BLAST OFF FROM UCH
The anaesthetist who wants to be an astronaut

Back from Iraq...
The story of Sylvia’s war

And the nominations are...
Michael Palin to present first UCLH staff award

Inside Story is the UCLH staff magazine
The Heart Hospital has made savings of over a million pounds - blazing a trail for the Trust.

Savings of £1,058,936 have been made over the last three years by reviewing contracts on everything they buy – from pacemakers to heart valves – and ensuring they get the very best deals. They negotiated favourable contracts by working closely with the Healthcare Purchasing Consortium, the major NHS buyer of supplies and commercial services.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds were shaved off individual contracts – including stents, heart valves and implantable cardiac defibrillators.

Now the rest of the Trust is following their lead in looking for ways to get best value on the goods and services we buy.

Chris Blake, divisional manager for the Heart Hospital/cardiac care said: “These savings have been achieved via a proactive and collaborative approach between the management team, HPC and clinical staff. It demonstrates that significant savings can be achieved, without impacting either on staff or the standard of clinical care which we offer to our patients.”

Susan Glaister has just begun a student clinical placement, spanning three years, at UCLH. Her current post as a student radiographer makes quite a change from her previous career in corporate banking! “I prefer my current role” says Susan, “because it enables me to use my communication skills and have real people contact where you’re helping in a constructive way”. Susan’s first impressions of UCLH: “nice and professional atmosphere.”

When children with chronic diseases leave our hospitals how is their medication managed? What happens when they go to school for example?

These questions are to be investigated by the award winning UCH clinical pharmacy team and researchers at the University of London. They won the 2006 National Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacist/Man Med award, receiving a £5,000 grant to set up the project. Children and young people between five and 18 years of age who suffer from chronic illnesses like epilepsy, asthma, arthritis and diabetes, amongst others, as well as their parents and carers, will be asked what their experiences and views are of continuing with medicines once away from hospital.

They’ll look at what is happening both locally and nationally, further supporting UCH’s commitment to the National Service Framework for Children.

Simon Keady, divisional lead clinical pharmacist for women and children’s service said “The project will allow us to identify current procedures and practices in schools, identify specific issues that individuals may have, and to assess the extent to which our patients are supported in the safe and optimal use of their medicines.”

Congratulations to all.

The team: Fiona Maguire, Nicola Mayne, Gary Beecham, Simon Keady, Neil Tucker, Mazanin Khorshidin
Anaesthetist Kevin Fong is usually a man with his feet firmly on the ground at UCLH. But he’s blasted off to Houston and if he had his way he’d be on another planet. A wannabe astronaut, it may be mission impossible, but Kevin is about to find out.

“I always wanted to be an astronaut, ever since I saw the 1975 Apollo-Soyuz mission on telly,” says Kevin. “But you don’t get many astronauts coming into casualty.”

Kevin, who studied astrophysics, and then medicine at UCL, is vexed with the question of how humans can live in space for long periods. So he’s packed up for six months with his wife Dee, a midwife, and their eighteen month old son Jack, and joined top scientists in Texas to work out how it might be done. His mission – to create artificial gravity and keep spacemen healthy in orbit.

“NASA talks of going to Mars and about building a base on the moon – we need to be able to go into space for long periods of time – maybe years.

“The key issue is low gravity. The body is built on the assumption that it will spend its entire time on earth and won’t experience any gravitational load more or less than 1G for any length of time.

“In space the body suffers bone loss, muscle wastage, increased difficulties with hand eye coordination.”

Kevin will investigate the possibility that the solution may be to spin the astronaut around quickly in a centrifuge – creating artificial gravity.

“A bit like spinning a bucket of water around your head quickly – it doesn’t spill,” he explains.

Kevin, aged 35, has been part of the scientific community at Houston before. He landed a place as a fifth year medical student at NASA’s Johnson Space Center. It spurred him to campaign tirelessly for Britain to take space research seriously, and he’s sat on numerous advisory committees.

