

Insight

Summer 2016 | Issue 59

Northampton General Hospital **NHS**
NHS Trust

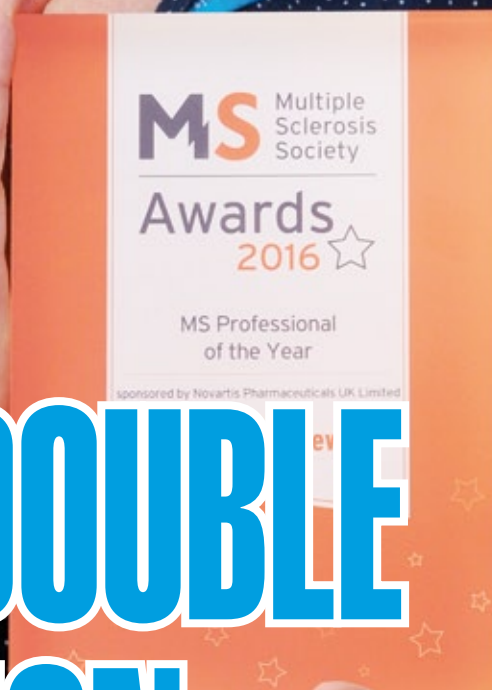


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SEE PAGE 23

EMMA'S DOUBLE CELEBRATION



**Our MS specialist
nurse picks up two
awards** See page 8



TEAM NGH PULLS TOGETHER

We prepared extremely well for the unprecedented junior doctors' strike – the first in the NHS without emergency cover being provided – and the planning carried out by all our teams was a fantastic example of people pulling together to make things safe for patients.

We are prepared for more challenges, and the continuing pressure on beds that has unfortunately resulted in rescheduling many elective operations. We are really sorry for the upset that long waits have caused our patients, and we're trying to deal with this issue without spending any more money.

Money is a big problem for us and for the whole NHS, and going into more and more deficit is not an option. We have done the best we can to ensure adequate funding but there is absolutely no doubt that next year will be the most difficult yet on this front.

Yet despite the increasing workload and lack of resource, bright spots do emerge. The teamwork I've mentioned already is one. Our staff winning awards, such as Emma Matthews (see page 8) is another. So too is being one of five hospitals shortlisted for the hospital patient safety award from CHKS, and the presentations of our quality improvement work at an international forum in Gothenburg in April – an impressive achievement for a small hospital.

And compliments continue to arrive. A recent one was about a 91-year-old care home resident with dementia who fell and cut her forehead badly. She was attended to immediately in A&E, and her high blood pressure and low heart rate were diagnosed as the likely cause of her fall. We fitted a pacemaker and the woman was transferred back to the care home two days later when she was medically fit. The family's thank you letter confirmed she was progressing well, and described the care as 'excellent - the best possible treatment from start to finish'. Amongst the ongoing daily pressures this was another welcome reminder about why providing the best possible care matters to us and our patients.

Dr Sonia Swart

**Chief Executive
Northampton General Hospital**

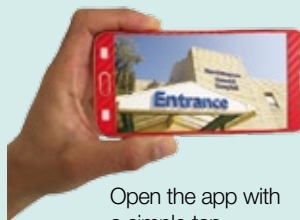
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Insight is now more than a magazine! Welcome to another edition with added video content, which you can see on your smartphone or tablet with our amazing new app, NGH Plus. Just download the app from the App Store or Google Play, follow the instructions below, then point it at the photos which show the 'Scan photo for video' symbol here.

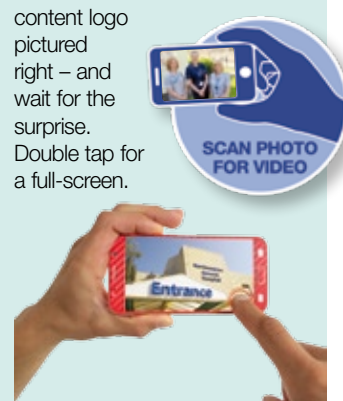
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2



3 Point your device at the photos where you see the AR content logo pictured right – and wait for the surprise. Double tap for a full-screen.



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MORE INSIGHTS FROM SONIA WITH OUR NEW NGH PLUS APP

With our new NGH Plus app, you can now see and hear our chief executive Dr Sonia Swart as well as read her regular column in Insight. Simply point your phone or tablet at the image below and watch her latest quarterly update about life at Northampton General Hospital.



RUTH'S NEW ROLE, SUPPORTING SECONDARY BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

Here at NGH we now have a Macmillan clinical nurse specialist (CNS) available to every patient who has been diagnosed with, or who is suspected of having, secondary breast cancer - where the disease has spread to other organs, such as the liver, lungs, or bones.

Ruth Fox's new role helps to support patients at every stage of their metastatic disease, at diagnosis, during treatment and afterwards, by co-ordinating any investigation, treatment and follow-up care.

The role, sometimes known as the patient's 'key worker', involves providing information and explaining treatment. The CNS is available to patients and their family or friends for emotional support and advice throughout their illness, on issues such as managing pain and other symptoms, and acting as the link between patients and all the team involved in providing their care. The key worker also telephones patients to offer support, can arrange additional help for patients at home and provide benefits advice where applicable.

