



St George's
University of London

Issue 9, May 2007

Newsletter for St George's, University of London

**BUMPER
EDITION**

George's News



Peak practice

A view from Everest

Principal's Column

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Submissions deadline for the summer issue of George's News is July 6. Email tstarr@sgul.ac.uk, or call extension 1139.

Thanks to Staff writer Anna Jenkins for her contributions

WHAT a cock-up! Yes, it's the Medical Training and Application Service, of course. For decades the UK has been a world leader in undergraduate medical education and postgraduate training and now the Government has made us the laughing stock of Europe and probably beyond. More importantly, the Government has damaged the prospects of not just a few thousand UK doctors in 2007, but this debacle may affect recruitment and retention in medicine for a decade or more.

A head has fallen – Professor Crockard's, the programme's director – but as he cleared his desk he complained that he was never given the support and authority to do a proper job. And Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt has apologised publicly – but what do these things really mean? Hopefully there will be an interim outcome that at least keeps the show on the road in the short term, but what of the future? Could something like this happen again?

Unfortunately the answer is yes. Not only that, but it has happened several times already in the very recent past. It was only a year ago that our final year students had a similar alarming experience with the job allocation process for the Foundation Programmes. Inadequate planning, inappropriate selection criteria and too hurried implementation! It is my view that the real culprit is a rather nasty political (with both a large and a small 'p') disease called control mania.

I first recognised this disease when Mr Milburn travelled down the well-oiled Newcastle-London line to take over as the Secretary of State for Health. He believed that all hospital consultants were bone idle, cheating on their contracts and spending too much



Professor Michael Farthing

of their time in private practice and therefore needed to be taught a lesson once and for all! The result was 'the new consultant contract'.

It is very clear that the decision was ill-informed, and has achieved very little other than giving the doctors a hefty pay rise and probably reducing the amount of consultant clinical contact time in the NHS. Most significantly, it has changed the work culture and reminded consultants that there is a clock in the room which was by and large not the case during the first 50 years of the NHS!

The same mistake was then made not once but twice again, both under the current 'ministerial watch'. The first was the new GP contract which again resulted in a substantial pay rise. On this occasion the BMA completely out-negotiated the Department of Health which gave away completely the need for a GP ever to contribute to the out-of-hours service for a minor penalty on the final salary. This again was largely about 'control'.

And then there was the dental contract... it was so good that we didn't hear a squeak from the dentists; they just took the money!

Introduction of these new contracts and pay structures, none of which was actively sought by the beneficiaries, is probably the main reason why the NHS has experienced the most recent financial crisis.

But that is not all. In the last three years we have witnessed both an increase and then a decrease in the number of Strategic Health Authorities, a re-organisation of Primary Care Trusts and a variety of destabilising interventions including 'Payment by Results', redistribution of NHS R&D funding, the raid on the education and training budget and others. These attempts at modernisation have merely added to the financial and organisational chaos within the service and further demotivated those working within it. Sackings and job losses have occurred at all levels. Is this really the way to run a business?

I have a sense that there are too many people just making it up as they go. Perhaps too much 'policy-based evidence' and not enough 'evidence-based policy'!

What concerns me even more is the impact that these interventions have had and are still

having on recruitment into academic medicine. Calman training programmes have probably inadvertently led to a reduction in the proportion of trainees undergoing research training and achieving a higher degree. If this continues, we risk a future without academic leadership which has been so important for many decades, and a major decline in clinical research.

The inflexibility of the Foundation programmes and Modernising Medical Careers have placed trainees in the position of having to choose the nature of specialist training too early in their careers, without any assurance that the right choice will be made at this very early stage. I did not make the decision to give academic medicine 'a go' until I had completed specialist training and was writing up a thesis for a higher degree. The need for serious research training before making a decision about whether to consider an academic career is vital.

Academic 'tasters' in the Foundation years are no substitute. The 'new' proposals for clinical fellows and lecturers as

preparation for an academic career are commendable but merely reinventing a situation that was working pretty well 20 years ago and produced most of the current cohort of clinical professors. So-called 'parallel training' was largely driven out by the rigidity of the Calman programmes.

