Jumping for joy
Meet the schoolboy who overcame chronic pain
Welcome

Patients are at the heart of everything we do at Guy’s and St Thomas’ and our staff are dedicated to providing the highest quality of care for all our patients – both in hospital and the community.

In this issue of the GiST, you can read about a team of speech and language therapists that helps men to improve their communication skills after an illness. Find out more on page 6.

In November, we opened a new Rare Diseases Centre that is dedicated to patients with complex rare genetic conditions. Meet some of the first patients to benefit from this specialist service on page 8.

Our cover star, Toby Mills, overcame unbearable chronic pain with help from teams at Evelina London Children’s Hospital – read his story on page 12.

More than 6,600 babies are born at St Thomas’ Hospital each year. Find out how maternity support workers are helping our midwives to care for women and their babies before, during and after their babies are born, on page 18.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the GiST.

Amanda Pritchard, Chief Executive
Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust

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Cover photo by David Tett.

Design: AYA-Creative www.aya-creative.co.uk
Print: O’Sullivan Communications

Front cover:
Toby Mills, patient at Evelina London Children’s Hospital

Tell us what you think

If you have any comments about the magazine or suggestions for future articles, please contact the communications department, St Thomas’ Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH, or email press@gstt.nhs.uk. Visit us online at: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk
Boy saved from life-threatening infection

The family of a five-year-old boy who nearly died from an infection caused by chickenpox have thanked the medics who saved his life.

Jack Underwood, from Gravesend in Kent, developed chickenpox last April. The next day he was in pain, had swellings on his chest and could not move his arm.

He was transferred from his local hospital to Evelina London Children’s Hospital where his parents were told he had developed necrotising fasciitis, a life-threatening bacterial skin infection that spreads quickly and kills the body’s soft tissue.

Jack’s mother Melissa Minall says: “As soon as we arrived at Evelina London we knew we were in good hands – the staff were amazing. They explained that they needed to operate quickly to cut out his damaged tissue and save his life.”

In May, after he started to heal, Jack returned to Evelina London to have skin grafts. He is now back at school and playing football again.

OBE honour for leading obstetrician

A consultant obstetrician at Guy’s and St Thomas’ has been recognised in the New Year Honours List for his work in maternity services.

Professor Andrew Shennan has been made an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire). He is recognised for his award-winning preterm surveillance clinic at St Thomas’ Hospital, which has been emulated around the country.

The clinic focuses on screening for, treating, and preventing premature birth. As a result of this novel approach, 90% of high-risk women seen at the clinic have had a healthy baby at full-term, compared with a national average of 50-70% of women.

Professor Shennan says: “I am delighted to receive this recognition, but am basking in the reflected glory from the efforts of many.

“I really enjoy working with my patients. Making a difference to them is the reason why we do this.”

Professor Shennan is also Professor of Obstetrics at King’s College London, leads clinical research in the Women’s Academic Health Centre, and is Clinical Director for the South London Clinical Research Network.

IN THE NEWS

A round-up of media coverage featuring Guy’s and St Thomas’.

BBC Radio 4
Dr Guy Leschziner, consultant neurologist and clinical lead of the Sleep Disorders Centre at Guy’s and St Thomas’, presented a new BBC Radio 4 series, Mysteries of Sleep. Dr Leschziner explored various sleep disorders including sleep walking, night terrors and insomnia.

Daily Mirror
National newspapers including the Daily Mirror and The Sun told how a prostate cancer patient at Guy’s and St Thomas’ had his robotic surgery streamed live over the internet. Robert Begent’s operation was part of the Worldwide Robotic Surgery 24-Hour event to help train medics on five continents (pictured below).

ITV London
The opening of the UK’s first shop dedicated to helping ease the side-effects of cancer was featured by ITV London News and Southwark News. The Live Better With Boutique at Browns is located on the ground floor of the Cancer Centre at Guy’s. Dr Anne Rigg, consultant medical oncologist at Guy’s and St Thomas’, says patients travel from all over London to shop there.

www.guysandstthomasm.nhs.uk 3
Duke celebrates scheme for armed forces veterans

HRH The Duke of Cambridge visited Evelina London Children’s Hospital to celebrate the national rollout of a scheme to help ex-servicemen and women find employment in the NHS.

“Step into Health’ provides a pathway from the military into the many career opportunities in the NHS and is supported by The Duke’s charity, The Royal Foundation.

The Duke met veterans who are now working at Guy’s and St Thomas’ as well as patients and their families.

Neil McKie, deputy service manager at Evelina London, spent seven years in the Armed Forces before working as assistant service manager in the dental department at Guy’s Hospital.

He explains: “I see it time and time again as I walk through the hospital, the people who rely on our services. That’s what gets me up in the morning. I want to do my bit to help.”

Guy’s and St Thomas’ has employed 12 people through Step into Health since 2015, when it was chosen as one of five host trusts to pilot the scheme.

Aidah, 14, met The Duke during his visit to Beach Ward. She says: “I’m on dialysis and working up to a kidney transplant so we talked about that. He asked if dialysis hurt and about my education so I told him all about Evelina Hospital School.”

Aidah, from Croydon, adds: “I asked about the gender of his new baby and suggested he name the baby after me, or if it’s a boy, Aiden.”

Inpatient pharmacy officially opened

The opening of the state-of-the-art Inpatient Pharmacy at St Thomas’ Hospital was celebrated with a visit from Kate Hoey MP.

As part of the redesign, a new leading-edge robot was installed – capable of storing and dispensing large quantities of medicine.