Ruth, who was formerly our skin cancer CNS, said: "I felt it was time for a new challenge. There's a very big caseload, with a lot more inpatients, a lot more complex needs in terms of symptom control - so it's very busy, but a really rewarding job."

Ruth offers support and symptom control to patients in both the outpatient and inpatient setting. She works to either avoid admission by timely intervention and liaison with community staff, or help to reduce length of stay by ward assessment, referral to other agencies and discussing preferred place of care.

The new post has been funded by Macmillan cancer care since October 2015, based on an unmet need for this group of patients being identified by the hospital, and Ruth is delighted with the results so far. "The breast care team just couldn't cover the whole pathway before, so it's great these patients now have their own key worker."

"I've had some really positive feedback from patients, and I'm getting more and more calls for advice and support - which is exactly what the role is for. Those living with secondary breast cancer require specialist support to address their complex needs and the uncertainty they face about the future. It is good to know that we're helping to ensure they receive the best possible treatment and care."

**Ruth Fox, our
secondary breast
cancer clinical
nurse specialist**



between 40 – 74 who live in the county and are registered with a local GP and with no previous history of diabetes, stroke, heart or kidney disease. The consultations take around 20 minutes and are held at our on-site occupational health department.

The new health and wellbeing strategy, which was developed by a steering group consisting of staff from across the hospital and representatives from the county council, sets out NGH's overall direction and aspiration of becoming a health and wellbeing campus. At the launch, staff were given the opportunity to learn more about these plans, and sample some of the 'under 500 calorie' meals on offer in the restaurant.

Health and wellbeing for NGH staff – what's available

- ▶ On site gym, swimming and fitness facilities
- ▶ Fully supervised Funzone holiday playscheme
- ▶ Childcare vouchers and on-site nursery
- ▶ Active support for employees for smoking cessation
- ▶ Stress audits and risk assessments
- ▶ On-site occupational health service
- ▶ On-site physiotherapy to support employees with musculoskeletal problems
- ▶ Free health checks for staff over 40
- ▶ External counselling service for staff
- ▶ Participation in the Global Corporate Challenge
- ▶ Annual sun-awareness sessions
- ▶ Hospital choir
- ▶ Employee awards and recognition
- ▶ Cycle to work schemes and cycling facilities
- ▶ Free flu vaccinations
- ▶ Weekly ballroom dancing sessions
- ▶ Walking group
- ▶ Planned programme of modules relating to obesity, weight management, smoking and fitness
- ▶ Supporting staff in raising and credibly advising on lifestyle issues with colleagues and patients
- ▶ Affordable, healthier food choices in our restaurant and cafes

MATERNITY CARE FOR PARENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The NGH team of safeguarding midwives have set up a support group (called 'Chit Chat') for women and partners who need extra help with their experience of pregnancy and childbirth.

Lead midwife Emma Fathers said: "We felt it was important to set up the group for families who may have additional needs. The idea is to provide help and support with individualised, accessible care so that everyone who uses our service receives the best maternity care possible."

Research shows that some women, those with learning disabilities for example, avoid maternity care often because of lack of confidence, and they are at greater risk of poor outcomes during their pregnancy and the postnatal period. They are also more likely to be vulnerable due to other issues such as mental health concerns or issues with housing, and be reluctant to ask for the help they need.

"Mothers are welcome to bring partners or family members along to the group for support," said Emma. "We meet every two weeks on labour ward, which itself helps to break down barriers and reduce anxiety as parents become familiar with the hospital environment. They talk about a wide range of subjects from labour and birth to pain relief, how they will know when it's time to come in, what it will be like and so on."

"Some members may feel they are socially excluded or living in quite vulnerable circumstances, and the group enables them to have this peer support around them. They meet other mums who can become friends and help each other throughout pregnancy

and as their children grow. As well as maternity issues they may help and support each other with things like applications for bus passes or for jobs. Recently one of the dads got a job for the first time in his life due to confidence that he has gained through attending the group.

"The midwives who run the group, Angela Bithray and Sally Kingston, can also attend hospital appointments to support the women. It can be quite daunting coming to a big hospital so it's fantastic for the women to come in and see a familiar and friendly face. Midwives have also attended planned caesareans to support them and it has helped to provide a better experience all round.

"We've had some lovely comments about how much more confident the group has made them, about how lovely it is to meet people in similar situations, how nice it is to make friends. The group is challenging to run, it's time out of a very busy working week, but for us if we have just one comment from a woman about the group making her feel more confident about being a mother – it's all worthwhile."

Tara, one member of the group, said: "I was very nervous at first because I'm not very good at meeting new people, but the group helped me in so many ways and it helped me be a better mum. I made some new friends, everyone was so supportive and made me feel wanted. So thanks for everything you've done for me. If it weren't for you I don't think I would have been able to cope, and I wouldn't have my gorgeous little girl."