Most of these policy disasters could have been avoided – for example, by better planning, wider involvement of those at the 'coal face' who could have predicted the outcomes, and a more measured introduction of change, possibly with more pilot studies.

The real problem is that most of these interventions have been driven by politically motivated top-down policies, without a long-term consideration of their consequences. If the NHS is going to flourish in the UK in the future, the boom and bust approach needs to be buffered. I would fully support the creation of an independent NHS Board which takes it out of the direct control of ministers and senior politicians and gives it back to healthcare professionals, experienced managers and committed policy makers. Although we sometimes



complain, the Higher Education Funding Council has served those of us in higher education very well for many years without the financial 'helter skelter' that now seems the norm in the NHS! It is not a panacea but it provides an intellectual buffer between Government and the higher education institutions. Since Mrs Thatcher began the dissolution of the Civil Service and Mr Blair was happy to keep banging nails in the coffin, the need for an

independent Board is even more acute. This is not a new idea.

Perhaps, Mr Brown and Mr Cameron, you should both put it in your manifestos for the next General Election if you are really committed to be the custodian of a flourishing NHS?

Michael Farthing
May 2007

Message from Baroness Elaine Murphy

I AM writing to let everyone know that the Principal, Michael Farthing, has been appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Sussex University and will be leaving SGUL at the end of the summer. I am sure you will all wish to join with me in congratulating Michael on this prestigious appointment and there will be opportunities for staff and students to mark the outstanding contribution that Michael has made to SGUL.

Council will immediately begin the process of appointing a successor. We will put together a Search Committee and it is likely that we will use recruitment consultants to help us in this task. We will want to ensure that the community has opportunities to make appropriate input into our selection and I will let people know how we propose to do this in the near future.

While we will do this as quickly as we can, it is crucial to the

ongoing development of SGUL that we make the best possible appointment to succeed Michael. There will be a gap between Michael's leaving and the next Principal taking up post. I have, therefore, on behalf of Council, asked Professor Sean Hilton to act as Principal to cover any such gap and Sean has very kindly agreed to do so.

SGUL is engaged in a challenging agenda across a number of areas and it is

important that we are able to keep up the momentum at this vital time. We have a strong and experienced staff and many of the best students in the sector. I know that we will all continue to work together to develop SGUL and that we will give our customary high level of support to Sean in the months ahead.

Kind regards,
Baroness Elaine Murphy
Chair, SGUL Council

Alumni

1960s Friends reunited

ST GEORGE'S alumni who graduated in the 1960s gathered together for a reunion at the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London. More than 70 former students and their spouses and partners were welcomed by the Principal, Professor Michael Farthing, and representatives from the Alumni Association.

The reunion on May 2 began with a drinks reception in the delightfully warm and sunny confines of the Apothecaries courtyard, followed by a delicious lunch in the Apothecaries Hall. Guests reminisced with their friends about their time at Hyde Park Corner and many a story was shared over the 'rogues' gallery' – a display of class pictures and individual student pictures.

Dr Stephen Herman, who graduated in 1965, said: 'A lot of effort was clearly put into the choice of venue and the presentation of memorabilia and photographs.

'I so much enjoyed meeting many of my old friends again.' Dr John Rankin, from the class of



Remember when? Former students from Hyde Park Corner days share their George's memories

1963, added: 'Many thanks to the Alumni Office for organising the reunion, which was most enjoyable.

'I met up with several old friends and really appreciate the hard work that the Alumni Office put into it.'

Chris Conneely, Development Manager, was responsible for organising the event and was pleased that so many alumni were

able to attend: 'It's fantastic that after 40-plus years our alumni still maintain their links with St George's and I'm glad that as well as catching up with each other, they were able to find out from the Principal how successful St George's is today.'

Some of the alumni in attendance had not been in touch with their alma mater for many years and this had perhaps been their first opportunity to re-engage with St George's.