The redevelopment has led to several benefits including a reduced processing time for medicines. This means patients waiting for their medication before they can be discharged can go home sooner, improving patient experience.

During the launch event Kate was given a tour of the new facility. She says: “I remember when the first pharmacy robot was installed at St Thomas’ several years ago. The new robot in the revamped Inpatient Pharmacy is another example of Guy’s and St Thomas’ using the latest technological innovations to help patients.”
Nurse trains at hospital that saved her life

A woman who nearly died from meningitis is training to become a nurse at the hospital that saved her life.

Sophie Royce, 25, was struck with meningococcal septicaemia five years ago and was given a 1% chance of survival after her organs started shutting down.

Unable to stabilise Sophie, her local hospital contacted a specialised team at St Thomas’ Hospital that treats patients with ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) therapy. This temporarily replaces the work of the lungs or heart in patients with severe lung or heart failure.

The team put Sophie on the ECMO machine and brought her back to St Thomas’, which slowly allowed her body to heal.

The experience made Sophie decide to become a nurse. She is now completing an adult nursing course at London South Bank University and is doing practical training at Guy’s and St Thomas’.

Sophie, from Reigate in Surrey, says: “There’s no way I would have considered becoming a nurse if it hadn’t been for what happened to me. Seeing the difference nurses make to patients made me realise that’s what I wanted to do.

“It was a lovely coincidence to find out that I would be doing my training at Guy’s and St Thomas’ after the teams here did so much for me.”

Dr Nick Barrett, consultant in critical care, says: “It is amazing to see how well Sophie has recovered and it’s fantastic that she is joining the nursing profession.”

Happy 10th birthday Gracefield Gardens

Chuka Umunna MP joined patients and staff from Guy’s and St Thomas’ and Evelina London Children’s Hospital as they celebrated the 10th birthday of Gracefield Gardens Health Centre in Streatham.

He says: “Everyone at Gracefield Gardens does a phenomenal job. I have seen first-hand the incredible work that takes place here as my family and I have all used the services at some stage.

“This centre is special and important to so many people in Streatham and beyond – here’s to the next 10 years.”

The centre, which opened its doors to the public in 2007, has been dubbed a one-stop shop for a range of community services including health services such as district nurses, midwives, speech and language therapists and a GP surgery.

In 2016/17 staff at Gracefield Gardens carried out almost 42,000 blood tests and provided more than 1,300 electrocardiograms (ECG) for people with heart problems, saving many trips to hospital.
At first glance it’s just another typical day in a Peckham coffee shop with the faint hum of the percolator and the buzz of general chit chat.

But among the chatter is a small group of men with health conditions including Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s and the after-effects of a stroke, who find the art of conversation particularly difficult.

The three men have been brought together by speech and language therapists at Guy’s and St Thomas’ adult community services to improve their confidence in social situations, and it is clearly making a difference.

Tony Croft, 67, is a retired caretaker who has Alzheimer’s disease.

He says: “Sometimes when I am talking things come back to me, things that happened 20 years ago. Previously I’d forget things and get cross and wouldn’t feel like talking to anyone.

“When I’m with the group I’m talking to people like me. I’m speaking a lot better now. I’ll go out shopping with my wife, meet the neighbours and people in the street and I’m talking all day.”

Eric Arthur, 44, had a stroke which led to a stutter and difficulty holding a conversation. He also had thoracic cancer and is living with liver problems and epilepsy.

Eric says: “I used to be alone and cry all the time but now I have other people to talk to.”

The speech and language therapists arrange for patients to meet regularly to practise conversation skills and encourage the men to swap phone numbers.

Some patients have gone on to meet outside of the group and use the techniques they have been shown, such as making eye contact and using breathing strategies to make their speech clearer.

Maxine Hoeksma learns how speech and language therapists are helping local men with health problems find their voice.

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Having met in the smaller group provided by Guy’s and St Thomas’, Tony and Eric have become more confident and together have attended events run by Reconnect, a local charity. The charity specialises in larger meeting groups for people with communication problems to help them socialise.

Jonathan Bose, speech and language therapist in the Southwark Community Neuro-rehabilitation Team, says: “The groups are aimed at men who are quite private and wouldn’t ordinarily go out to meet people. The groups are small so may be less overwhelming for the men and help them to progress to socialising with the wider community in the future.

“It’s not match making but when we set up the groups we’re thinking about someone’s interests and background. The speech and language therapists act as a springboard, suggesting comments and questions and different topics of conversation to highlight shared interests.”
A tiny therapy dog is bringing comfort and joy to older patients who are being treated in hospital. Kelly Cook finds out more.

A paw-fect canine companion

Little Dorrit is one of the most welcomed visitors to the wards of St Thomas’ Hospital.

The seven-year-old miniature pinscher has been visiting older patients over the last two years as part of the Pets As Therapy programme.

Jo Hunter, 75, was admitted to hospital with a leg ulcer in December and spent a week recovering on Alexandra Ward.

The retired nurse says: “Pets As Therapy is a fantastic idea. I love animals and always had dogs growing up but, because I’m mostly stuck in bed, I’ve been unable to have a pet for a while so it’s great to have a visit from Little Dorrit.

“She laid down on my bed and fell asleep straight away – it was wonderful to sit there stroking her soft fur.

“Spending time with a dog can do everyone some good – they give you warmth, it’s very calming and it’s an opportunity to have a chat with the person who has volunteered to bring them in.”

