

What's On

Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences Research Seminar Programme 2010

This fortnightly seminar series aims to share the research being undertaken in the Faculty, as well as to offer the chance to debate and exchange ideas, and meet others interested in health and social care research. Lunch will be provided at each seminar from 12.45pm. To book a place, contact Johanna Moloney on 020 8725 3924 or at J.Moloney@sgul.kingston.ac.uk

Engaging health and social care service users in defining the outcomes of interprofessional working for older adults with multiple long term conditions: the experiences of the TOPIC study
14/1/10, 1-2pm, Boardroom 2, Second Floor, Hunter Wing, SGUL

Presented by Vari Drennan, Professor of Health Policy, and Research Associate Dhrushita Shah

GPs and child protection

28/1/10, 1-2pm, Room 6231, Frank Lamp Building, Kingston Hill Campus, Kingston University

Presented by Hilary Tompsett, Head of the School of Social Work



The Interprofessional Institute
11/2/10, 1-2pm, Room 6231, Frank Lamp Building, Kingston Hill Campus, Kingston University

Presented by Jan Fook, Professor of Professional Practice Research and Director of the Interprofessional Institute, part of the SouthWest London Academic Network (SWan)

Identifying and treating Neuropathic Pain
25/2/10, 1-2pm, Training Room 42, Second Floor, Grosvenor Wing, St George's Hospital
Presented by Dr Iain Beith, Head of the School of Physiotherapy



Consumer perspectives on therapeutic coercion in community mental health services

11/3/10, 1-2pm, Boardroom 2, Second Floor, Hunter Wing, SGUL
Presented by Iris Gault, Principal Lecturer in Mental Health

Impact of Masters' degrees in nursing
25/3/10, 1-2pm, Boardroom 2, Second Floor, Hunter Wing, SGUL
Presented by Senior Researcher Dr Ruth Harris and Honorary Research Fellow Dr Andy McEwen

Principal's Open Forums

12/1/10, 1-2pm,
Michael Heron Lecture Theatre
19/3/10, 1-2pm, Lecture Theatre G
21/4/10, 1-2pm, Lecture Theatre G
25/5/10, 1-2pm,
Michael Heron Lecture Theatre
23/6/10, 1-2pm,
Michael Heron Lecture Theatre
27/7/10, 1-2pm,
Michael Heron Lecture Theatre

The dates of the Principal's Open Forums for the first half of 2010 have been confirmed. The Open Forums are open to all staff and students, and are an opportunity to find out what's happening at St George's. There will also be opportunities to ask questions of SGUL Principal Professor Peter Kopelman.

SGUL National Orthopaedic Surgery Taster

16/1/10, 8am-5pm, Postgraduate Centre, St George's Hospital
This day-long education workshop is an opportunity for medical students to find out more about orthopaedic surgery. The morning session will consist of talks from consultant orthopaedic surgeons. There will also be a careers talk by an orthopaedic registrar. The afternoon will consist of workshops in arthroscopy, plastering, and plating and nailing. The event is free to SGUL students, although a refundable £20 booking deposit is required. For more information and to book a place, email the Obs in Surgery Society at orthosurgery@sgul.ac.uk

Fetal Monitoring in Labour (CTG) Study Days

The following study days are aimed at midwives, obstetricians and lawyers. The cost of each day is £85 for midwives, and £110 for doctors and lawyers. To book a place on either day and for further information contact Jill Edwards at obsandgy@sgul.ac.uk

23/10/10, 8.45am-5pm, O&G Seminar Room, Third Floor, Lanesborough Wing, St George's Hospital

Topics covered include the pathophysiology of ECG, clinical interpretation of CTG and ECG, reviews of interesting and difficult case scenarios and the use of STAN equipment and education packages.

25/10/10, 8.45am-5pm, O&G Seminar Room, Third Floor, Lanesborough Wing, St George's Hospital

Topics covered include the pathophysiology of fetal monitoring, current NICE guidelines, CTG interpretations, medico-legal issues and reviews of interesting and difficult case scenarios.

David W. Holt - Forty Years of Drug Use and Abuse

16/5/10 - 17/5/10, SGUL
This two-day symposium is being held to honour the 40-year career of Professor David Holt of the Division of Cardiac and Vascular Sciences at St George's. Prof Holt is internationally renowned in the field of bioanalytics, and a range of speakers from St George's, other UK institutions and abroad will talk on a range of subjects reflecting his career path. Amongst the

speakers are Professor Juan Carlos Kaski of St George's, Professor Leslie M. Shaw of the University of Pennsylvania in the USA, and Professor Hans H. Maurer of Saarland University in Germany. The symposium is £95 for those booking before February 12th, and £120 after that date. All bookings must be made by March 31st. For the full programme and to download the application form visit www.bioanalytics.co.uk/40years.html

WIN a George's bear



Congratulations to Jana Nittel, the winner of the last issue's competition. The MBBS4 Year 3 Placements Coordinator has scooped herself a cuddly mini medic. To win a bear, just answer these questions about this month's George's News:

- What award has Rosie Spooner won?
- How many pairs of underpants did Ed Coats take to Antarctica?
- What is Peter Hobbs' debut novel called?

Email your answers marked a), b), and c) to gcoutts@sgul.ac.uk with 'Competition' in the subject line. **Good luck!**

Student stars - volunteering in the community

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Your George's...