Our thanks must go to those alumni who helped us track down some of the 'missing' names and a special thank-you must go to Marina Logan-Bruce, Library Services Manager, who compiled the archive displays that kept everyone so entertained on the day.

While most were busy finding 'long-lost' friends, swapping news and reawakening memories, for Georgean and Peter Schofield it was the perfect opportunity for romance. The pair met at a dance at St George's in the 1960s. Peter

recalls: 'I was working in London, and living at a YMCA on Wimbledon Broadway in 1963, and we had an invitation to go over to St George's for this Beatles hop.

'So about a dozen of us young lads went over there, Georgean was there, dispensing drinks... I spied her on the other side of the table, you know, and our eyes met across a crowded room!'

But, as Peter reveals, the romance was nearly over before the first date. 'She wasn't going to go that night,' he says.

'Five or six of her friends clubbed together and persuaded her into it. I still remember just what she was wearing...'

'It was a rather old-fashioned cordouroy dress,' chips in Georgean, who was a general nurse at St George's. 'But back then, it was very 'in'!'

The pair have just celebrated their ruby wedding – and George's News wishes them many more happy years of reminiscing to come. ■



Alumni

Dr Nuala Sterling looks back on her time as a student in the 1960s

I QUALIFIED from St George's, Hyde Park Corner in 1960, subsequently doing both my surgical HS and medical HP posts there.

Students were accepted for their clinical training twice yearly in intakes of approximately 20. The spring intake was from King's College in the Strand following first and second MB with a few additions from Oxford. In autumn the intake was mainly from Cambridge following the Natural Science tripos together with candidates who had retaken 2nd MB.

Despite our small numbers we had our share of overseas students – a Sikh from Nairobi, a Pakistani from Oxford, a Malaysian Chinese, a Canadian and a few girls (between one and three a year). So the entire Clinical Medical School totalled 120 students, of whom up to seven were girls.

St George's was not unknown to any of us at King's who played sport or rowed – we were eagerly adopted to the tiny hospital

teams! The existence of Atkinson Morley's at Wimbledon meant access to sport and was close to Wimbledon to queue for the tennis.

On our first day we were welcomed at the Club No 9 Knightsbridge. The formalities were strict, observance of the dress code instructed thus: 'Gentleman are expected to wear suits on the wards.' There was no reference to ladies. It would have been unthinkable to ask ladies not to wear trousers. Absolutely all wore skirts – we were already grown-up!

Nevertheless, I was dispatched from Surgical Outpatients for wearing red nail varnish the day after the Annual Ball, and though I repaired to the library indicating to the astonished surgeon that I might learn more, I have continued to let the nail colour remind me that humiliation is not a valued part of student teaching. By contrast, one other surgeon permitted me to do the post-op suturing on my 21st birthday as an encouragement to my early



High standards: Nuala Sterling recalls her 'friendly and idiosyncratic' training

surgical skills. The first Professor was Tony Dornhorst (from St Thomas's), widely quoted to have the highest IQ and lowest pH of any London academic. His formidable four-hour ward rounds were not welcomed by all, but his teaching of the scientific method was never bettered.

On the wards our teaching was focused on clinical skills, backed up by daily lectures on pathology, bacteriology and virology plus laboratory practice. With no modern non-invasive investigations, this was followed by daily attendance at the post-mortem room.

The Grove Hospital, Tooting was where we were bussed to see real medicine – a contrast from the barbiturate overdoses, Belgravia cirrhosis, Victoria collapses or the tramps from the Park. The Grove and the Fountain Hospital (where unimaginable childhood deformities were seen) were the future foundation for the new St George's. The pre-reg year was hard going. We were responsible on a 1:3 rota for three or four days at a time, which included all A&E patients at night, all the

procedures and paper work without assistance. The support and friendship of the nurses and the nightly bacon and eggs were a consolation but it could not balance the frequent exhaustion. You were not expected to leave the hospital if your patient was ill. You gained a lifelong habit of observing progress and outcome in your patients. Continuity was superb.