Little Dorrit underwent an extensive assessment before qualifying for the Pets As Therapy programme in 2012 and initially started her career on the Lane Fox Respiratory Unit at St Thomas’ Hospital, which she still visits.

Her owner, Diana Mukuma, decided to volunteer after an elderly friend was cared for by the Trust.

She explains: “I was really impressed with the compassionate and caring staff at the hospital and wanted to give something back when I retired.

“Little Dorrit is the perfect pet for this because she is very calming and affectionate and is happy to snuggle down on the bed and fall asleep.”

Diana adds: “Being in hospital can be quite lonely and isolating for elderly people so a visit from Little Dorrit can bring a bit of the outside world in and really cheer them up.”

The duo visit the wards every fortnight and often spend time with patients who have dementia.

Diana explains: “Touching and stroking Little Dorrit seems to help patients to communicate and reminisce about past memories.”

Karen Jackson’s mum suffers with dementia but has always loved dogs so when Karen found out that Little Dorrit was on the ward, she requested a surprise visit to her bedside.

Karen says: “I think it’s marvellous for someone who loves animals. It gives them a moment of happiness. It was a delight to see my mum’s face light up when Little Dorrit sat on her lap.”

Little Dorrit is also a firm favourite among staff on the wards.

Matron Darlene Romero explains: “Little Dorrit’s visit is something staff and patients always look forward to. For staff, it gives them a break from their very busy daily routine and for some patients Little Dorrit provides a therapeutic intervention.

“I remember we had a patient on the ward who was very confused, agitated and restless and when we introduced Little Dorrit to her she calmed down and settled.”

For more information about Pets As Therapy, visit petsastherapy.org
Living with a rare condition can be incredibly challenging. The opening of the Rare Diseases Centre at St Thomas’ Hospital hopes to make patients’ lives easier and enhance their care.

The centre is the first of its kind in the UK to provide a space designed specifically with the needs of adults and children with life-long genetic and skin conditions in mind. These conditions include epidermolysis bullosa (EB), which causes fragile skin prone to recurrent painful blisters and sores, xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), a genetic disorder affecting patients’ ability to repair the damage caused by ultraviolet (UV) light, significantly increasing their risk of skin cancer and eye disease, and Bardet-Biedl syndrome (BBS), a disorder that can cause blindness and kidney disease as well as affect other parts of the body. The Trust is a national centre for these conditions.

The new centre brings together several specialist services in one place, saving time, increasing efficiency and improving patient experience. Previously, patients who needed to see many different specialists had to visit separate clinics around the Guy’s and St Thomas’ sites.

Patients have been involved in the design of the centre. It is UV free, includes furniture with curved edges so it does not catch on fragile skin and has an enchanted forest-themed feature wall.

Professor Jemima Mellerio, clinical lead for the Rare Diseases Centre, says: “We wanted to design a centre that, instead of feeling clinical, created a relaxing, healing environment for people that come here. “It is very important for these patients to have somewhere permanent that they can call home.”

The Rare Diseases Centre has been funded by Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity, the EB charity DEBRA, the Four Acre Trust and the Photodermatology Charitable Trust.
Mohamed Abu-Taleb, 41 from London, has XP.
Living with XP means Mohamed gets sunburn and freckles easily, even on a cloudy day, and experiences skin irritation.

He says: “Throughout the year I wear SPF 50 sunscreen, gloves and a hat or hoodie, and sunglasses because my eyes are photosensitive.

“Since I was 11 I have had more than 10 procedures to remove skin cancers on my face. It’s scary but thankfully I have never needed further treatment.”

Mohamed adds: “The whole Rare Diseases Centre is UV free so I can sit anywhere without worrying there may be UV light.

“The feature wall is beautiful and takes you away from being in a hospital. The centre has a social atmosphere rather than feeling like a traditional waiting room.”

James Dunn, 24 from Liverpool, has EB.
James’ condition means his skin blisters and tears at the slightest touch, leaving him with chronic wounds covering most of his body. He wears bandages from the neck down, which can take around four hours to change every other day.

James has been treated for a type of skin cancer known as squamous cell carcinoma.

He says: “The Rare Diseases Centre is very bright, modern and spacious. It’s brilliant that, for the first time, we have our own space and everything we need is done here without moving around.”

Hannah Young, 32 from Felixstowe in Suffolk, has BBS.
Hannah’s night vision deteriorated in her early 20s which led to her diagnosis and she is now registered blind. Her weight is also affected by the condition.

She says: “I have good and bad days. My diagnosis has had a big impact on my life as I cannot work or drive.” Hannah plays in the national women’s visually impaired teams for cricket and tennis which boosts her confidence and independence, and has helped her to make friends.

She sees up to seven specialists when she visits the hospital. Hannah says: “Being visually impaired, it can be stressful finding where to go in a hospital and I feel disorientated going from one place to another. Visiting the Rare Diseases Centre is a more relaxed experience because I stay in one room for my appointments.”
A pioneering fertility service at Guy’s and St Thomas’ helped testicular cancer survivor Gareth Jones beat the odds to become a father. He spoke to Matt Barker about his treatment.

Showing cancer who’s the daddy

Gareth Jones, 38, beams with pride as he talks about his baby son Arthur, who was born in March last year. It feels like a long time since he was diagnosed with testicular cancer in August 2015 – just four months after marrying his wife Caroline.

Gareth, from Mile End in East London, says: “When I was told I had cancer it was a shock, it is terrible news and it changes your world immediately.