WELCOME to the last George's News of the year. This issue contains a feature on our student community volunteers, the new SGUL writing fellow, and a tribute to our longest serving staff. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, everyone!



Press Officer
Gordon Coutts

Honours and achievements

Rosie Spooner

Final-year medical student Rosie has been named Student Volunteer of the Year at the Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards. Rosie was nominated for her outstanding dedication to volunteering, which includes her work with the Student Action for Refugees (STAR) group, her mentorship of two young Eritreans, and her work as a founder member of the DIG fruit and veg-growing student society.

Professor Hamid Ghodse

Professor Ghodse has been appointed inaugural Chair of the new International Health Advisory Board, which will support Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson in his capacity as chief medical advisor to the government on international health. Prof Ghodse is Director of the International Centre of Drug Policy at St George's and is widely recognised as a world leader in international drug policy and addictions.

Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran

Sir Arul will be the first Briton in more than 50 years to head the International Federation of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (FIGO). He has been chosen as President Elect of FIGO and will take up the Presidency in October 2012 as the successor to Professor Gamal Serour. He is also President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG).

Professor George Griffin

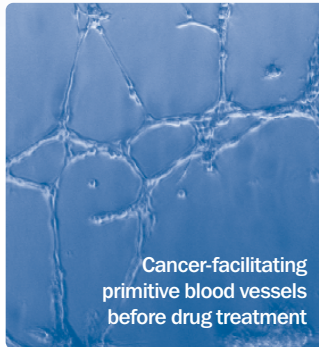
Professor Griffin has been elected a Distinguished Fellow of the Irish College of Physicians. Prof Griffin has been honoured for his contribution to clinical medicine, in particular his work on infectious diseases.



Hitting the headlines

• Mix 'n' match therapy targets cancers faster *The Times; The Irish Independent*

These articles looked at a new directory of cancer-fighting drugs developed at St George's, which will help doctors mix and match the most effective drugs with specific tumours. Doctors will be able to use the directory to identify effective treatment sooner and develop personalised therapies for cancer patients, potentially saving thousands of lives.



Cancer-facilitating primitive blood vessels before drug treatment

The directory has already helped to identify how other cancers, including pancreatic, can be treated with medication earlier than was previously thought possible.

• Social mobility: It's not a 'leg up' for poor students, just a fair chance *The Independent*

Kenton Lewis, Head of Widening Participation and Student Recruitment at St George's, responded by letter to a story about the rise in number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the original article, Andrew Grant, Chair of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, described some of the measures that have helped achieve this as a "leg up".

Kenton described this as "inaccurate and unfair", saying: "As a specialist medical and healthcare higher education provider, St George's, University of London, views it as particularly important to take measures to help those from less advantaged backgrounds



• Hopes of prevention receive shot in the arm *The Financial Times*

On December 1st's World AIDS Day, this article looked back at September's announcement of the first partial success of an HIV vaccine. It discussed how the modest success of the RV144 vaccine has given hope to researchers, but said suitable efficacy may still be some way off. Robin Shattock, Professor of Molecular Infection at St George's, talked about his team's own work, involving "next-generation approaches where we deliberately target the immune response in the genital tract."

access HE."

"...Students who have gained a place through the adjusted criteria scheme have proved just as successful as those who gained access via standard criteria."

• Still saving lives at 90 *The Guardian Education*

This profile looked at the life and work of 90-year-old Professor Denny Mitchison of St George's, presumed to be the oldest full-time professor in the country. Prof Mitchison (who was profiled in the last George's News) is a bacteriologist, whose pioneering work on clinical trials of tuberculosis drugs in the 1950s and '60s led to the regimen that is still standard today.

Prof Mitchison said: "Science is a lifetime occupation. It takes you over. When you actually find something new, it's the most exciting time. The real reason one goes on doing it is simply having put all that amount of one's self into something. If you then stopped doing that, it

would all go. You can look at it and say, how many lives have you saved? It's probably in the millions."

• Can mind-altering drugs have mental health benefits? *The Guardian; The Taipei Times*

This article examined the effect of war on health, looking at how the blame for illness and birth defects can be attributed. SGUL's Professor Nigel Brown, an expert in the causes of birth defects and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, said it was hard to identify which of several factors caused by war could be responsible for the dramatic rise of birth defects in Falluja.

"These birth defects in Falluja could be the result of multiple factors including the sheer psychological stress on the local population of being in a war zone, malnutrition, air and water pollution and a cocktail of chemicals, which may include contamination from munitions." ■

Principal's column

OCTOBER and November have been successful months for St George's. Terry Poulton and his team from the Centre for Medical Education deservedly won the Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding ICT Initiative of the Year for developing the Second Life training tool. This is truly a laudable distinction given the meritocracy of the award and SGUL's scale compared to the strength of the competing universities. On the same evening at a different location in London, Rosie Spooner, one of our final-year medical students, received the Lord Mayor's Dragon Award for Student Volunteer of the Year. Well done to Rosie and to all of our students who are so engaged with local communities – something that is very special to SGUL.