“I want young people to be inspired to be scientists – and space exploration fires the imagination.”

And what do his hospital colleagues make of it all?

“I think they’re a bit bemused for the most part but they have always been extremely supportive.”

Mission Impossible for Rocket Man?

Anaesthetist Kevin Fong (right) and weightless Kevin takes the pictures (left)

From lab to patient – millions won for research.

Funds for research at UCLH have been given a £16.5 million boost – and a new steer out of the lab to the patient.

UCLH, in partnership with UCL have become a key part of the new National Institute for Health Research, set up to keep Britain at the top of the international league table for biomedical research.

The research will focus on projects in cancer, cardiovascular and neurological diseases, women’s health and technologies like cellular and gene therapy, and focus on “translational research” that directly benefits patients.

“It means research in the laboratory goes into the hospital and to the bedside,” said Professor Ian Jacobs, director of research and development at UCLH, who will direct the research.

“This is a very exciting opportunity to focus world leading research expertise at UCLH and UCL on advances that will have a direct impact on patient care, save the lives of many and improve the quality of life of many.

“It puts us at the forefront of an innovative health research system which will see the NHS and our research teams conduct world-class research which is truly patient focused.”

Professor Ian Jacobs
Do you have a colleague who despite the pressures of hectic hospital life still finds the time, energy and good cheer to go that extra mile making patients feel cared for and valued?

If so, we’d like your nominations for the Trust’s first Annual Service Commitment Staff Award. It will go to the person you, fellow staff members, believe has made a real difference to patients and visitors. And it’s open to everyone – nurses, doctors, cleaners, receptionists.

The award recognises the hard work and effort staff make in delivering not only first class medical care but also the kind of caring that makes patients and their families feel at ease, welcome, and reassured in our hospitals.

The Service Commitment puts into words what we all strive to do in our working day: to give a friendly and welcoming smile to patients and visitors; to remember to introduce ourselves by name and explain what we do; to treat each and every one with respect, just as we’d want to be treated ourselves; to take the time to listen and help and to respond promptly; and, to keep well informed and pass on information, anticipating the needs of patients and visitors where possible.

The Service Commitment underpins the Trust’s vision to provide “High quality patient care, excellent education and world class research” by putting patients first and providing the highest standards of service. The award will be presented by broadcaster Michael Palin, who regularly attends the UCLH travel clinic, at the official launch of the Service Commitment in late March.

Chief Nurse Louise Boden said: “Caring is at the heart of the NHS and all of us who work in it know what a tremendous difference a reassuring smile, a friendly face, or just giving a moment of our time can make to our patients. We’re all so busy but making that special effort really does make a difference the moment a patient comes through the door.”

It’s staff who’ll decide the first name to be engraved on the trophy. So to make a nomination, simply fill in an application form on Insight or on a hard copy which will be available on all wards and departments. Nominations close on 14 March. Judges are looking for the quality that marks out a staff member as someone who makes patients and visitors feel welcome and special.

And the nominations are...

Trust voted tops twice by midwives and nurses

“A great place to work….”

“Challenging, empowering, enjoyable” is how one nurse summed up the ethos at UCLH Trust. That was just one of the many positive views that put us in the Nursing Times Top 100. It names the Trust as one of the best organisations in the UK for nurses to work.

Sister Rachel May, from T13 south, who attended the awards ceremony and reception lunch at the Landsdowne Hotel, along with AALU senior nurse Michelle Gardener, said: “We were so very proud of the Trust and were delighted to represent it. People really are very happy to be working here – we receive fantastic support, and training opportunities.

“People have a lot to give and the Trust makes it possible for everyone to contribute, either full time or part time, especially those with children.”

Rachel Downey, editor of Nursing Times, added: “This is a tremendous achievement which reflects extremely well on your employment practices and as a reflection of how your employees feel about their place of work.”