The contrast between the formality of etiquette with the friendliness of the teaching and after-hours sharing between the consultants and the newest student was striking. St George's seemed unique and we were privileged to have had such a friendly and idiosyncratic training in a place which set high standards yet seemed more like a club than a hospital. ■

Dr Nuala Sterling (nee Bradbury) CBE MB FRCP, Consultant Emeritus in Geriatric Medicine, Southampton University Hospitals. Married to Dr Graham Sterling MD FRCP Honorary. Senior. Lecturer Medicine (Southampton) and Chest Physician (retd.) Five sons, the youngest a sixth-year medical student at Imperial.

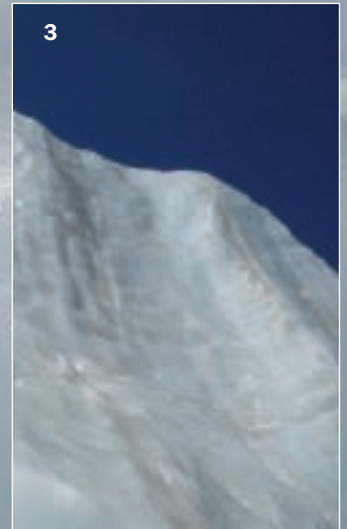
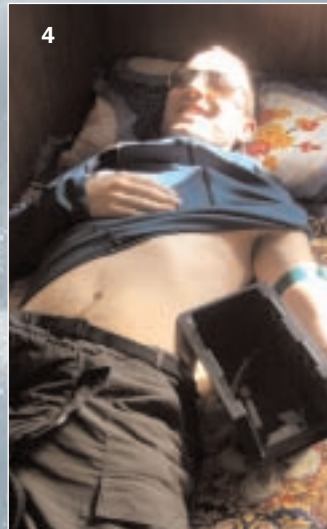


St George's, Hyde Park Corner

0607

My Everest diary,

by James Hambly





St George's student James Hambly described his 21-day trek up Everest as 'A once in a lifetime experience... until the next time!'

James, a second-year medical student, set off on 31 March to Base Camp to take part in tests aiming to prove a genetic link to successful adaptation to low oxygen levels, which will help the treatment of critically ill patients.

Doctors tested his blood pressure, oxygen saturations and the ability of the body to use oxygen efficiently at four altitudes on the way to the camp, at 17,225ft to see how the body reacts when faced with high altitude oxygen deprivation.

This will help them to develop new treatment methods for those in critical care.

'As far as altitude sickness went, the worst

I suffered were mild headaches above 5,000 metres – thankfully!

'But it was all worth it – to be a part of such groundbreaking research was so worthwhile.'

For more information on last month's 21 day Caudwell Xtreme Everest research trip, visit www.xtreme-everest.co.uk.

Read on for James's photo diary.

Captions to pictures

- 1 "Dorje Lakpa (6950m) is considered a holy mountain for Buddhists - permission to climb it was given only in 1964 and it was not climbed until 1981."
- 2 "The Khumbu ice falls have boulders of ice as big as a block of flats, which can come loose, and climbers teeter across crevasses on aluminium ladders - it's the riskiest part of the trip!"
- 3 "The Khumbu ice fall - up close and personal."
- 4 "Here I am having my blood sampled at 4,950metres. It was so great to be part of such a small team doing amazing research work."
- 5 Spice seller in Kathmandu
- 6 "Some of the local kids in Lukla."
- 7 "Here I am with the trekleader Paul, fellow trekker at the summit of Kala Patthar, at 5,650m."

Feature

Close to midnight, in a country racked by political turmoil, Professor George Griffin was relaxing in a hotel after four days of roughing it in a remote research outpost when the phone rang. ‘Is this the distinguished English physician?’ came a voice. ‘Come quickly, the Prime Minister is ill.’

AFTER ten years of civil war, advisors to the 86-year-old Nepalese leader, Girija Koirala, were anxious that the Prime Minister remained in good health – and as far as they were concerned, there was only one man for the job.

