are being urged to sign up today by calling the Lottery hotline on 0870 085 8843 (calls charged at local rate).

Southampton Hospital Charity’s very own fundraising officer, Suzie Pearce, raised over £1,000 at this year’s London Triathlon. The gruelling 750m swim in the docks, 20km bike ride and 5km run didn’t faze her, despite the wind and rain, as she strove to victory in a time of just 1hr 56mins 07secs.

Suzie, 30, from Lymington, said: “It’s been such a motivating event to be involved in and the support I’ve received from friends, family and colleagues has been incredible. Thanks to them I’ve managed to raise over £1,000 and the donations are still coming in.” Following her success at this year’s event, Suzie has already signed up to take part next year. “In a moment of post triathlon insanity, I thought it would be a good idea to do it again. I had been warned that these things are addictive and despite all the hard work and pain I am totally hooked!”

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Further details about fundraising news and events and to find out how you can help, visit www.suht.nhs.uk/charity or contact the team on 023 8079 8881 or email charity@suht.swest.nhs.uk

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Triathlon success raises over £1,000

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SUHT Sudoku challenge

Win a meal at the Tiffin Club!

Complete this puzzle to be in with a chance of winning a meal at the Tiffin Club worth up to £25.

Enter numbers from 1 to 9 in the blank squares, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 square has one of each digit. Cut out and send your entry through the internal post to Connect, Mailpoint 18, Trust Management Offices, SGH, by 20th October 2008.

Congratulations to Katy Hirstwood, midwife, who successfully completed Issue 14’s puzzle to scoop the prize.

www.tiffinclub.co.uk

www.suht.nhs.uk