The Secretary of State for Innovation and Skills, Lord Mandelson, has called for universities to look beyond A Levels to identify the aptitude and potential of all those who should benefit from a university education. And ministers hailed the pioneering adjusted criteria scheme at St George's as an example of how this can be done. Lord Mandelson's proposals are outlined in a new framework for higher education - a 10-15 year strategy outlining the government's future direction for universities. The report considers all aspects of university life, from student admissions processes to research funding and focus, in an attempt to sustain university success in increasingly challenging and competitive times. As part of an



important focus on social mobility, Lord Mandelson has directed universities to look beyond A Level grades when allocating places and setting conditional offers. He urged universities to take pupils' school and family backgrounds into

"October and November have been successful months for St George's."

account within this process. The Secretary of State backed schemes already in operation to aid widening participation, including our 'adjusted criteria' scheme.

The strength of SGUL in WP has additionally been recognised by a gold medal for the St George's website www.tasteofmedicine.com at the 2009 e-Learning Age Awards

for 'Excellence in the production of learning content'. Although our innovative approaches to widening access have largely involved medicine, Kenton Lewis and his team are now extending the same principles and philosophy to all

SGUL undergraduate programmes. These are important awards that provide appropriate distinction and distinctiveness to SGUL and the Joint Faculty.

We are making good progress in implementing the strategic objectives from Building Sustainable Excellence – we have appointed the new heads of the

three divisions, identified research centres within the new divisions and have invited applications for heads of the research centres. HEFCE's consultation on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) has underlined the importance of 'research units' and the requirement for these to be world class and internationally recognised. We do have distinctiveness in certain areas of research – we need to build these strengths. Such strengths link closely to our partnerships with the NHS and the inter-dependence between our future success and the success of our partner NHS Trusts. In this regard, I am delighted to learn the St George's Hospital Trust has been awarded the Dr Foster Annual Award for the best large NHS Hospital Trust.

A final note of success, tinged by disappointment - SGUL was narrowly beaten by Girton College, Cambridge, in the second round of University Challenge. I gather that after a poor start our team came back strongly and was beaten at the last moment. I was tempted to start my column with the words "we was robbed!" but I felt that this could be misinterpreted. Well done to the team and better luck for 2010. Christmas and 2010 are fast approaching and I thank everyone for their support and loyalty to SGUL during 2009. I wish you all a joyous and restful seasonal period and good fortune for the New Year.

Professor Peter Kopelman
Principal ■

New network a force for change

St George's has joined forces with partner health and social care organisations to provide world-class care to the people of south west London.

The South West London Academic, Health and Social Care Network (AHSN) has been set up to ensure positive health and social care change, especially in

disadvantaged communities. It aims to provide fast, local access to care, and will address health inequalities by tackling poverty and disadvantage.

The AHSN was launched in October by NHS London Chief Executive Ruth Camall and Ian Winter, Deputy Regional Director of Social Care for London.

Membership of the AHSN means St George's has entered into partnership with the key health and social care organisations in south west London's six London boroughs - Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth - as well as Kingston University, which is already a partner institution



through the joint Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences. Ruth Camall said: "The AHSN is an exciting development that is set to deliver real positive change to the people of south west London." ■

Students inspire youngsters to reach for the stars

It might seem that studying for a medical or healthcare degree while still managing to enjoy the social side of university would occupy just about every waking hour of a student's life. But, amazingly, many St George's students seem able to find the energy and the drive to give up their precious time for altruism. Squadrons of student volunteers are a familiar sight around St George's and the local community, helping with everything from sex education and first aid cover to public health for children and international aid projects through schemes such as Sexpression, the St John's Ambulance university arm, the Teddy Bear Hospital, and SKIP. Many have also dedicated themselves to helping improve the lives of marginalised people living in Tooting and the area around St George's.

Since 2002, one group, **Student Action for Refugees (STAR)** has worked with young refugees and asylum seekers in the local area. STAR supports people from Sudan, Sri Lanka, Ivory Coast and Eritrea, amongst others, through a range of projects. It runs an after-school club for children, a mentoring scheme for young people, and a football team, as well as organising days out and holidays. Together with the Klevis Kola Foundation, the partner charity set up by STAR members to help expand its programme, STAR has also started an advocacy service for vulnerable children and families. The new advocacy programme offers families help negotiating childcare, employment, health and housing issues, providing support and advice where appropriate.

STAR, which receives some of its funding from SGUL alumni via the Annual Fund, has a pool of around 100 students who help out when they can find the time, with a core of 40 regulars. They help youngsters at the after-school club and youth club with their schoolwork, and lead activities including sports, drama, arts and crafts, cookery, healthy eating workshops, film making, music, first aid, rap and street dance. Volunteers on the mentoring scheme work with young people to try and build up their self-esteem and confidence, to help them

integrate into the community. The trips have included concerts, museums, the cinema and sports events, as well as walks and camping. In addition, STAR FC is going from strength to strength.

Last year's STAR Chair Chris Hands, who recently completed his St George's medical degree and now chairs KKF, said: "A lot of the volunteers, when they visit the families, are surprised at the conditions in which they live. Although we all live in the same place, people seem to live very separate lives, and that's a real shame. I hope we've been able to help disparate groups of people come together and feel they are part of the same community."