Mum Tara with midwife Sally Kingston



Our safeguarding midwives, from left: Sally Kingston, Emma Fathers and Angela Bithray



Emma is a determined woman who does not compromise on patient choice but uses this to drive the service forward. She provides the best for patients and is not afraid to bang on doors, make some noise – all in the name of MS care.

She demonstrates integrity, honesty and compassion whilst delivering the highest quality care.

Acute hospitals are not always the most appropriate place for people with chronic long term conditions and helping relatives to manage care at home or when necessary in a hospice can be beneficial for all concerned. Recently, she supported a family where the patient was terminally ill but needed medical intervention. She liaised with the GP, district nurse and hospice to ensure that the family had all the necessary help and support both day and night including weekends.

Emma was a complete and utter godsend. She combined kindness and compassion with professional behaviour.

She was very passionate about not just helping the patient but the whole family. Her level of care and compassion for us goes above and beyond the requirements of her job. I and my family, will always be forever grateful to her because she has got us through so many difficult times and to this day we have still not met anyone in the medical profession that comes anywhere near that level of devotion.

Emma visited our home on a weekly basis for several months to provide continued support and to care for myself, my wife and my family. This was very reassuring. It enabled my wife, who had spent long periods of time in hospital, to be cared for and stay at home for longer periods of time. To have my wife at home meant the world to me, my wife and my family.

Emma enabled my wife to be discharged from hospital, visiting each week and arranging for the GP to visit weekly too. She referred and introduced us to the Palliative care team which was invaluable. Emma ensured that my wife got the best care and support she required to stay at home for as long as possible.

Emma is a resourceful, proactive and caring nurse who has energy and enthusiasm for all activities she applies her mind to. She has abseiled down a lift tower, made cakes and jam and raised money for various MS causes. She's proactively identified gaps in local support services and set up 'The Guy Group' - a support group for young males with MS. She has provided training for colleagues, patients and carers locally and nationally and has had the privilege to speak at a European conference also.



DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR EMMA AS SHE GETS THE ROYAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

Our multiple sclerosis clinical nurse specialist Emma Matthews has been recognised with two prestigious awards this year. One was a national award from the MS Society, and the other a royal seal of approval with the granting of the title of Queen's Nurse.

Accepting the MS professional of the year award from the MS Society in April, Emma said: "This is for every MS nurse in the UK." The following month Emma went to another special ceremony in London to pick up the Queen's Nurse award. She said both honours make her feel "really proud".

The Queen's Nurse award is given to community nurses who have shown outstanding commitment to high standards of practice and patient care, and who have also acted as a mentor to colleagues and student nurses.

Emma uses a holistic approach to provide advice and support to patients with MS, helping to manage their care planning and symptom control. She provides outreach clinics to enable patients to receive care nearer to their home, and also offers training sessions for carers and other professionals.

Following in the footsteps of her colleague Kathy Franklin, who became a Queen's Nurse in 2008, Emma asked her patients, consultants and other team members to provide testimonials to support the evidence in her application to the Queen's Nurse Institute.

"The Institute want to see case studies where you've gone above and beyond your role to provide a patient and family with an excellent level of care," said Emma, "plus testimonials from patients, consultants and colleagues. You send off an application, but you don't get to see what others have said about you until afterwards.

"It was a lengthy process but very worthwhile, and I feel very proud to be able to put the letters QN after my name. It really boosts your enthusiasm and motivation. It means a lot when you know your patients and your consultants and the team appreciate and recognise what you do.

"I always strive to deliver the best

quality patient care that I can give, and I try to provide innovative, 'above and beyond' support for the patients in my

care. I feel that these awards are the ultimate recognition as a committed health professional."



Emma with radio presenter Scott Mills at the MS Society Awards. Inset: Emma's Queen's Nurse certificate

Emma Matthews CV

1994 – 1997 Trained at Sheffield and North Trent University

1997 – 2002 Trauma and orthopaedics (T&O) staff nurse then deputy ward manager at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham

2002 – 2004 T&O deputy ward manager at Northampton General Hospital

2004 – 2008 Orthopaedic outreach nurse

2008 – 2010 T&O ward manager

July 2010 – present Multiple Sclerosis Clinical Nurse Specialist

LET'S DO IT FOR DEMENTIA

Hospital wards can be very confusing and anxiety inducing places for people with dementia, and the more we can do to make these patients feel safe and comfortable, the better we can treat and care for them. That's why Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund has launched a new appeal, called Do it for Dementia, to help improve care for NGH patients with dementia.

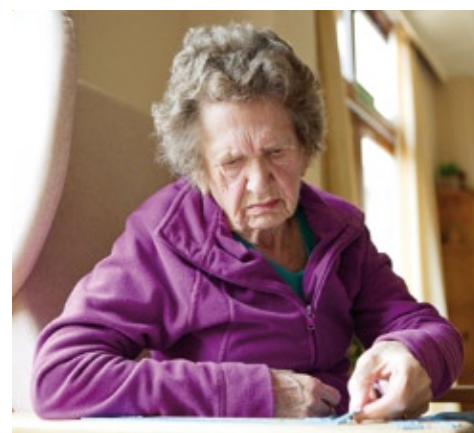
Charity coordinator Alison McCulloch explained that the campaign was likely to be ongoing, but the initial target was to raise £50,000 for a first project to create a homely environment in which therapists could assess and treat patients with cognitive problems.