We are extremley proud of our nurses and midwives and as a Trust strongly believe in a place where they can develop their skills and professional potential. The NHS is very demanding and our nurses work best of times and everyone involved to feel valued and supported in a supportive working environment - our best thing we have as a Trust, staffed by highly motivated and caring people.

Rachael May, chief nurse - Lo
“When the coffin went by, I actually passed out, and had to be taken away. It was the only time I broke down completely,” said Corporal Sylvia Ibie.

She’s better known to UCLH colleagues simply as Sylvia. A senior radiographer she’s just back from a three month stint in Iraq, where she swapped her familiar hospital blue for khaki camouflage at 22 Field Hospital 500 kilometres from Baghdad. She’s often near to tears when she talks about her time there. Every day brought death and destruction.

“It was worse than anything you can possibly imagine. Every day I saw young men seriously injured,” said Sylvia, a reservist with RAF Leuchars 612 Squadron.

“Sometimes I would just hold a soldier’s hand in his final moments when all those around him were desperately trying to save him. I just held on so he knew someone was there who cared.

“I thought of my younger brothers, how easily it could be them. It was heartbreaking.

“We held a ceremony for every soldier who died – I could only attend one. I had to be taken away.”

You’ll see Sylvia laughing and smiling with colleagues on T2, they’re so proud of her and so relieved to see her back safe and sound.

“I laugh a lot, try not to dwell on it — laughter is my way of keeping it all at a distance. I lived in constant fear of attack and constant fear of dying.

“My Christian faith gave me strength. I thought I could live in fear or live in faith. I chose faith.”

At one point she ran the radiography department single handed on round the clock call.

“I was so tired but when the bleep went I had to get out of my bed, snatch any rest I could no matter if the hospital was being shelled or mortars were exploding around us.

“So much depends on radiography in a place like that, you can’t send a wounded soldier blind into theatre.”

Sylvia’s bleakest moment came when she couldn’t get through to her ten year-old son Josh.

“I promised to phone him every Thursday. One week it was impossible - communications were bombed and I was desperate. When I eventually got through they said he’d freaked out and thought I was dead.

“I told him forget Thursdays, believe me God will keep me safe for you even if I don’t call.

“And here I am back with colleagues and back with my son,” she smiles.
A new generation of mums are celebrating the birth of babies they feared they might never have – thanks to the expertise of specialists at the Heart Hospital.

First time mum Kathryn Howard, who just got home with baby Chloe, said: “I’d given up. I never dreamed this day would happen. No words can express how I feel, how grateful I am.”

Kathryn is one of many women born with a congenital heart condition who’ve been cared for through complex pregnancies by the specialist GUCH unit, along with EGA colleagues.

“It’s a new generation – girls born with congenital heart conditions are now reaching an age when they want their own children,” said Ruth Brooks, clinical specialist nurse for the pregnancy service unit. Many are advised not to become pregnant because of the complexities, but in fact in many cases they can be managed.

“Pregnancy complicates things for these women - blood volume increases by fifty per cent, putting additional stress on an already compromised cardiovascular system.”

One of the most important aspects of Ruth’s job is giving support to mums-to-be and their families who are often especially anxious.

“I spend quite a lot of time reassuring our patients either in clinic or on the phone – it is a worrying time for them, but explaining things makes a big difference, and gives them confidence as their pregnancy progresses. Having the time to give emotional support to them and their family’s means a great deal.”

Ruth works closely with Dr Fiona Walker, consultant cardiologist, and liaises with other key members; the multi-disciplinary team includes obstetricians, anaesthetists, haematologists, neonatologists and midwives. Thirty-three women are being looked after by them at the moment. Over the last three years 211 babies have been born under their care.

CONGRATULATIONS IT’S A GIRL!

Kathryn and Chloe’s story – oh and dad too!

After two miscarriages and at the age of 36 Kathryn Howard, born with a congenital heart defect, had given up all hope of having the baby she so wanted.