“The doctor, Shamim Khan, was amazing. Testicular cancer has a very high survival rate and when I went to the fertility clinic at Guy’s Hospital for some tests, the day ended relatively positively.

“Then I had a phone call from the doctor who said ‘you have no sperm’ and in a lot of ways that was harder to take than the cancer diagnosis. We knew we wanted to have a family so it was pretty devastating news.”

Gareth, who works for a bank in Canary Wharf, needed to have his left testicle removed. He was referred to consultant urological surgeon, Mr Majed Shabbir, to assess his options as part of the Male Cancer Fertility Programme. The service is run jointly by urology and the assisted conception unit (ACU) at Guy’s and St Thomas’ with reproductive medicine consultant, Dr Julia Kopeika.

The programme offers a procedure called microsurgical testicular sperm extraction (MicroTESE) – when sperm is extracted directly from the testicle using a high power microscope. It can be used for men who do not produce any sperm, even after cancer treatments.

The team is one of only three in the UK to offer a more specialised onco-microsurgical testicular sperm
extraction, Onco-MicroTESE. This harvests sperm from the testicle that has just been removed for cancer and limits the need for surgery on a patient’s remaining, unaffected testicle.

While the service has a 60% success rate using this technique, Gareth benefited from another treatment it offered. He was put on a course of the fertility drug, Clomid, to kick start the production of sperm in his remaining testicle, which succeeded after six months.

Gareth says: “The best news I had throughout the whole two year experience was when Majed told me I was producing sperm and we could have our own baby using IVF. That was just an incredible day.”

Gareth had IVF treatment with his wife Caroline at Guy’s ACU and, after a successful first attempt, Arthur was born at St Thomas’ Hospital last March.

Mr Shabbir says: “For most men testicular cancer isn’t the death sentence they think it is, but it can still end any hope of starting their own family. Through early intervention and management we can increase the chance of keeping those hopes alive.

“We are driving change in the way testicular cancer patients are managed with respect to fertility so that it is not an afterthought. Evidence shows that well-being scores are higher for men who take steps to preserve their fertility before cancer treatment starts.”

Gareth and Caroline have frozen embryos if they want to try and grow their young family but, he says: “One is enough to handle at the moment and he’s an absolute blessing.

“If it only ends up being Arthur that’s all it was meant to be and we’re very, very grateful for it.”

Fact box

- Testicular cancer is the most common cancer among men aged 15-40
- More than 95% of young men diagnosed with testicular cancer now survive
- Around half will have problems with fertility when first diagnosed. One in 10 will produce no sperm at all and may benefit from an Onco-MicroTESE at the time of their cancer surgery.
Struggling with excruciating pain and confined to a wheelchair, Toby Mills was unable to live a normal life. Hamza Omaar finds out how he made a full recovery.

Schoolboy overcomes debilitating pain

Suffering from chronic pain is tough at any stage of life, but especially so as a child or teenager.

Teams at Evelina London Children’s Hospital work very hard to help young people who struggle with chronic pain. One patient who has benefited is schoolboy Toby Mills, who overcame a debilitating chronic pain condition with the help of a number of specialists at Evelina London.

After falling down the stairs at home in January 2016 and hurting his back, Toby, from Orpington in Kent, was admitted to his local A&E for observation. He was discharged but his pain became increasingly worse, leading to two more visits to A&E.

In April 2016, Toby, who is now 13, was referred to the rheumatology and chronic pain service at Evelina London and diagnosed with a form of complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), a condition that causes excruciating and debilitating pain across the entire body.

This meant Toby also struggled to sleep, compounding the problem as tiredness and stress makes CRPS worse. Things got so bad that he missed the whole of his final year at primary school.

Toby’s mum, Caroline Sandford-Mills, says: “Before being referred to Evelina London, Toby was in a tremendous amount of pain. He was often unable to leave his bed for days at a time, could rarely make it out of the house at all, and was only able to make it downstairs once or twice a week.

“Everything he did made the pain worse, and this was a big strain on the whole family. Eventually I left my job so that I could care for him full time, so we were cautiously optimistic that things might improve when he was finally referred to Evelina London.”

At Evelina London Toby was cared for by Dr Nick Wilkinson, consultant rheumatologist, and Dr Suzy Gray, lead clinical psychologist for chronic pain and rheumatology.

During a follow up appointment in May 2016 it was suggested that Toby take part in the hospital’s Pain Management and Rehabilitation programme, known as the PRIME programme, to help treat and manage his condition. The pioneering programme is one of only a few of its kind in the country. It involves patients spending two weeks in hospital and weekends at home, helps children to manage their persistent pain, and reduces the effect on their daily life.

Toby’s participation in the PRIME programme included physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychology and regular classes at Evelina Hospital School.

“Toby’s mum, Caroline Sandford-Mills, says: “Before being referred to Evelina London, Toby was in a tremendous amount of pain. He was often unable to leave his bed for days at a time, could rarely make it out of the house at all, and was only able to make it downstairs once or twice a week.

“Everything he did made the pain worse, and this was a big strain on the whole family. Eventually I left my job so that I could care for him full time, so we were cautiously optimistic that things might improve when he was finally referred to Evelina London.”

Caroline says: “At first Toby wasn’t sure that the PRIME programme was something he wanted to try. After a long chat about it, he decided that he really wanted to get back to feeling 100% and that if this programme could help him do that, he was willing to give it a chance.”

Dr Gray says: “Given how difficult it can be for children to deal with chronic and debilitating pain, the PRIME programme aims to help them take part in normal everyday activities, which can often lead to reduced pain.