Alison said: "We want to transform a room in our elderly medicine centre to make it a warm and welcoming place that patients will enjoy being in. We'd like to have some comfortable chairs, pictures on the wall, and also some wonderful things called RemPods which are literally pop-up reminiscence rooms that can turn any care space into a therapeutic and calming environment. They can temporarily transform an area into anything from a 1960s living room to a beach or vintage tea room – there's a whole range of possibilities

and they would be so useful for memory and reminiscence purposes.

"The room would primarily be for patients with dementia but would also be used for patients who have had a stroke, brain injury or other similar conditions. We would like it to be used for many different purposes. When it's not in use for cognitive assessments it could be available for activities such as music, exercise, baking, lunch groups – and we are looking at the possibility of running regular dementia cafes there with the help of the Alzheimer's society."

Karen Wesley, NGH lead champion for dementia and an occupational therapist, said: "Such a room would have lots of potential. It would ensure that the



functional skills of patients with dementia are maintained or even improved while they are in hospital. Taking them out of a clinical ward environment to assess them may help us to get a more accurate understanding of their skills, and that could help reduce their length of stay in hospital. There would be social benefits for these patients, reduced anxiety and stress levels, and they would be more settled when they return to the ward."

Alison said: "We also hope to refurbish the adjoining kitchen to the same standard as the new therapy suite. The kitchen is where occupational therapists carry out functional



RemPods (above, left and right) are pop-up 'reminiscence rooms' that can turn any care space into a therapeutic and calming environment for patients



Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund *Do it for Dementia*



Part of the money raised will also be used to fund cognitive stimulation equipment, which will be put into memory and activity boxes and used on the wards or in the therapy suite

Charity coordinator
Alison McCulloch



NGH staff have recognised the need for improving care for patients with dementia for some time, and a group led by head of patient experience and engagement Rachel Lovesy (above) ran events and raised money for the campaign for two years. On handing over to the NGH charity this April they had raised over £14,000 towards the cost of the planned improvements.

assessments of patients to see how well they can cope with tasks such as filling a kettle and making a cup of tea. Just across the corridor there's a small garden area that we would love to upgrade as well so that patients could sit outside for a while when the weather is suitable.

"If you would like to help us make this project a reality, please take up our challenge to help raise the £50,000 we need. There are all sorts of things you can do to fundraise – from sponsored sports activities to bring and buy sales, to throwing yourself out of a plane! It will be fun, you will be doing something really worthwhile, and it will benefit lots of people for years to come – maybe even someone you know and love. Thank you so much."

Contact the charity team for any help and advice you need, give us a call on 01604 545091 or email us at greenheart@ngh.nhs.uk Our office is open from 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday, and you can also find us on Facebook – search for Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund.

NGH PEOPLE

1 Pat Woolacott retired after clocking up an incredible 50 years service. Starting as a pre-nursing student in 1962 she became a staff nurse, then a sister and 'found her niche in life' in dermatology where she established an integrated unit, with nurse led clinics running alongside those of consultants. "There have been lots of changes," she said, "but we've managed to keep the camaraderie going thanks to these guys," before presenting all the members of her team with their own individual gift – a framed drawing of themselves which Pat had commissioned for each of them!

2 Happy sixth birthday to the fabulous NGH **home birth team!** Their party featured on BBC Look East and matron Paula Briody put in a confident appearance on Radio Northampton to sing the team's praises - and those of the Barratt Birth Centre, our equally wonderful midwife-led birth centre.

3 From April this year, all nurses and midwives have to regularly demonstrate that they "practise safely and effectively" under a new rigorous system of revalidation if they want to work in the UK. Congratulations to our first cohort of **19 nurses and midwives** who successfully revalidated in April – here are just a few of them.

4 Healthcare assistant **Margaret Inman** (with flowers) spent more than 25 years on the trauma and orthopaedics ward, where she was a great mentor to the students and trainee HCAs through the years.

5 Elaine Crisp's retirement as Brampton ward sister after 36 years in elderly care at NGH was described as the 'end of an era' by divisional director Dr Lyndsey Brawn, who praised Elaine for her 'can do' attitude, calmness, loyalty and nurturing of her staff. "I've consistently tried to keep focused on what we are actually meant to be here for," said Elaine, "and that's looking after the patients. Care of the elderly is not for everyone, but I've managed to build a great team who are very committed and work hard. I know I'm

leaving the ward in good hands, and I'll really miss them all."

6 Congratulations to Cedar ward sister **Stacey Cheney**, who has been nominated to join a Nursing & Midwifery Council working group looking at nursing standards.

7 Kate Garden shows off the turquoise stripe on her uniform, which is being worn by student nurses taking part in a pilot learning placement programme we're delivering in collaboration with the University of Northampton. Specific bays within Rowan and Knightley wards will have three student nurses working alongside a registered nurse during the trial programme.

8 Dr Pamela Hall, described by staff as "very kind and supportive, much loved and very much missed," retired from the maxillofacial unit after 21 years.

