



# kidneytalk

Guy's & St Thomas' Kidney Patients' Association Newsletter

## A holiday in Mallorca (dialysis included)



**Well that couldn't have been simpler or more successful. Why had I been so worried? After nine months on dialysis awaiting a transplant while still doing a full time job, I really needed a break away with the family. But the prospect of holiday dialysis filled me with concern. How would we find a suitable clinic? Would the medical care be up to scratch?**

Like most things these days, our tentative exploration started with a Google search. Although I'd seen adverts for holiday dialysis centres, I had no idea there were so many in so many different locations around the world. We could potentially have gone anywhere from Bournemouth to Bali. We settled on the beautiful unspoilt north-east corner of the island of Mallorca, on the basis that it offered September sunshine and had easy access to and from the UK in case of any problems. Via the web we identified

a suitable clinic in Inca, a 20-minute drive from the old town of Pollensa where we hoped to stay.

Our next step was to get in touch with Freedom, the dialysis holiday specialists ([www.holidaydialysis.co.uk](http://www.holidaydialysis.co.uk)), who explained that they could either organise the whole holiday for us or, for a admin fee of £60, could simply arrange the six dialysis sessions that I needed. They contacted the Clinica Juaneda in Inca who confirmed they could fit me in, which meant that we could now go

firm on our accommodation and flights. Various blood tests and medical paperwork was efficiently handled by the ever-helpful staff at my satellite dialysis clinic in Camberwell, south London, and sent to Inca, but they made it all seem pretty straightforward. I am very grateful for the support they gave me in the process.

We flew out on the Saturday and my first dialysis session was on the Monday. My wife Penny came with me to help navigate through the unfamiliar streets and to see what the clinic was like. The staff were charming and clearly experienced at accommodating foreign visitors. Some spoke excellent English and I was made to feel very welcome. I was soon connected up and left to sample the dubious delights of Spanish daytime television, accompanied by a delicious fresh ham and cheese baguette made to order in the clinic's kitchen. Getting that first session over was a huge relief. I felt much more confident about what to expect and could now start to relax and enjoy the holiday.

In the second week I was able to negotiate an earlier start for each session, so although it meant getting up at 5.30am, I was back in Pollensa to join the family for a lazy coffee in the town square by just after 11, giving us the rest of the day to explore the countryside and breath-taking coastline. All in all, as well as being a much-needed break from routine, the experience made me realise that dialysis doesn't have to tie you down. Maybe next time we'll be more adventurous and opt for Bali.

**Nick Bundy**

## Spotlight on...



**Jan Barnett**

Sister in home dialysis

### **Q What is your role within the renal unit?**

**A** My job involves teaching patients to dialyse at home safely and confidently. We teach the patients at their own pace and they do not go home to do dialysis until they feel competent and confident in doing their own treatment.

Once the patient is at home we support them by home visits and by consultant clinics. We also give advice over the telephone if a patient is experiencing problems and our technicians are on call 24 hours for machine problems.

### **Q How do you know which patients are interested in home dialysis?**

**A** Most of our referrals come from our home dialysis coordinator Colin Jamieson who is very pro active in encouraging patients to consider home dialysis.

### **Q The home dialysis unit is moving to the Borough Kidney Treatment Centre soon, are you looking forward to the move?**

**A** Yes I am looking forward to it very much as we will have a much larger area which will enable us to promote and expand our home dialysis service and increase our support for all of our patients and carers.

### **Q How long have you worked at Guy's kidney unit?**

**A** I've worked in home haemodialysis for 5 years and was promoted to sister in charge in February 2009.

### **Q Where did you train and in what other areas of nursing have you worked?**

**A** I am Australian so I did my general nurse training in Brisbane, Australia, I then went on to do my midwifery training in Sydney. I have travelled extensively from Australia to New Zealand and to Saudi Arabia. It was in Saudi Arabia that I met my husband. I did my renal training in Adelaide and then went to Dublin to work in a renal unit. One of my favourite memories was nursing in a renal unit in Port Hedland, Australia where most of the patients were Aborigines, they were lovely people and I really enjoyed my time there. Whilst working in the Cayman Islands I got caught up in a hurricane and we had to evacuate all the dialysis patients to Miami, fortunately patients and staff arrived safely!