Juggling the demands of an

"It's so satisfying being able to spend time with the children when they're enjoying themselves so much"

intensive course while being so heavily involved in such emotionally involving extra-curricular activity obviously isn't easy. But current Chair Tim Little, a third year medical student, seems to take it in his stride: "It is quite hard to fit everything in, but I've learned to be quite disciplined and if I know I have to do some work for STAR after a day of study, I just try to do it.

"The thing is that once you've spent some time with people you find a lot out about their lives, and

when you see them in need and they ask you for extra help it's very hard to say no. It's often hard work, but it's nice to feel you're doing something useful.

"We also have a lot of fun. That Eureka moment when one of the children in your education group understands something for the first time is priceless. It's so satisfying being able to spend time with the children when they're enjoying themselves so much, smiling from ear to ear and being able to act their age for once, in spite of the adversity they have faced and often continue to face at home."

Chris agreed: "Hopefully what we do helps people, but we get so much out of this too.

"Having the responsibility for

shaping volunteers' drive and enthusiasm into structured projects that meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community is a wonderful challenge. It's given me much more confidence in approaching difficult situations on the wards, and organising research projects with large teams of people."

Chris and Tim also believe that STAR can have benefits for patient care, as volunteers can pick up vital skills that will make them better health professionals. From a survey

STAR conducted of its volunteers, 95 per cent of the 44 who replied said they were more confident working with refugees and asylum seekers, 82 per cent more confident communicating with people with limited English, 86 per cent more confident working with vulnerable people and 77 per cent more confident working in teams. Ninety-one per cent believe they have learned something that may help in future practice. And every one of those surveyed was more confident working with children.

And, as Tim says, there's another reason why taking part might appeal to students of difficult and time-consuming courses: "Where else would we get the excuse to do messy arts and crafts, cookery and play silly games every week?"

Anyone wanting to get involved with the projects can contact the team at starsgul@gmail.com. For more information, go to the KKF website at www.kleviskola.org ■



St George's honours long service staff

An old St George's tradition was held in November to honour the dedication of some of the longest serving members of staff. The Long Service Awards celebrated those who have worked at SGUL for 25 years or more.

Eleven staff members have received Long Service Awards, and those who could make it to a special presentation ceremony were given their awards by St George's Principal Professor Peter Kopelman.

Six people were given awards for a quarter century of service – Kanvaljit Matharu, Colin Smith, Professor William Large, Professor Dot Bennett, Professor Paul Andrews and Professor Mark Fisher. Professor Stephen Nussey and Yvette Bland were honoured for 26 years at St George's, and Dr Kay Colston and Glenn Alder for 27 years. And Dr Chrissie Fenske was awarded for an incredible 28 years of service.

Professor Kopelman said: "It's a privilege to be able to recognise the dedication these long-serving

members of staff have offered to St George's, and the exemplary contribution each of them has made.

"It's very rare in any walk of life to find people giving so much of their careers and their lives to any one institution. St George's has benefited hugely from the cohesion and loyalty their long service has provided, and I hope St George's has served each of them equally well.

"It's very rare in any walk of life to find people giving so much of their careers and their lives to any one institution."

"Congratulations to all, and I hope to see everyone around for many more years to come."

Dot Bennett, Professor of Cell Biology, could not make the award ceremony, but remembers her

early days at SGUL with fondness and is glad she has stayed for the bulk of her career.

"Why do I like St George's enough to stay 25 years? Well, on coming here from a research institute, the impression was one of space - both space to work and to think, and the intellectual space to work on one's own ideas.

"Another appealing aspect is being on the same site as a big hospital. Not only is it a pleasure to be next door to all those folks running around curing the sick, it is also valuable for our research. We have been able to develop some productive clinical collaborations with the Trust, not to mention other collaborations within the University.

"St George's has always been a friendly place, too – small enough in the 80s that one could get to know a fair few students as well as staff. Again, it has grown and diversified, and people have come and gone. But, to me, it still manages to keep a human face and that flavour of friendliness." ■



Some of the Long Service staff having a well-earned seat. From left to right: Kanvaljit Matharu; Professor Stephen Nussey; Professor Mark Fisher; Yvette Bland; Principal Professor Peter Kopelman; Dr Kay Colston; Dr Chrissie Fenske; Colin Smith

The icemen cometh

Deliberately putting yourself in a such a desperate situation that eating your friend's dismembered toe seems a good idea might not be the kind of experience anyone would like to repeat. St George's alumnus Dr Mike Stroud, however, is made of sterner stuff than most. A lifetime of adventure has seen the intrepid record breaker follow in the sled tracks of one of St George's most famous sons, Antarctic explorer Eddie Wilson. Mike and fellow alumnus Dr Ed Coats – who famously conquered the South Pole with Ben Fogle and James Cracknell – came to St George's for a HealthyLiving 2020 talk about their incredible experiences in the wildest, most inhospitable places on earth.

Mike is known best for his Arctic and Antarctic expeditions with Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the living legend adventurer. Following attempts to walk to the North Pole unaided, in 1992/93 Mike and Sir Ranulph succeeded in completing the first unassisted walk across the Antarctic, where Eddie Wilson took part in Captain Scott's ill-fated final journey. Amongst other feats, Mike has completed the Marathon Des Sables desert ultramarathon, and in 2003 he and Sir Ranulph completed seven marathons in seven days. Mike's day job is as a consultant gastroenterologist, with a particular interest in human endurance under extreme conditions.