9 Louise Williams retired after 30 years at NGH, having worked in theatres, intensive care, and for the last 14 years in the resuscitation service where she "loved every moment". Colleagues praised Lou's warmth and humour as they gathered to thank and say goodbye to her – then revealed a video montage of special messages they had put together for their colleague, which is sure to keep her laughing for many years to come – particularly the special outtakes section!

10 Huge thanks to bank nurse **Nora Webster** for volunteering to be the new face of our nurse bank recruitment campaign. Nora has taken the modelling baton from Rowan Ward's Amber who featured in the campaign we launched last year. Spot her on posters and buses helping to spread the message about our enhanced benefits package for bank nurses! (For details visit www.LoveNursingLoveNorthampton.uk)



Very kind and supportive, much loved and very much missed.





ONCOLOGY ASSESSMENT BAY PROVIDES CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH CANCER

Our assessment bay in oncology outpatients is where specialised doctors and nurses assess patients who become acutely unwell during treatments like chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or from symptoms from their cancer.

It's where patients experiencing symptoms from their disease, or side effects, can be assessed and if necessary be treated quickly and effectively without having to attend

the hospital's accident and emergency department.

The bay, which has been running successfully for three years, is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and operates a telephone service at all other times.

Previously, cancer patients who are acutely unwell would come to the

hospital via a variety of routes which could sometimes slow down the process of receiving treatment. They may have been sent by GPs to A&E, attended outpatients or self-referred to their specialist nurse or teams. By providing one, dedicated centre to deal exclusively with acute oncology, the process is streamlined and more

More than 80 per cent of our patients get seen within an hour of arriving here.

Patient Eddie Hartill with healthcare assistant Sam Hillier and lead nurse Paula Wadhams





Paula and Sam outside the entrance to the oncology assessment bay which is situated in oncology outpatients (Area N on the hospital map)

patients can receive the treatment they need more quickly.

Lead nurse Paula Wadhams said: "We're here for all patients that are on active treatment for cancer. We do as much as we can to allow them to maintain as normal a life as possible while they are being treated. They can come to us directly if they become unwell due to their cancer or side effects of their therapy. We can treat them here in the assessment bay and they go home the same day if they're well enough.

"We also have a telephone advice service, so patients can ring the department on one number for urgent advice, and we phone patients at home

to give them advice and support. The feedback tells us that patients really like having this personal assurance.

"The benefit for a patient using the assessment bay here in oncology is that they would generally get seen quicker. More than 80 per cent of our patients get seen within an hour of arriving here."

To be told you've got cancer is hard, but swift advice and treatment from dedicated staff can make it more bearable.

Eddie Hartill from Billing has been an oncology patient for a number of years and was complimentary about the service provided by the assessment bay staff. "I've always been treated very well," he said. "I've had

a few mishaps over the years, and the girls have been there for me and sorted me out. They're always so friendly, efficient and above all very calm. I've no complaints at all and I really can't praise them highly enough."

Oncology directorate manager James Rogers said: "The oncology assessment bay has been a real success, thanks to the dedication and professionalism of our staff. It's allowed us to streamline the service we offer, which has taken the pressure off A&E and inpatient beds across the hospital. It also means some patients can go home rather than being admitted for a long stay in the ward. This is better for the hospital and better for patients."

The oncology assessment bay has been a real success, thanks to the dedication and professionalism of our staff.





All donations to the hospital are managed, separately from NHS finances, by the trustees of the Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund, a registered charity. If you would like to make a donation, or be involved in raising money for NGH, please contact our fundraising office on **01604 545857**.

Please visit our website for more fundraising stories and details of how you can get involved www.nghgreenheart.co.uk

Thank you!

Here are just a few of the many generous donations we have received over recent weeks. Every gift, large or small, enables us to provide that little bit extra to help care for our patients, and we are very grateful to you all – thank you so much.



NCCC chairman supports Dryden Ward

A group of local men got together to celebrate November's Beaujolais Nouveau grape and raised over £21,000 for charity, with NGH's Dryden Ward benefiting from £3,000. Gavin Warren, Chairman of Northants County Cricket Club, came in to present the money and explained that the cardiology ward had

been chosen because of the excellent care that his father had received there.

The Dryden team are continuing to raise funds for the refurbishment of the ward. If you would like to make a donation or support any of the staff with their fundraising activities, please contact the charity on 01604 545857.



Sharon runs for Gosset

Sharon Packer completed the Adidas Silverstone Half Marathon in March to thank Gosset Ward for all the care they gave to her grandchildren.

Initially setting her target to raise £300 Sharon has now reached over £500 for the ward which is fantastic!

"Gosset Ward have provided amazing care and support for two of our gorgeous grandchildren and their Mummy & Daddy. This is my way of saying thank you."

Thank you Sharon, for all of your hard work that you have put in training to support Gosset Ward. We hope that you have a nice relaxing few days to rest!