“Our team of doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists and occupational therapists...
LIVING WELL

work together to create treatment plans that help children get back to doing things that are important to them. We also work with their parents to help them better understand ways to help care for children suffering from chronic pain as this can often bring its own challenges.”

Toby thrived after starting the programme and was fully discharged in November 2017.

Caroline explains: “I knew we’d turned the corner when, just like all the other children at the hospital, he went down the slide at Evelina London. It really brought home just how far he’d come, and how great it is that he is again able to enjoy life like any other happy and healthy young man. We are all incredibly proud of him.

“Toby Mills with his parents John and Caroline

The PRIME programme has been life changing for the whole family, and Toby has done brilliantly well. He has started secondary school, and has come top in a national UK maths challenge. I’ve also been able to go back to work full time.”

Toby says: “Dr Wilkinson, Dr Gray, my physiotherapists Aditi and Ellie, and occupational therapist Kerry were all brilliant and helped me overcome the pain from my fall. I’m really happy to be back at school, and can now go back to playing rugby which is something I love to do.”
Lindsay Wright meets Nzinga Gardner and Moh Okrekson, two of the Trust’s Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) representatives.

“We make unannounced visits to wards and clinics to observe how staff interact with patients.”

Getting involved

**Q** Could you tell us about yourself?

**Nzinga** I work full time for the BBC and have a seven-year-old daughter.

**Moh** I’m a retired civil servant with a long-term condition, diabetes.

**Q** How did you become involved with Guy’s and St Thomas’?

**Nzinga** I needed urgent medical intervention to save my third pregnancy from another pre-term loss. My daughter was saved and born at 25 weeks and underwent prenatal care. I got to know the medical staff so well that when I was approached to participate in research I was ready and willing.

**Moh** While waiting for my appointment I read an issue of the GiST and saw an advert for patient membership of the Trust and decided to apply.

**Q** What does your role as a PPI representative involve?

**Nzinga** I attend the Patient and Public Involvement Advisory Group, where I meet up with other representatives to learn about the Trust, share updates and hear presentations from doctors and researchers who require patient input and feedback on their proposals. I attend meetings which are condition-specific, such as in women’s health, where I give a patient’s perspective on new research proposals. I also help to facilitate workshops and training courses and conduct interviews.
Moh I am a mystery shopper and take part in PLACE (Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment) visits. I also review recorded customer service calls to ensure call handlers are following best practice principles. As part of a team, I make unannounced visits to wards and clinics to observe how staff interact with patients, and to assess factors such as patient privacy, cleanliness and the quality of food. We then make recommendations to the Trust for service improvement.

Q What motivated you to get involved?

Nzinga NHS care made a huge difference to both me and my daughter. I have benefited from the research that has gone into pre-term birth and women’s health and I want to give back in whatever way I can.

Moh The NHS has always looked after me. I want to ensure other people can enjoy the same benefits, and help preserve the NHS for future generations. It belongs to us all – staff and patients – and we all need to pull together and give something back.

Q What are the benefits and challenges of being a PPI representative?

Nzinga I’m a full-time working mum and freelance photographer so am often short of time, but it is worth the effort. I get to meet like-minded, passionate people and learn so much about research, women’s health and other conditions.

Moh It is satisfying to see our recommendations implemented by the Trust. During a PLACE visit to a care home we noticed that the shiny floors were incompatible with guidance for dementia patients, who often mistake them for water patches.

Walls, doors and door frames were the same colour as were toilet seats and bowls, which is also confusing for dementia patients.

We fed this back to the Trust and when we went back for our next assessment, they had installed dementia-friendly flooring, changed the colour of the toilet seats, door frames and doors and improved the signage.

Fact box

There are lots of ways for patients and the public to get involved at Guy’s and St Thomas’:

- For further information, email getinvolved@gstt.nhs.uk
- We are recruiting patient assessors to take part in this year’s PLACE assessments. To find out more and to sign up to be an assessor, visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/place-assessors
- To access free training opportunities in public and patient involvement and for more information about getting involved in research, visit www.guysandstthomasbrc.nihr.ac.uk
Kelly Cook investigates how the rapid access diagnostic clinic at Guy’s Hospital has been helping patients in its first year.

When Yvonne Allen suddenly started experiencing pain in her lower back and side, she booked an appointment with her GP.

The 61-year-old had vague symptoms and painkillers were not helping so the doctor referred her to the rapid access diagnostic clinic at Guy’s Hospital.

Yvonne, from Southwark, says: “The clinic was fantastic and, over the next few weeks, I had a range of tests including an MRI scan, endoscopy and blood tests.

“The staff were very nice and even helped me conquer my fear of the MRI machine.”

Scans revealed that Yvonne had a lump in her lower intestine so she was referred to the gastrointestinal unit and was diagnosed with bowel cancer. She had an operation to remove the tumour and is continuing to take medication.

Yvonne, who has been a foster carer for 17 years, continues, “It wasn’t the outcome I expected but I’m glad it was discovered and treated so quickly.

“This type of cancer is like a silent killer – there were no obvious symptoms so it wasn’t easy to detect. I believe in knowing your body and, if something doesn’t feel right and is out of the ordinary for you, get it checked by a doctor.”

Since its launch in December 2016, the rapid access diagnostic clinic has received more than 400 referrals, with 31 resulting in a cancer diagnosis.

The team has also helped to diagnose around 300 patients with a wide range of other serious conditions including liver cirrhosis, Crohn’s disease, multiple sclerosis, tuberculosis, heart failure and emphysema.