Bristol-based obstetrics and gynaecology doctor Ed Coats, meanwhile, was selected from hundreds of applicants to replace actor Jonny Lee Miller for Fogle and Cracknell's attempt this year to win the South Pole Race. Ed has also represented Great Britain at decathlon, captained two teams that swam the English Channel in 2003, and has completed the

gruelling two-day Karrimor Mountain Marathon.

While Mike is a polar veteran, Ed had just 16 weeks to prepare himself for one of the harshest environments on the planet. His intensive training involved a miserable 48 hours in a deep-freeze Antarctic simulator, and 18-hour sled-pulling sessions in the Swiss Alps. But nothing could prepare him for the rigours of the Antarctic itself.

"After three days I broke down emotionally, as I'm used to decathlon, which is two days. When that happened I realised it wasn't going to be only a physical challenge, but mental as well."

Ed did manage to cope with the mental demands of enduring massive shifts of monotonous skiing through the snow, sometimes in snowstorms. He also conquered the problems presented by bringing just one pair of underpants, the fact that their snack bags had melted into a congealed mess on the journey to Antarctica through Cape Town, the breakdown of team decision-making through exhaustion, James' trench foot, temperatures as low as -40°C, and dangerous crevasse fields, to eventually come third in

"It's nearly all mental. Even if you are in pain, you find you can still keep going."

the race after 18 days, five hours and ten minutes.

"It was a hugely amazing experience. A unique experience." Ed said he wouldn't have made it had it not been for "something that I learned and was instilled in me at St George's – teamwork."

Mike Stroud has a slightly different take on what is required to undertake such extreme adventures: "I always say the most important quality you need is a very

defective short-term memory. When you start something you sometimes think 'what on earth has made me do this again?' You

feel like you've made a mistake an hour in on day one, but you don't want to let anyone down so you keep going. But it's all about the satisfaction you feel afterwards, once you've finished something that's a real challenge."

Mike's adventures have allowed him to study up close the effects of extreme conditions on the human body. He discovered during his Antarctic crossing with Ranulph Fiennes that their energy

expenditure was around 11,000 calories a day – the highest recorded. His "very unusual" findings also showed they had such low blood sugar levels it would normally be incompatible with life.

Despite this, Mike believes most people could undertake the kinds of things he has done, if they were put into the same situation.

"It's nearly all mental. Even if you are in pain, you find you can still keep going."

However, one incident from Mike's Arctic attempts with Sir Ranulph might put anyone off trying to follow in his and Ed's footsteps.

"We were so hungry we'd search the tent for crumbs. Ranulph's toe fell off in his sock and I'm surprised in retrospect we didn't eat it." ■



Not even an ice-encased nose can perturb Mike Stroud.



Ed Coats drew on the teamwork he learned at St George's to conquer the South Pole.



Mike and Sir Ranulph had to squeeze into a tiny tent together.



CONQUERING obsession

FOR MOST OF US, leaving the house in the morning is pretty simple – prise eyes open; shower quickly; throw on some clothes; out the door. Easy enough. But imagine if you had to have two showers and five changes of clothes before you were prepared to face the day. Imagine you had to unlock and lock the door precisely 37 times before you could leave the house. It doesn't sound much fun, but even that is nothing compared to the extreme cases of Obsessive Compulsive Behaviour Dr Lynne Drummond deals with on a daily basis.

Lynne is a Senior Lecturer in the Division of Mental Health and a Consultant Psychiatrist at the South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust. She is in charge of the National and Trust-wide Services for OCD and Body Dysmorphic Disorder. Lynne's work also encompasses helping people with phobias, and she is on the board of the charity Triumph Over Phobia.

The ten-bed St George's unit is the only 24 hour-staffed NHS inpatient OCD facility in the UK. It looks after patients with the most profoundly debilitating conditions.

Lynne said: "OCD is a spectrum, and everyone has it to some extent. We all have disturbing thoughts and impulses that pop into our heads without us really knowing why; a lot of people say, for example, that when they're on the tube they suddenly think about throwing themselves in front of a train for

no reason. Most of us can get rid of these thoughts very quickly and easily, but people with OCD find them so distressing that they think to themselves 'I must never have that thought again', so they develop methods to try and reduce the chances of it happening again."

People with OCD develop physical or mental rituals, such as repeatedly cleaning, checking,

"We all have disturbing thoughts and impulses"

counting or hoarding to stave off such thoughts. Some rituals become incredibly complicated, and can involve having to complete a set routine of physical manoeuvres before being able to do anything else.

"These complex rituals give relief, but the problem is it's very short-lived. Some people who

have elaborate cleaning rituals, where they have to rid themselves of all germs, think 'Have I got them all, or are there some still on me?' and the doubt makes them start all over again. The OCD can end up becoming an end in itself, and it can really ruin people's lives. It's a terrible condition."

In fact, OCD is listed by the World Health Organisation as one

of the top ten most debilitating illnesses, in terms of decreased quality of life and loss of income. Most people with severe cases live alone, and many are unable to lead full, active lives.

"One of our patients was a man in his 60s who owned four houses because he'd filled them with newspapers. He started by

collecting book review clippings, then progressed onto whole papers. He couldn't throw them away so ended up having to buy more houses to keep them."