Angel Foundation makes a donation for Talbot Butler relatives room

Matthew Masters set up The Angel Foundation in memory of his mum Angela Masters who was treated at NGH for myeloma, a rare cancer of the blood. To say thank you for his mum's care by haematology and Talbot Butler ward, Matthew came in with his dad David to present a cheque for £3,000 to staff. The funds are to be used towards creating a relatives' room on the ward, which will be an area where family and friends of patients can sit, make hot drinks, take a shower and speak to doctors and nurses in private. We are still fundraising for the room, so if you would like to



get involved please contact the charity team. Thanks to Matthew and his family for this very generous donation and their continued support of the NGH oncology service.



◀ From left: **Matron for quality improvement Helen Lidbetter; blood transfusion practitioner Lucy Smith; practice development nurse Luci Jenkins; resuscitation officer Andy Winter; practice development nurse Jo Pace.**

Howling success for the Resuscitation Service

An enthusiastic pack took part in the mud filled Wolf Run recently to raise funds the NGH resuscitation service. The Resuscitation Service provides training to all members of staff in the hospital using

innovative tools and ideas to make it as interesting, interactive and engaging as possible. However the rooms they use are in need of modernisation and the team would like them to resemble a ward or unit rather

than a classroom. The Wolf Run pack were made up of staff from across NGH and they raised £460 towards the project. If you think you can help in any way to raise more funds please contact the charity team. Thank you!



Pull down beds for Paddington's parents

Paddington Ward have started to fundraise to purchase pull down beds for some bays on the ward. Currently parents don't have any beds to sleep on when staying overnight and the ward doesn't have enough space to store them in the cupboards. Purchasing pull down beds will be a great asset to the ward. They will save space being attached to the wall, comfortable for the parents to sleep on giving them a good night's sleep - and being by their child's side throughout the day and night will keep the child calmer. Many thanks to Carrie Dent, Kay Jackson, Jessica Canniah and Daniel Smith from the Hilton Hotel Northampton who came in to start off the fundraising with an £800 donation.

Scott and Des conquer The Ram Run!

Scott Wilkinson and Des Pratt completed the 12k Ram Run obstacle course to support different areas at NGH. Scott chose to support the Snowdrop Room on labour ward for women who are experiencing late pregnancy loss before, during and after their baby is born. Sadly Scott and his wife Helena experienced huge complications during pregnancy and had to use the room. Scott raised a fantastic £1,600 and said: "Throughout this terribly emotional experience, we were looked after by the amazing people at NGH and the team in the Snowdrop Room." Derek Pratt, known as Des, chose to support the chemotherapy suite refurbishment appeal with an amazing £800 donation. He said: "The Ram Run was a huge challenge for me - the pinnacle of my achievements following my lifestyle change. In three months I've managed to lose three stone and I continue to push on and change my health and fitness for the better."



REDUCING THE WAITING TIMES IN PRE-OP ASSESSMENT

The pre-operative assessment (POA) unit is where we check that patients are fit enough to have an anaesthetic and undergo any surgery that is necessary. It's a very busy unit and staff there see between 50 and 60 patients every working day using a mixture of scheduled and drop-in appointments.

When Sharron Matthews took over the role of POA sister last year she quickly became aware that patients were often subjected to long waits to be seen, sometimes up to three hours, with a number of them each day even having to be rescheduled because they could not be assessed on the day. She said: "Staff often felt under pressure because of the workload but we knew that overall it ought to be possible for us to meet a target of a maximum 30-minute wait for every patient."

To help get to the bottom of what was going wrong, Sharron enlisted the help of our in-house service improvement team. Making Quality Count expert Steve Bryden said: "We gathered data and evidence to create a baseline of quality and patient experience. Once this was complete we worked with the staff to understand what the data was telling us and to design a new way of working."

"We used lean methodology as the basis of our approach and found that the day was not organised in a way that was focused on patient demand. The demand was uncontrolled, and too much variability in the system resulted in waves of activity that the staff could not forecast or manage."

Sharron said: "Staff in the unit and the MQC team were excellent and worked together well. My team were willing to try new methods and as the experts it was crucial that they were



Pre-op assessment sister
Sharron Matthews

In the first three months we saw patient waiting time reduced from up to three hours to a maximum of just 30 minutes.

involved in the process. The MQC team really did listen to the staff and helped them build a new process they could own. A lot of visual communication was employed in mapping out the old and new process on post-it notes and using bar charts and graphs to show what was happening.

"As a result we've introduced more scheduled appointments, and moved most of the drop-ins to around the middle of the day when patients are more likely to be coming straight from an appointment with their consultant. In the first three months we saw patient waiting time reduced from up to three hours to a maximum of just 30 minutes. At the same time we saw an extra 220 patients from the previous quarter."

Patient Diane Pannell was very complimentary when she came in for an assessment in May. Diane said: "As soon as I walked in the door, I was seen

straight away – it was amazing. When I was here before it took a lot longer but this time I was just in and out. And Clare was lovely, so reassuring. You get anxious when you're waiting around, but when you're in and out you don't have time to think about what's happening. It was so much better."