Dr Luigi DeMichele, consultant in internal medicine at Guy’s and St Thomas’, says: “This clinic makes things easier for GPs and quicker for patients.

“It is normally clear when a patient has certain symptoms where their GP should refer them to but things are not always that simple.

“This service avoids delays in diagnosing patients when their symptoms are less specific so that a treatment plan can be put in place for them.”

Dr DeMichele runs the clinic with

Rapid response helps with early detection

Geraint Jones, Paula Allchorne, Daniel Murphy and Dr Luigi DeMichele

Yvonne Allen with her daughter Luanda
Geraint Jones, advanced nurse practitioner, with support from project manager, Paula Allchorne, and administration lead, Daniel Murphy.

Geraint says: “We see patients within seven days of referral from the GP and the 45-minute consultation involves myself and Dr DeMichele. Together we are able to provide medical and nursing expertise.

“Many of the cancers discovered in the clinic have been diagnosed at an early stage which means patients have a greater chance of recovery.

“Once our investigations are complete we can refer the patient to the relevant service for treatment and, if no condition is discovered, refer them back to their GP.”

Thanks to the clinic’s success, in April it will expand to offer services to patients under the care of GPs in Greenwich, Lewisham, Bexley and Bromley.

An innovative procedure which repairs leaking heart valves without invasive surgery has been carried out at St Thomas’ Hospital in a UK first.

The pioneering technique uses equipment known as an Arto device to pull a stitch across a leaking mitral valve and then tightens it to stop the leak.

A leaking mitral valve compromises the heart’s function and causes symptoms such as breathlessness and tiredness.

Professor Simon Redwood, consultant cardiologist at Guy’s and St Thomas’, performed the new technique for the first time in the UK as part of the international MAVERIC (MitrAl ValvE Repair Clinical) trial.

Using a catheter (a thin, flexible tube), a tiny metal T-bar is positioned through a small hole created at one end of the valve and a stitch is released across the width of it. Two discs on a spring are released from the other catheter, which sit at the other end of the valve. The stitch is pulled across the valve through the discs and is tightened until the leaking stops. The stitch is locked and cut, and the device remains inside the heart.

Olasumbo Yates, a pharmacist from south-east London, became the first patient in the UK to have the procedure in September 2016.

The 55-year-old says: “The procedure has given me a whole new lease of life and I’m so grateful I had it.”

Professor Redwood says: “It is important to understand more about the long-term benefits of the device. Guy’s and St Thomas’ is one of only two centres in the UK carrying out the treatment.”

**The GP voice**

Dr Anthony Cunliffe, a GP at Stockwell Group Practice, says: “We are often faced with patients who have vague and concerning symptoms, but who don’t have an obvious diagnosis, or it’s unclear where they need to be referred to.

“In these situations it can be difficult to ensure that the patient is investigated in the quickest and most appropriate way. The rapid access diagnostic clinic provides an opportunity for these patients to be seen and investigated quickly, ensuring any sinister diagnosis is reached as quickly as possible, or to gain reassurance that nothing serious is going on.”
Veronica Williams, maternity support worker, tells Kelly Cook how she helps midwives to care for women and their babies before, during and after childbirth.

“No two days are the same as a maternity support worker and that’s what I love about this job.”

A helping hand

No two days are the same as a maternity support worker and that’s what I love about this job.

Veronica Williams, maternity support worker

8:30am – Our first job of the day is to make sure the consulting rooms are re-stocked and the equipment is prepared so that the midwives and doctors running the antenatal clinic have everything they need. We ensure that the emergency trolley is stocked and that all items are within date.

9:00am – When women arrive for their appointment we ask them to provide a urine sample and give them 10 minutes before taking their blood pressure. This short break allows them to relax and get used to their surroundings before we take the reading and update their records.

10:00am – We’re qualified to take blood samples so if a woman requires a blood test after her appointment we can take their blood straight away. Some women – and their partners – can be nervous so I put myself in their shoes and try to reassure them.

12 noon – The clinic can be very busy so we regularly update a communication board that informs women how long it will be until they are seen. Communication is key, especially if there are delays, so this is just a simple way of reducing the stress levels of everyone in the room. I am always on hand to answer questions that they may have relating to their appointment.
2:00pm – If I’m working on the postnatal ward my day can involve helping new mums to get out of bed to shower, supporting them with breastfeeding or providing advice to parents one-to-one or in groups. I really enjoy building up a rapport with the families and there’s nothing better than helping a nervous new mum and then seeing her walk out of the hospital like a little warrior.

5:00pm – I finish my shift by asking my colleagues if they’ve had a good day. The best thing about this role is getting to meet all the awesome new mums and working within a fantastic team. We are given appropriate training and support, and learn lots of skills along the way which can help take our careers in many directions.

7:00pm – Sometimes I help out with an evening antenatal class so my working day is longer. To be a maternity support worker you need to be an all-rounder, a good team player, have a good sense of humour and be willing to go the extra mile.

Kevin Ward and Mr James Gossage

Why I Fundraise

Mr James Gossage, a cancer surgeon at Guy’s and St Thomas’, was one of our fearless fundraisers who braved the St Thomas’ abseil last year with a team of 16 – Kevin’s Heroes.

Last year Kevin Ward, a recovering cancer patient, wanted to give back to Guy’s and St Thomas’ for saving his life. He contacted a few of the staff that treated him to ask if they’d help out and abseil on his behalf. One of the people that Kevin contacted was his surgeon Mr Gossage, and he said yes right away.