Lynne and her team use cognitive behavioural therapy as well as medication to help people with OCD learn how to keep the thoughts that result in compulsive behaviour under control. And they have an excellent success rate.

"We are able to help most people make significant improvements. We try to equip them with the tools to manage OCD themselves. If they slip up and revert to their old ways that's fine, as long as they have the means to get on top of it again.

"It can be incredibly satisfying to see people really get their lives back. OCD can block someone's personality entirely, so when you make progress you really get know the person that emerges, which is wonderful." ■



Fellowship of the Tooting

ANTON CHEKHOV ONCE ANNOUNCED: "Medicine is my lawful wife. Literature is my mistress." And Chekhov is by no means the only doctor to have been tempted from medicine by the lure of the pen. William Carlos Williams, John Keats, W. Somerset Maugham and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are amongst the great writers who were also qualified doctors. Even St George's legend Edward Jenner was a useful poet. Now, anyone around St George's who secretly yearns to follow in their footsteps has the perfect opportunity to sharpen their pensmithery.

Acclaimed novelist and short story writer Peter Hobbs has been appointed as Royal Literary Fund Fellow at St George's. Peter has had one novel published – *The Short Day Dying*, a spare, lyrical account of a 19th Century Cornish lay preacher's spiritual crisis – as well as a collection of short stories, *I Could Ride All Day in My Cool Blue Train*. Peter succeeds Maryon Tysoe as RLF Fellow, and his role is to help staff and students with their own compositions, from academic dissertations and research papers to any other piece of writing. While medicine, healthcare and science might seem poles apart from literature, Peter says there are "many parallels" between the different forms.

"Medical and science writing needs to have the same clarity and sense of flow as fiction. There is a huge difference between simply imparting information and

writing with a narrative drive, and that's what I try to get across. Even if I don't understand the substance of a scientific paper, I can hopefully still help to make it clear and concise.

"There's been a couple of Eureka moments so far, where people have realised they can write things in a certain way they hadn't thought of before. It's

"Medical and science writing needs to have the same clarity and sense of flow as fiction."

pretty satisfying to see them make a breakthrough with their work."

Peter, who is currently polishing off his second novel, is at St George's two days a week, and is getting to grips with having an actual workplace to come to.

"It's really strange for me to have a proper job with a proper office. My usual day of writing

involves a couple of hours of procrastination, followed by a couple of hours of panic that I've not done anything, then usually at the end of the day I'll manage to get some actual writing done. It's certainly a change to have a more rigid way of working, but I'm enjoying it."

Peter's writing career began during a long period of serious

illness which started while the Oxford politics graduate was travelling in Pakistan. He spent the best part of ten years recovering, and began writing to deal with the debilitation. As Peter says: "Art helps process the emotions you go through."

He began by following in the footsteps of some of his favourite

writers, Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino, by writing short stories, but was encouraged by publisher Faber & Faber to attempt a novel. Five years later *The Short Day Dying* was published, and universally lauded for its bleak, graceful narrative.

Peter acknowledges that his sickness is likely to have informed the themes of his writing: "I'd love to write a great comic novel, but my themes seem to be a lot more earnest – the inaccessibility of the past, lack of freedom, dealing with emotional or physical constraints, fear, hope and death. Some of the big stuff I suppose."

Appropriately, then, Peter is probably in the right place, surrounded as he is by medical and healthcare students and professionals who face some of these issues every day.

Anyone wanting to discuss their work with Peter can contact him at phobbs@sgul.ac.uk ■

People

New Staff

Basic Medical Sciences

Dr Rachelle Cook - Research Assistant
Dr Ferran Valderrama - Senior Lecturer in Anatomy
Alison Wallace - Research Assistant
Dr Claire Wells - Clinical Research Fellow

Cardiac and Vascular Sciences

Dr Rachel Bastiaenen - Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Andre Coetzee - Clinical Research Fellow
Jacqueline Coleman - Clinical Trials Nurse/Study Coordinator
Professor George Hall - Professor of Anaesthesia
Reuben Lewis - Clinical Trials Nurse Coordinator
Lee Nathaniel-Wurie - Assistant Clinical Studies Coordinator
Sophie Payne - Assistant Clinical Studies Coordinator
Zuzana Topham - Academic Secretary

Cellular and Molecular Medicine

Carole Donaldson - Secretary
Dr Jamal Hayat - Clinical Research Fellow
Hazel Nyamajiyah - Research Nurse

Centre for Medical and Healthcare Education

Dr Carwyn Hooper - Lecturer in Medical Ethics and Law
Evangelia Mitsopoulou - E-Projects Learning Technologist

Clinical Developmental Sciences

Caroline Appel - Research Assistant
Professor Nicholas Carter - Emeritus Professor
Dr Karin Leslie - Clinical Lecturer
Gaurav Haralka - Research Assistant
Dr Lingping Zhan - Research Assistant

Community Health Sciences

Sarah Cleary - Research Nurse
Gail Harding - Research Nurse
Dr Dahai Yu - Statistician

Information Services

Georgina Coles - Information Assistant

Faculty midwives' trip a 'real eye-opener'

A group of Joint Faculty midwifery students has had first-hand experience of the hardships faced by their Ugandan counterparts on a "life-changing" trip. Three third-year students travelled to Uganda on a two-week placement, where they were confronted with a startling lack of hospital resources that meant women giving birth on plastic bags on bare mattresses.