Staff nurse Lorraine Brangwyn, one of the staff involved in the project, said: "It's been very interesting work, and to see the results is excellent. It's still a very busy area, in fact I think we're getting a lot more people through, but it doesn't seem so much of a push now and it's a lot better for the patients that way. It's a lot more organised. People are spread throughout the day and it's making them happier and it's certainly better for us."

Clare Bramwell, also part of the team, said: "It's vastly improved. The long waiting times we had before made our lives much more stressful because we knew the patients were waiting for so long. So this just helps our day and I'm sure it helps the patients' day as well."



Here are some of our Pre-Operative Assessment team. Download the NGH Plus app (see page two) then scan the picture above to watch a video of Sharron Matthews and members of the team explaining how they reduced waiting times. And hear what patient Diane Pannell had to say about her visit to the unit.



Louise Brangwyn



Clare Bramwell


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WHAT IS... ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY?

Acute kidney injury (AKI) is sudden damage to the kidneys that causes them to not work properly. It can range from minor loss of kidney function to complete kidney failure.

AKI, previously known as acute renal failure, normally happens as a complication of another serious illness. It's not the result of a physical blow to the kidneys, as the name might suggest.

You're more likely to get AKI if you're aged 65 or over, already have a kidney problem or a long-term disease, or a severe infection. Being dehydrated, having a blockage in your urinary tract, or taking certain medicines can also increase your risk.

It's essential that AKI is detected early and treated promptly. A major role of the kidneys is to filter and clean the blood, so - without quick

treatment - abnormal levels of salts and chemicals can build up in the body, affecting the ability of other organs to work properly.

Julia Moreno is our hospital's AKI nurse and every day she reviews the alerts based on blood tests carried out in our laboratory. She

visits the patients, who may be in almost any of the hospital's wards, to review the blood tests and liaise with doctors and nursing staff.

Julia said: "It's important to ensure that all the appropriate monitoring and treatment is being carried out with

AKI in mind. I'll check the patient's fluid status, their intravenous fluids, medication, and that repeated blood tests are planned. If they need an ultrasound scan of their kidney I'll arrange that with radiology. I'm acting as a link between the medicine

doctors and nephrology so, if I have any concern about a patient, I'll go and speak with the renal consultant to speed up their intervention.

"People coming into hospital with another condition may have AKI as well, so these are the ones we really need to be alert to. They might come in with a fractured femur and be seen by an orthopaedic doctor, who is absolutely the right person to deal with the bone, but they might not be too aware of AKI symptoms. Also, many patients who come in have some level of dehydration and, because that is so common, it has previously not been treated with the right level of importance.

"If you treat it in time AKI is completely reversible but if not treated it can lead to a chronic kidney problem. The key is to identify it sooner, and act sooner - and this is very much our focus at NGH. We aim for early detection, early identification and swift treatment of the underlying cause."

We aim for early detection, early identification and swift treatment of the underlying cause.

LOOK AFTER YOUR KIDNEYS

- ▶ **Stay hydrated** Drinking plenty of fluid will help your kidneys function properly.
- ▶ **Eat healthily** A balanced diet ensures you get all the minerals and vitamins your body needs. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and grains, such as wholewheat pasta, bread and rice. Don't eat too much salty or fatty food.
- ▶ **Watch your blood pressure** Raised blood pressure has no symptoms, but it can increase your risk of kidney and heart problems. Get it checked regularly.
- ▶ **Don't smoke or drink too much alcohol** Both raise your blood pressure and this is one of the most common causes of kidney disease.
- ▶ **Keep slim to help your kidneys** Being too heavy raises your blood pressure, which is bad for your kidneys. Try to keep yourself at a healthy weight by keeping active and not overeating.

Acute kidney injury nurse Julia Moreno



Carnival time memories

By NGH Archive volunteer
Sue Longworth

Northampton Carnival has a long history in the town dating back to 1890 as the 'Bicyclists Parade.'

It was reported that year to have been attended by 20,000 people and six brass bands, visiting various areas of town and ending in Franklin's Gardens. The name of the parade changed to the Cycle Parade in 1901. Children and adults entered competitions for the best decorated cycle and rider.

For many decades the proceeds raised would be given to the hospital by the

Hospital Week Committee. For instance, in 1928 the total raised was £63 (today worth £1,888) Cycles dominated the parade up to the late 1950s and then gradually cars and lorries took over as the preferred mode of transport.

A report from the 1935 NGH Annual Report reads:

"The Northampton Hospital Carnival Committee achieved in 1934 a record total of £1,500 and had visions of making a total for 1935, £2,000, but it was not to be. For once, Carnival Day weather was too good; so

hot that folks were too languid even to spend money, though attractions were never so great and the Parade never so spectacular. Not being able to organise a public prize draw, the committee had to be satisfied with a net total of £1,300, two hundred less than the previous year. The innovation of note for 1935 was the election of the Shoe Trade Queen which caused considerable interest of the resident doctors. The help of the Matron of the hospital and the Nursing Staff was again most helpful and greatly appreciated, as were the efforts of all others concerned."

The carnival parade had a short break in the late 1990s due to lack of funding, but has now been successfully revived. Wards and departments throughout the hospital participated in the parade for many years. It was only when the old enemies time and money kicked in that this stopped. The hospital today does not receive any proceeds from this event and monies raised are shared between local charities.