Now she’s stuck at home, up half the night, looks like a bag lady most of the time and her figure’s gone to pot. And she couldn’t be happier! Hungry baby Chloe is the child she thought she would never have – she was safely ushered into this world by Heart Hospital and EGA specialists.

“I get a lump in my throat just thinking about Ruth and everyone who looked after me,” she says. “I was so scared. I was going into the unknown. I didn’t know if I could do it,” says Kathryn.

“Ruth spent hours talking to me, and I had many big panics. They had a plan for everything, and told me to let them do the worrying.

“Mum, dad and baby and proud grandparents are a very very happy family. Words just can’t say enough.”

AND A SURPRISE DELIVERY FOR SARETA

It’s the early hours of the morning and your pregnant daughter who has been complaining of stomach pains all day goes into labour. The midwife isn’t going to make it in time. Most people would simply panic.

But not UCLH education and training facilitator Sareta Hutton. Supercool Sareta is a trained midwife and though she hasn’t delivered a baby for nearly 20 years, her daughter Sharon Hutton-Young, knew she was safe in her mum’s hands. Bouncing baby girl Shardé came into the world on 15 January delivered by her grandmother on her bathroom floor in Kennington.

“I am a very calm and relaxed person, said Sareta. “You switch into professional mode even though it’s your grandchild. That’s the way to focus really. My daughter knew she was safe with me.”

“It was probably 1990 the last time I delivered a baby but you never forget – it’s like riding a bike,” she added.

welcome to the world Shardé

Don’t forget to nominate your colleague for our first staff award
A day in the life... Trust archivist - Annie Lindsay

A working day is full of surprises for Trust archivist Annie Lindsay. Suddenly a woman carrying a huge box full of grimy sporting trophies turns up and drops them at her desk.

“They were lying around John Astor House – seem to be tennis trophies won by nurses years ago. Didn’t want them to get lost so I took a taxi and brought them here,” she announces, and then disappears.

The rescued cups from the thirties, forties and fifties, now sit in a cupboard waiting to be catalogued as part of the Trust archive of photographs, letters, hospital policy documents, and artefacts, stretching back to 1747.

We’re one of the few Trusts to have a full time archivist and there are thousands of items still to be catalogued. Annie pours over black and white photographs, picking out details like hairstyle and uniforms, even shoes, to date them, building up a social history of hospital life. One minute she’s in an operating room during the Blitz, the next at the Eastman Dental Hospital with the ragged children.

The Middlesex forms most of the archive, but it also includes St Peter’s and The Hospital for Women and the National Temperance. Annie’s job involves much more than managing documents. She also advises on record management, corporate and clinical, as well as being responsible for dealing with all Freedom of Information requests.

“The public sector feels more worthwhile than the private sector,” says Annie. “I can offer services to staff that make a difference to their working lives and contribute to patient care in a very small way by looking after past treatment notes and providing copies of these to departments if needed.”

There are some secrets you might want to keep – but fans have blown the whistle on Alison Leary. Yes it’s out. Not only is she a nurse and formidable academic with a string of degrees and a doctorate to her name as the Trust’s Macmillan lecturer in oncology. But - take a deep breath - she’s a Millwall fan! And a very special one at that.

“I grew up in south London and they’re my team” says Alison.

Every Saturday down at the Den Alison is roaring her side on with the best of them - not from the stands but the stadium medical centre. She heads up the crowd medical service - in charge of anything from a major incident and accidents, fans falling ill at the game, as well as planning medical cover for big matches.

“At a high category match there can be as many as forty of us at the centre,” says Alison. “Millwall had a bit of a reputation in the 70s – but we have one of the lowest arrest records in the country. They really are wonderful supporters.”

Alison, who decided on a career as a nurse after a decade as a scientist, made front page headlines when she helped save the life of a 22 year-old man suddenly taken seriously ill.

“His heart had stopped. The team resuscitated him and we found out he’d recently had brain surgery. We got him to Kings A&E where the neurosurgeons met him. He made a full recovery.”