### **Q During your travels have there been any unusual moments?**

**A** Yes, when I was in Egypt, in a shop I was approached by the owner with a marriage proposal and my son was offered 5 thousand camels for me!

### **Q Well fortunately for us that offer was rejected! Are you a city girl or a country girl?**

**A** I have lived in both the city and the country and have loved both. I tend to like wherever I am and feel you should always make the most of wherever you find yourself.

### **Q If you had not become a nurse what would you have liked to have been?**

**A** My mother was a nurse and nursing was something I always wanted to do and I don't think I ever really thought of doing anything else. Thinking about it now though maybe I could have been a detective or perhaps an astronomer.

### **Q Your favourite holiday destination?**

**A** Well it would have to be Australia, although this is not really a holiday destination for me, I like to go back once a year to see my son and my two lovely grandchildren. I did enjoy a wonderful holiday in Jordan, the people were really friendly and I just loved the culture. I also really love Scotland and the beautiful landscape.

### **Q Finally if you could have a dinner date with anyone who would it be?**

**A** It would be with my three closest girlfriends in Australia. We would have a really good girl's night out. I would also like a dinner date with Desmond Tutu, not for any religious reasons but just because I saw him being interviewed and he came across as very entertaining and a good person.

**Well Jan that just leaves me to say thank you for allowing me to put the spotlight on you today.**

# Summer Activities

What a wonderful summer we have had, with so much to celebrate with the jubilee, olympics and para-olympics. Our dialysis units had a great time and with the kpa's support they were able to really enjoy the festivities. Below are some of the wonderful pictures and articles from the events that took place.



## Camberwell Dialysis Unit

Camberwell had a fabulous day celebrating the Jubilee. All staff and patients dressed up as Kings and Queens and were announced into the unit via a floral arch. It was a great day and everyone's spirits were lifted.



## Astley Cooper

Astley Cooper celebrated the Olympics in great style. Staff dressed for the occasion by wearing roman togas and decorated the ward beautifully with flags from all nations who took part in the Olympics. They had a mock podium erected and awarded gold, silver and bronze medals to patients who supported the winning nations. To finish off the celebrations patients and staff took part in an Olympic bingo session which was such a success they have decided to run the bingo event every month.

## New Cross **George Brown** (KPA rep for New Cross Gate Dialysis Unit)

The annual New Cross Gate dialysis unit summer barbecue was once again very well attended by patients, their families and staff. The warm and pleasant summer air was filled with a variety of aromas as the food sizzled on the barbecue (all of which was provided voluntarily by staff and

patients). The weather was kind to us and the sun shone as sounds of laughter and conversation drifted across the surrounding area.

Many people could not resist participating in the word quiz whilst others relaxed and enjoyed having their feet, neck and shoulders

massaged by a volunteer beautician.

The day was a real success to say the least and on behalf of all the patients, families and staff I would like to say a very big THANK YOU to the KPA for funding the event. Also, congratulations to staff and volunteers who made the occasion such a success.

# KPA LOTTERY DRAW

I am pleased to announce the winners of the KPA lottery which was drawn on 15th October on Astley Cooper Ward.



1st Prize IPAD - Carleen Kerr

2nd Prize £500.00  
Mr P Lynch Online Property



3rd Prize Kindle - Rosemary Connell

Congratulations to all the lucky prize winners. I would like to thank everyone who supported the KPA with this lottery.

It has been a great success and we really do appreciate the time and energy that staff, patients and relatives put in selling tickets for us.

# The Borough Kidney Treatment Centre

The Borough Kidney Treatment Centre in Long lane SE1; opened its doors on 22nd October. It has 47 dialysis 'stations' in a comfortable, pleasant, environment. A local artist was commissioned to contribute to the interior design of the centre following feedback from patients and staff.

The centre includes a specially designated area for patients who want to learn how to carry out their own dialysis treatment at home. There are also self care areas for people who want to learn to do their dialysis independently within the centre.

The nursing teams are headed up by Erwin Desendario, Adora Beleno-Harriott, Jan Barnett and Caroline Willis. Deborah Mundle and Linky Verster are the Matrons

for the centre. The Guy's kidney care team including consultants, dieticians, social workers, psychologists and physiotherapists will be visiting regularly.