A personal recollection from Sue:

"I worked in the operating theatres and our department would enter a float for many years, with different themes. Charlie Butt, a local haulage business would let us have the use of a lorry, free of charge - the only condition being to keep the driver 'refreshed' as we passed the various pubs on route. The parade started off from Midsummer Meadow and would wend round town ending up at Abington Park, some four hours later. All great fun and sad when we stopped, never won any prizes, but helped to raise thousands of pounds with the other participants."



Float by the main theatres team in the 1980s – Sue is on the far left

The Archive is normally open Wednesday mornings between 8am - 1pm. Please telephone 01604 544868 or email historical.archive@ngh.nhs.uk to make an appointment.

Thank you...

... for thinking of making a donation to the NGH charity. We would like you to know that any gift received from you will be used carefully and sensitively.

You can make a donation for a specific NGH department or towards an ongoing appeal.

Online - please visit our Justgiving webpage at www.justgiving.com/ngh which is a quick, secure, and tax-efficient way of donating.

By post - please make cheques payable to Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund and post to: Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund, Northampton General Hospital, Cliftonville, NN1 5BD. (Please let us know if you would like

to donate to a specific department)

Mastercard, Visa, Visa Delta, and Switch, payment by credit and debit card can be accepted through the post or over the phone.

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Gift In Your Will -

please give us a call to find out how to make a gift in your will to NGH.

Gift Aid - remember if you are a UK taxpayer we can claim an extra 25p for every pound you donate from the Inland Revenue under the Gift Aid scheme. This won't cost you a penny! Please just let us know that you would like to claim Gift Aid when you make your donation.

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Insight

Summer 2016 | Issue 59

Keep in touch

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Like our Northampton General Hospital Facebook page

Until our Autumn issue in September, please keep up to date with NGH news on our website www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk where you will also find all back issues of Insight.

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(peter.kennell@ngh.nhs.uk)

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Insight is a free magazine, and we encourage our patients and visitors to take one home with our compliments. Please pass it on to a friend or relative when you have read it.

We are very grateful to the supporters of Northamptonshire Health Charitable Fund for their sponsorship of the magazine in 2016.

► DO SOMETHING AMAZING...

96% of us rely on the other 4% to give blood. Please don't leave it to someone else.

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For more information please visit www.blood.co.uk

The next donor sessions at St Giles Church Rooms, St Giles Terrace, Northampton NN1 2BN are:

Monday 6 June

12.45pm - 3.10pm; 4.10pm - 7.10pm

Monday 13 June

12.45pm - 3.10pm; 4.10pm - 7.10pm

Monday 25 July

3.00pm - 7.10pm

Friday 5 August

12.45pm - 3.10pm; 4.10pm - 7.10pm

Friday 2 September

3.00pm - 7.10pm

Monday 12 September

3.00pm - 7.10pm

Monday 26 September

12.45pm - 3.10pm; 4.10pm - 7.10pm

To book an appointment call 0300 123 23 23.

► TRANSPLANTS SAVE LIVES

The NHS Organ Donor Register gives hope to more than 10,000 people of all ages across the UK who need an organ transplant.

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► call 0300 123 23 23 or

► text SAVE to 84118

► ANNOUNCEMENTS

RETIRED (or soon to be?) NHS Retirement Fellowship (Northampton Branch) meets on first Wednesday of each month at 2.15pm at Northampton East Salvation Army, Northampton, NN3 8EZ. Range of speakers and activities. Open to ex NHS staff, together with spouse or partner. Please contact the chairman Ruth Gould on 01604 846508.

BACK ISSUES of Insight are available online at www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk – go to About Us > Documents and Publications

Win free theatre tickets Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Jason Manford will play the role of Caractacus Potts, when the fun-filled new production of the much-loved musical Chitty Chitty Bang Bang comes to Northampton's Royal & Derngate this autumn, from Wednesday 21 September to Sunday 2 October, with tickets priced from £17 to £42.50. To check times and to book, call Box Office on 01604 624811 or go to www.royalallderngate.co.uk

For your chance to win a free family ticket (two adults, two children) to the 7.30pm show on Tuesday 21 September, answer the five questions below. Send your entry to arrive by Friday 26 August to peter.kennell@ngh.nhs.uk - or by post to Insight magazine, Communications, NGH,

Cliftonville, Northampton NN1 5BD.

- 1 **Who** is the new face of our nurse bank recruitment campaign?
- 2 **What** was the total number of operations and procedures performed by NGH in 2014/15?
- 3 **Where** is the assessment bay for unwell cancer patients situated?
- 4 **Which** day of the week does our 'Chit Chat' group normally meet?
(Hint: you may need to listen to Emma Fathers in one of our NGH Plus videos)
- 5 **Which** well-known comedian is to play Caractacus Potts at the Royal & Derngate?

ROYAL
DERNGATE &



► The winner of the *Chicago* tickets in our last competition was Susan Hodges from Northampton.

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Ofsted inspection 2011, www.ofsted.gov.uk

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