The centre is also used as a drop in surgery. The medical team run a Men’s Health Day with Southwark PCT, a sort of on the spot MOT.

“Not everyone has a GP in our area – there’s a shortage. It’s a part of London with some of the richest and poorest people. Many haven’t seen a doctor for a while even if they are not well. One man for example came in with a very bad chest infection, hadn’t seen a doctor, and ended up in hospital.”

Well, Millwall may be in the relegation zone but Alison Leary is firmly in the premier league.
Competition...It's just the ticket for those Blues…

Calling all football fans – win a behind the scenes tour for all the family at Chelsea FC. You don’t need to be a Blues fan to enjoy a day at Stamford Bridge with the kids and glimpse the secrets of one of the most famous grounds in the country. Built in 1876 as an athletics ground, it became the home of the newly formed football team in 1905, and has hosted FA Cup finals, motorbike and greyhound racing, even American football and cricket! Walk through the tunnel to the hallowed turf, put on a scowl and sit in the manager’s dug out and take a trip to the press office.

Just answer this question: **What team does Alison Leary our McMillan lecturer in oncology support?** Read about her in this Inside Story.

Email entries to competition@uclh.nhs.uk or send to communications unit, 2nd floor central, 250 Euston Rd via internal mail. Closing date is Friday 9 March 2007.

Join up, join up…£50 to spend at John Lewis

UCLH is on the lookout for more members to join the Foundation Trust. They give crucial feedback on what patients and visitors think of our services, and can stand for the Member’s Council. Recruit five new members – they can be patients or local residents – and you could win £50 to spend at John Lewis – there are two vouchers up for grabs. A recruitment pack is on Insight (front page - Hot Developments) - along with results of a recent member’s survey on our services. It’s a bit of an eye opener. And if you’re a staff member you’re automatically a member of the Trust – so you can vote for your own representative on the Council. More in the next issue of Inside Story.

Turn it down! And make Every Penny Count

**Prize winner Meredith Taylor**

Congratulations to Meredith Taylor at the Heart Hospital who topped the Every Penny Counts competition with a simple suggestion – **turn down the thermostat**.

It may be simple - but it could save the Trust hundreds of thousands of pounds.

“Sometimes the hospital is so warm we have the windows open – so it seems an obvious suggestion but I thought it would save money and energy,” said winner Meredith, an audit nurse. Her prize is a £100 night out at a restaurant of her choice – and she’s taking husband Paul.

Chief nurse Louise Boden, who is spearheading the savings campaign, said:

“We have to save £6 million in the coming year on what we spend on buying goods and services - everything from stationery to surgical equipment. Every penny really does count and ideas like Meredith’s make a difference. Thank you to her and everyone who put forward ideas.”

Keep sending your money saving ideas to everypennycounts@uclh.nhs.uk

Indian Adventures: Cycle or Trek 24 October - 3 November 2007

Tempted by Indian adventure? Trek your way to the Taj Majal or opt for pedal power - and raise money for our hospitals at the same time. The trip is this year’s Development Foundation overseas fundraiser. The 10-day trek starts with a visit to the Dalai Lama’s monastery in Dharamsala and continues through Himalayan mountain villages and some beautiful camping spots. Or cycle 400km through the Bharatpur National Park and along the Aravali Mountains past temples and ruined forts, then sleep in palace grounds under the stars. For further details email alex.adie@uclh.nhs.uk, ext 3325 to support the National Hospital or helen.sandwell@uclh.nhs.uk, ext 2415 to support UCL Hospitals.

Thank you Friends

A big thank you to the Friends, who donated a new beside monitor, comes from Michele Gardner, UCLH senior nurse, acute admissions unit, and colleagues. “The Friends donated two dynamap machines which monitor blood pressure, oxygen and pulse. The new larger wards only had two; these extra machines make our life very much easier.”

January’s competition winners: Tara Dewdhory, Annabel Simmonds, Shimee Ranjeeawon, Lee Jenkins