The new centre is open Monday to Saturday, from 7am. Patients who are unwell or who have complex care needs will continue to be treated on Astley Cooper dialysis unit at Guy's Hospital.



## KPA RAISE AWARENESS WEEK

In an attempt to promote the KPA and raise its profile the kpa launched a week long raise awareness event. We had stalls throughout the renal unit and at all of our dialysis satellite units. Volunteers were on hand to give out promotional merchandise, information and also answer any questions that patients, staff,

relatives and friends had regarding the work of the KPA. We were also able to sell some lovely xmas cards and raffle tickets in an effort to raise funds for the KPA. It was felt that the week was a great success and something that we would like to run as an annual event.

# What a summer that was!



What an amazing summer I have had. I was privileged and proud to be a Games maker volunteer at the Olympics and Paralympics. When I filled in my application over 18 months ago offering my services as a nurse I did not anticipate that I would be involved in such an amazing event. During the Olympics I was based at Wimbledon for the tennis. I was part of the medical team and was given the responsibility of managing a group of first aiders and providing care alongside a doctor in the medical centre below Centre Court. Working at Wimbledon as a nurse was exhausting but exhilarating.

The days were long (12+ hours) and at times the workload difficult, but the atmosphere and camaraderie amongst the volunteers made each day unique and interesting. I even quite enjoyed having to travel in my Games Maker uniform on the train and tube. Wearing the uniform was definitely a good excuse for fellow passengers to strike up a conversation!

Although I hadn't originally planned to do any volunteering at the Paralympics when the opportunity arose I didn't hesitate to say 'YES'. I was fortunate to work in different areas of the Olympic park, including the 5 a-side-football (blind

football) and 7 a-side-football arenas as a First Aider. My most memorable day was spent in The Velodrome, which was even better than it looked on TV.

When asked why I volunteered, the answer was originally, "To be an inspiration to my children and to help makes the 2012 Games the best that they could be". I can now say that I was there....I worked at the Olympics (and Paralympics) and helped in my own small way to make it the success that it was.

**Vanda Fairchild**  
**Staff Nurse, Kidney Clinic**

# Are you interested in being on the KPA committee?

Could you devote some of your spare time to the KPA? If the answer is 'yes' or 'maybe' then why not think about joining our committee?

## What does a committee member do?

- We ask committee members to attend at least seven out of our nine monthly meetings.
- We ask members to allocate about five hours a month, in addition to the meetings, for KPA work. This might include visiting dialysis centres, supporting events, fund raising, or just promoting the association.
- We welcome new ideas & suggestions for improving on our successes.

## How will the KPA support new committee members?

- We will provide an introduction to the clinical areas and research facilities if needed.
- The KPA office at Guy's can provide you with information, promotional materials and contacts and support you with some administrative assistance if required.
- We will pay all out of pocket expenses which can be supported with an invoice. We will offer you opportunities to attend conferences and working groups, if you wish.

## If you are interested or want to find out more, please contact us:

Trevor Cook, Chair: [chair@gsttkpa.org](mailto:chair@gsttkpa.org)  
or Bernadette Lynch PA to the KPA:  
[Bernadette.lynch@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:Bernadette.lynch@gstt.nhs.uk)  
Tel: 020 7188 5667

# British Transplant Games 2012



This year the Annual British Transplant Games took place in Medway, Kent at the end of August. The Guy's & St Thomas Kidney Patients Association were able to provide financial support which enabled the Evelina Childrens' service and the Adult Transplant service to send teams

to compete in four days of competition. This annual event is very popular with patients, families, friends and staff who turned out in force to cheer on the teams. It was a huge success and an impressive haul of medals was won by both of our teams.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

**Christmas card & calendar sales: Guy's Foyer – 15th November 2012**

**St Thomas Hospital Central Hall – 22nd November 2012 10:30am**

**Annual General Meeting – 12th January 2013**

**My Kidney Care App** – Apologies to all of you who had some difficulties downloading our new App this was due to some technical difficulties which I am pleased to say have now been sorted. Our new App was launched on 22nd October 2012 and can now be downloaded from Google Play and is suitable for all Android and smart phones.