Mr Gossage says: “I had never done anything like that before and I thought it would be great to help Kevin. Also, it would be something quite fun and exciting to do at work.”

Kevin aptly named the team Kevin’s Heroes and the fearless bunch raised more than £10,000 for the hospital.

Have Kevin’s Heroes inspired you to take on the challenge in 2018? If so or if you’d like to support the hospitals in another way contact the fundraising team on:

- www.supportgstt.org.uk
- info@supportgstt.org.uk
- 020 7848 4701

“There’s nothing better than helping a nervous new mum and then seeing her walk out of the hospital like a little warrior.”
Meet the governors: Why become a governor?

Jenny Stiles, who has been a governor at Guy’s and St Thomas’ for five years explains why she’s stood for election twice.

As a Foundation Trust, Guy’s and St Thomas’ has a Council of Governors which ensures that local people, staff and all those who use its services have a greater say in how the Trust is run.

The Council of Governors is made up of eight patient, eight public, six staff and nine stakeholder governors.

Jenny Stiles has lived in Waterloo since 1981 and helped set up the Waterloo Action Centre. She was re-elected as a public governor in 2016 having first been elected in 2013.

Jenny says: “I could see it was an excellent system because not many organisations give the public, staff and service users a voice at the top.

“I have strong links in the community and a background in social work and the voluntary sector, so I understand the issues going on outside the hospital and can help reflect this in the hospital’s policies.

“Anyone who wants to contribute from a grass root level and give a voice to their community should consider becoming a member and standing for election to become a governor.”

The governors are your elected representatives and are keen to hear your views.

If you have a question or comment, please email governors@gstt.nhs.uk or call 020 7188 7346.

The Trust is holding elections for seats on the Council of Governors from April 2018. Make a difference, become a member of the Trust and take part in the upcoming elections.

Call: 020 7188 7346
Email: members@gstt.nhs.uk
Visit: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

Taking the ‘ouch’ out of children’s A&E

Visiting an emergency department can be a frightening and intimidating experience for patients, especially children.

This is why Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity has contributed funding and artworks from its collection to Evelina London’s children’s emergency department.

The ‘Taking the ouch out of A&E’ programme was set up to engage children in their surroundings and help them feel oriented and calm.

Teams at Evelina London worked with art co-ordinators, Art in Site, to develop a ‘gang’ of illustrated patients, staff, and families, which was generated in partnership with children, their families and clinicians.

Japanese manga artist, Kiriko Kubo, helped to develop the characters who also act as friendly guides around the main children’s hospital building.

The gang also come to life in an interactive app, playable on site, which helps to explain what happens in the emergency department. Interactive animations tell patients and their families about clinical procedures, including blood tests, injections, and pulse measurements.

Liz O’Sullivan, arts manager at Guy’s and St Thomas’, describes the artworks as “family-friendly, gentle and playful”.

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Call: 020 7188 7346
Email: members@gstt.nhs.uk
Visit: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk
Choosing life

Robin Cavendish defied all odds by becoming one of the longest surviving polio survivors in Britain. He was just 28 when, in 1958, he collapsed during a game of tennis having contracted the viral infection. Paralysed from the neck down, he was given three months, and then a year to live, spending most of his time on the Lane Fox Respiratory Unit at St Thomas’ Hospital.

Facing what remained of his life as a ‘responaut’, wholly reliant on a machine that breathed for him and confined to hospital, Robin at first expressed a wish to die. Instead, and against all medical advice, he left hospital after a year, with the support of his wife lived to be 64, and received an MBE in 1975 for services to disabled people.

His life has been celebrated in the new Hollywood film, Breathe, which was produced by his son Jonathan Cavendish. Staff from Lane Fox Respiratory Unit, including clinical and academic director Professor Nick Hart, worked closely with the film’s director, Andy Serkis, and actor Andrew Garfield, who plays Robin.

The unit, which was named in the film’s credits, advised on the technical aspects of Robin’s clinical management and care, ensuring the respiratory equipment used was historically accurate.

Patients and staff were treated to a special screening of ‘Breathe’ at the MediCinema in St Thomas’ Hospital. Afterwards, Robin’s son, Jonathan, answered questions from the audience and commented on the incredible role his mother, Diana, played in his father’s care.

Jonathan says: “If my father was alive today he would want to dedicate this film to carers, many of whom are unheralded. Being a carer is a job, a very hard job. This film shows that with love you can have a great life.”

Robin did not let his profound disability hold him back and led a life of mischief and adventure. An eccentric Oxford professor, Teddy Hall, built him a Heath Robinson-style, battery operated wheelchair-cum-respirator, and a Dormobile van complete with a hydraulic lift to accommodate it.

Robin’s family took the van to Europe, once memorably breaking down outside Barcelona and having to hand pump the respirator for 36 hours until help finally arrived from England.

In the 1960s, Robin tracked down and listed the circumstances of every responaut in Britain, compiling the first ever record of the number of people confined to ‘iron lungs’. He also persuaded the Department of Health to fund a new type of wheelchair based on the initial prototype, and was instrumental in setting up Netley Waterside House, a holiday complex for severely disabled responauts and their families.

Jonathan remembers his father as “an inspiring and exciting person to be with”. He says: “Through his pioneering example, he changed the way that severely disabled, respirator-dependent people could live their lives, while spreading around him a lot of joy and fun.”
Say what?