In their final year, student midwives can go on international placement, to compare models of care, practice and education. The trip was arranged with Makerere University in Uganda's capital, Kampala.

The students – with Valerie Sheridan, Course Director of the School of Midwifery and Child Health – spent time at Kampala's Mulago Hospital. There are 25-30,000 births at Mulago Hospital each year, with 8-10,000 of these on the low-risk midwifery led labour ward. Maternal mortality stands high at 425 per 100,000 births. The students also visited a rural ante-natal clinic north of Kampala. Their role was mainly to observe, but they did get to use their skills when required. What they saw was a far cry from modern UK maternity units.

"It's a completely different world," said Georgie Guy, one of the students. "The labour ward was like a sea of women, and they didn't have many midwives to deal with them all. There was no running water, and they have nothing like the resources we have so it makes you realise how much we waste. The pregnant



Georgie Guy with some of her Ugandan colleagues

women had to bring in their own gloves and cotton wool, for example. When a baby is born we clamp the umbilical cord, but they didn't have clamps so the midwives used the rim of a rubber glove to tie the cord. Things like that were a real eye-opener.

"Because you don't have all your equipment, you have to rely on your basic midwifery skills. It was great experience, so I hope it's made me a better midwife."

The Ugandan midwives' dedication in the face of incredible difficulty left its mark on the students, who have now graduated and are putting their skills into practice as newly qualified midwives.

Georgie, who is working at Mayday Hospital, said: "It was a life-changing experience, and I think about what I learned every day. The practice is years behind us, but they tried so, so hard. I really appreciate now how lucky we are."

Valerie Sheridan said: "The mortality rates are quite shocking and the conditions we saw were pretty desperate, especially for women in labour.

"The students were shocked by what they saw, but it was an incredible experience for them and me. A key thing they learned was how to provide midwifery care without the technology available in this country and they came away feeling really inspired and confident. It wasn't just professional development they achieved, but personal development as well." ■

Research degree awards

Dionysios Alexandrou (MD), CDS, Main supervisor - Professor Dafydd Walters. *The role of active chloride transport in the balance of secretion-absorption of alveolar fluids*

Charlotte Combs (PhD), CDS, Main Supervisor - Professor Timothy Chambers. *The role of urocortin in osteoclast physiology*

Katherine Dick (PhD), CDS, Main supervisor - Professor Andrew Crosby. *Neurological Disease Gene Identification in Consanguineous*

Populations

Ramaswamy Diwakar (PhD), CMM, Main supervisor - Dr Mark Dockrell. *The regulation of the actions of albumin by endocytosis on human proximal tubular epithelial cells and the role played by adaptor protein Disabled2*

Anna Marciniak (PhD), CVS, Main supervisor - Professor Marjan Jahangiri. *Ventricular function in left sided regurgitant valve disease – When does the ventricle fail irreversibly? Could this be detected by strain variant*

echocardiography?

Gunaratnam Niranjan (MD), CVS, Main supervisor - Mr Venkatachalam Chandrasekaran. *Effects of autotransfusion with a cell saver on acute phase response, neutrophil activation and lung function in patients undergoing coronary surgery with and without cardiopulmonary bypass*

Fenella Willis (MD), CMM, Main supervisor - Dr Ruth Pettengell. *Optimising peripheral blood progenitor cell mobilisation*

New publications

Langsaeter L., Mukherjee S. *Emergency caesarean sections; Are we meeting our guidelines in a busy London tertiary hospital with over 5000 deliveries/year?* International Journal of Gynecology and

Obstetrics, Volume 107:2 2009 Pg S474
Mukherjee S., Cartwright J E, Whitley G StJ, Michael A E, Thilaganathan B. *Altered Glucocorticoid Metabolism in Placental Tissue from First Trimester*

Pregnancies at Increased Risk of Pre-eclampsia. Placenta, Volume 30:9 2009 Pg A.24

Liu W M, Fowler D W, Smith P, Dalgleish A G. *Pre-treatment with*

chemotherapy can enhance the antigenicity and immunogenicity of tumours by promoting adaptive immune responses. British Journal of Cancer, online publication December 8th 2009

News in brief

Samantha Masvodza 1989 - 2009

ST GEORGE'S received very sad news in October with the death of student Samantha Masvodza. Samantha, in the second year of a biomedical science course, was described as a 'bright and enthusiastic student', and 'an absolute pleasure to teach'.

St George's Principal Professor Peter Kopelman led the tributes to Samantha: "Those who worked closely with Samantha have expressed that she was an incredibly pleasant and likeable individual, and her death is a huge loss for St George's as well as a tragedy for her family.

"On behalf of St George's, I express our condolences to her family and friends. Our thoughts are with them during this very difficult time."

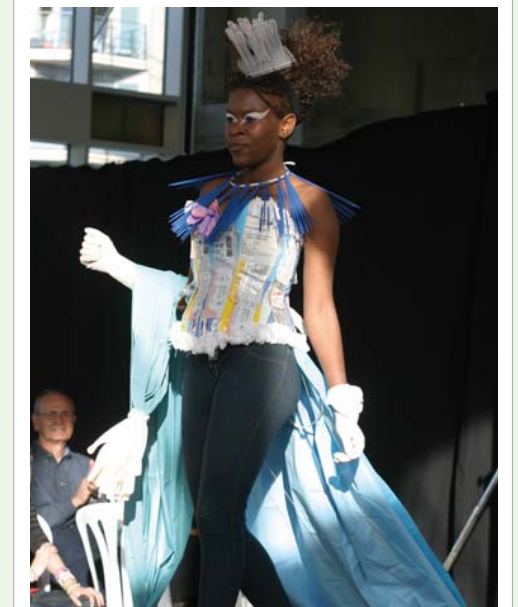
Samantha's friends organised a gathering

at St George's to remember her life, and they released balloons in her honour. Staff and students from the university also attended her funeral near her family home in Bedfordshire.

During her time at St George's, Samantha was an active member of the Afro-Caribbean Appreciation Society, and was involved with the cheerleading team. She also took part in a fashion show organised by a St George's staff member, where she modelled clothes made from discarded medical material.

Samantha's mother, Priscilla, said: "We would like to thank all the students and friends who attended Samantha's funeral. There were about 400 or 500 people and we had a beautiful church service with African music and drums.

"I hope it comforted her friends at St George's and made it easier for them to grieve." ■



£1.3m Wellcome Trust award for Ecuadorian immunity and allergy study

Dr Philip Cooper has been awarded £1.3m by the Wellcome Trust to continue his research into immunity and allergies in young children in rural South America. The renewal of his Senior Fellowship will allow Dr Cooper to continue his project in Ecuador for another five years.

Dr Cooper has set up a birth cohort of 2,500 newborns in rural Ecuador, and is investigating how early exposure to parasites affects the development of immunity and allergic diseases. He runs a team of 30 clinicians and ancillary staff at two sites in Esmeraldas Province, and the new funding will allow his team to follow the cohort to five years old. The study should provide new insights into the early causes of inflammatory disease such as asthma, which now has a very high prevalence rate in Latin America.

Hundreds raised for Poppy Appeal

Big-hearted SGUL staff and students raised a mighty £890.95 for The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. The money will go towards helping past and present members of the British armed forces. Well done to all who contributed.

St George's infection researchers scoop five of the year's top ten papers

Researchers at the Centre for Infection at St George's have been honoured by the prestigious Infectious Diseases Society of America for producing five of the year's top ten world medical mycology papers. At its recent annual meeting in Philadelphia, the Society named the top ten papers from around the globe published in any journal. The first authors of five of the papers are from Professor Tom Harrison's group at St George's. The papers' first authors were: Dr Joe Jarvis, Dr Jonathan Lambourne, Dr Nicky Longley and Dr Tihana Bicanic, who had two papers commended.

Cardiovascular Research Group Symposium 2009

The Cardiovascular Research Group at St George's held its annual Symposium in October. This year's event was called *Cardiovascular Complications of Chronic Kidney Disease - A New Challenge*. Researchers from St George's and colleagues from UK and national institutions gave talks, and a poster session was held.

Amongst the speakers were Dr Debasish Banerjee from St George's, who spoke about *Mechanism of CVD in CKD*,

Professor Alan Jardine of the University of Glasgow, whose talk was called *Risk factors for CVD in CKD: Hypertension*, and Professor David Wheeler of the Royal Free and University College Medical School, who discussed *Risk factors for CVD in CKD patients: Cholesterol*. Professor Charles Herzog of the University of Minnesota gave The Michael Davies Memorial Lecture, *Controversies in the management of CVD in patients with CKD*.

Jenner Symposium and Lecture 2009

St George's hosted a showcase of its latest research in infection and immunity at the Jenner Symposium and Lecture 2009.

The event – held in honour of St George's legend Edward Jenner, who discovered the smallpox vaccine – was opened by SGUL Principal Professor Peter Kopelman and Professor George Griffin, Vice Principal of Research. They introduced talks by a line-up of St George's researchers. Professor Philip Butcher gave a talk called *Probing in vivo phenotypes of M.tuberculosis by transcriptional profiling*, Professor Robin Shattock spoke about *Progress towards new HIV prevention options: vaccines and microbicides*, Professor Julian Ma Plant discussed *Plant*

biotechnology to address global access to modern medicine and Professor David Lewis gave an insight into the *Ups and downs of mucosal vaccines*.

Professor Maria Zamboni, director of the Health Protection Agency's Centre for Infections, also gave a talk, called *What's new in 'flu?*, and the showpiece 2009 Jenner Lecture was given by Professor Myron Levine from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. The Jenner Lecture - *Silent fate: lethal invasive non-typhoidal Salmonella infections in Africa* - can be seen here - <http://video.sgul.ac.uk/vod/?asset=73>. Prof Shattock's talk can also be viewed, at - <http://video.sgul.ac.uk/vod/?asset=72>

Medical Biomics Centre celebrates 1000th scan

The Medical Biomics Centre at St George's has celebrated analysis of the 1000th sample on its Illumina microarray platform. The platform, which began operating under two years ago, enables researchers to analyse genome-wide patterns of gene expression, SNP genotyping, methylation and copy number variation. The 1000th sample was run by Nana Shimosako as part of an investigation into genetic predisposition to chronic fatigue syndrome. ■