Gavin Tiffin is head of hospitality and events at Guy’s and St Thomas’, and has raised over £30,000 for charity.

Q What does your job involve?
A My role combines organising hospitality for meetings, events and medical conferences with bringing money into the Trust. My team also manages requests from production companies to film at the hospitals because we have some great locations. Scenes from the film ‘Spectre’ were shot here and popstar Sam Smith also recorded a music video on St Thomas’ roof.

Q What have you learned working here?
A Arts and music are incredibly healing for people coping with illness. Through my work at Guy’s and St Thomas’, I’ve got to know Breathe Arts Health Research, a charity that organises free concerts in our hospitals. The MediCinema shows the latest film releases to our patients in state-of-the-art, specially adapted charity-run cinemas.

Q What is your proudest achievement?
A I’m proudest of the Trust’s Cancer Survivors’ Day event, the annual abseil down North Wing at St Thomas’, and the Guy’s Urban Challenge, all of which I’ve helped set up and which have raised a lot of money for the Trust.

Q What charities do you support?
A I cycled from London to St Petersburg to support Evelina London, Breathe Arts and the MediCinema. I also set up a Tiffin Scholarship in Jamaica which funds eight children each year to attend high school.

Q Where have you worked before?
A I’m from Scotland and while I was working there I managed hospitality for the G20 Summit and the MTV Music Awards, met the Dalai Lama, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Where have you worked before?

Jan Ganashadevan, orthopaedic physiotherapist at Guy’s Hospital.

Jan enjoyed her time at Guy’s and St Thomas’ as a student so much that she returned to the orthopaedic department for her junior training, and is now the specialist physiotherapist in orthopaedics.

Jan says: “I’ve worked for the Trust for nearly 10 years so Guy’s Hospital has become like a second home to me. “Our team members are not just colleagues, we’re good friends who communicate really well.”

Jan works with patients in Queen and Sarah wards as well as the day surgery unit, supporting patients who have had a range of procedures including knee and hip replacements and spinal surgery.

She says: “The patient journey is at the heart of everything we do. “Patients undergoing hip and knee replacements are seen for a ‘pre-hab’ session before surgery so that they know what to expect, and we see them again within four hours after their surgery to help them become as mobile and independent as possible.”

During their stay, each patient is seen by a physiotherapist twice a day for assessment and treatment to help them achieve their functional goals. This allows patients to recover faster and return home sooner.

Jan says: “We’ve done a lot to improve the service over the past few years. “We set up a seven-day service and extended our working hours to ensure all our patients get the same quality of care at weekends as they do during the week.

“By working closely with Guy’s orthopaedic outreach team, some of our patients are able to go home sooner and continue to receive the same treatment that they would have previously had on the ward in hospital.”
What’s On

Free Public Tours
(weekly event)
Florence Nightingale Museum
Tuesdays at 3.30pm (except during school holidays)
Call 020 7188 4400 or visit florence-nightingale.co.uk

1 – 31 March
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
www.ovarian.org.uk

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
www.prostatecanceruk.org

7 March
Friends of Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospitals book sale
10am-3pm, Birdsong Corridor, St Thomas’ Hospital

No Smoking Day
21 March
Friends of Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospitals book sale
10am-3pm, Birdsong Corridor, St Thomas’ Hospital

Free film screenings:
MediCinema (gsttmedicinema@medicina.org.uk) shows the latest releases for patients and staff
Guy’s Tuesdays, 1.30pm and Thursdays, 7pm
St Thomas’ Saturdays, 7pm and Tuesdays, 7.30pm
Evelina London screenings on Wednesdays, 6.30pm

Free lunchtime concerts:
Mondays 1 – 2pm, Central Hall, St Thomas’
Wednesdays 1 – 2pm, Atrium 1, Guy’s

27 March
Seminar for Foundation Trust Members – hearing loss
6-7.30pm, Nevin Lecture Theatre, St Thomas’ Hospital
Call 0800 731 0319 or email members@gstt.nhs.uk to book your place

7 April
World Health Day

22 April
London Marathon

25 April
Board of Directors and Council of Governors meeting
3.45-7.30pm
Robens Suite, Guy’s Hospital

15 May
Seminar for Foundation Trust Members – sleep disorders
6-7.30pm, Robens Suite, 29th Floor, Tower Wing, Guy’s Hospital

1 – 31 March
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

22 April

23 April

2 May

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(weekly event)
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Raise money for your hospitals and community services
For all the latest news about our amazing fundraisers and how you can support Guy’s, St Thomas’ and Evelina London,
follow @SupportGSTT
and like facebook.com/SupportGSTT
and facebook.com/SupportEvelina

We have two pairs of tickets to the London Eye up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning, simply complete the wordsearch below.

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| G | N | I | K | L | A | W | R | R | C | V | G |
| L | I | A | R | L | A | N | O | I | T | A | N |
| I | G | J | B | K | K | T | U | B | E | B | E |
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Borisbike
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Nationalrail
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Rail
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Tram
Tube
Walking
Watertaxi

Name
Address
Email

Send your entry by 30 March to the GIST competition, Communications Department, 4th floor, Staircase C, South Wing, St Thomas’ Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7EH; or you can email communications@gstt.nhs.uk.

The winners will be selected at random and notified within seven days of the draw. The result will be final and we will not enter into any correspondence regarding the competition winners. The prize is non-transferable.

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk 23
Worried you have an urgent medical concern? CALL 111

Our fully trained advisors will help you get the right medical attention when you urgently need it, 24 hours a day, and can put you through to healthcare professionals.