‘I was in Kathmandu looking at research opportunities and medical student training programmes,’ explained Professor Griffin. ‘Late one night, the phone in my hotel room rang – ‘would I go and consult with the Prime Minister?’ I got bundled in the

back of a car, and was driven to this very large house, passing through three major security gates – all with armed guards. They frisked me, then I was taken in to see the Prime Minister.’

He spent two hours at the leader’s house, consulting with him, before being whisked off to a luxury restaurant in the capital. ‘The Prime Minister’s and the King’s doctors took me to this amazing place and explained all about the political problems of Nepal – about the Maoist insurgency and the assassination

of the old king. It really was the most interesting experience!’

Professor Griffin, Professor of Infectious Diseases and medicine at St George’s, was in Nepal last month to set up an elective medical student training programme and some collaborative research into TB and typhoid with former St George’s student and TB researcher Dr Navin Thappa. He gave Dr Thappa and his colleagues at the Dhulikel campus of Kathmandu University Medical School a talk on SGUL’s recent research on TB and HIV – ‘it

was eight in the morning, freezing cold and the electricity failed just after I had started my seminar!’ – before visiting staff at the National TB Centre in Kathmandu who were very keen to describe their work. In addition, Professor Griffin was ‘very warmly received’ by the English ambassador and the Head of the British Council.

He visited a medical school and several hospitals, including one unit specialising in treating leprosy, where St George’s students can now do clinical electives. ‘On the electives, our students will have





the potential to work with rural, and often very isolated, communities in the hills surrounding Kathmandu,' Professor Griffin explained.

'In Nepal, the hospitals have to adopt an interesting approach in these remote areas.

'They tell each town that they're coming on a certain day with a mobile unit specialising in one discipline – such as gynaecology or plastic surgery – so they can target all those people who need that treatment.'

The unit stays in the village for around a week to finish the work and then returns to the medical school.

St George's students who want to pursue work in Kathmandu can also opt to study specialist areas such as TB, leprosy, typhoid and typhus as part of an elective SSM.

But accommodation will be basic.

'While I was visiting the medical school, I stayed in the Vice-Chancellor's guest house which had no hot water. The bed – well, it had been there for a long time!'

Professor Griffin admits. 'It was damp, there was a missing pane of glass in the window, and it was the coldest time in Nepal for 50 years.

'I went to bed with two layers of clothing every night and my down parka.

'On the last night, I went to this hotel in Kathmandu, which was a converted palace.

'There were candles, there was music and hot water – it was great! I had just sat down with a glass of wine reflecting on the entire experience and the

opportunities for collaboration, thinking 'At last, I can relax', when the phone went – it was the call from the Prime Minister.'

Anyone who fancies following in Professor Griffin's footsteps – though introductions to world leaders aren't guaranteed – by taking up an elective, can get in touch with Naomi Simcox on extension 5222 for more information. Dr Navin Thappa is keen to be the link in Kathmandu to facilitate local Nepal arrangements. ■



Above, Professor George Griffin gives an impromptu tutorial in clinical skills. Inset left, Prime Minister Girija Koirala. Top: A view of the misty mountains from Anandaban Leprosy Hospital (also far left)

Feature

Men get breast cancer too

ARE you a St George's male? Then Pauline Cooper has a message for you – and it might just save your life.

Pauline, 74, visited St George's last month to present £3,000 to Shirley Hodgson, Professor of Cancer Genetics, for research into breast cancer in men.

Although the money will help fund vital research work, what Pauline wants most of all is for more people to know that the disease affects not only women.

'Men get breast cancer too,' says Pauline, a former special needs teacher who now runs a B&B in Guarlsford, Worcestershire.

'If you're a man, check yourself out! If you're a woman, check your partner.'

'Then go down to the pub and tell everyone you know.'

It's a cause close to Pauline's heart. In the 1990s both she and her husband, Stephen, underwent a mastectomy for breast cancer just a few months apart.

Three years ago Stephen died of the disease aged 79. One of his brothers is now being treated for the same condition – a link Professor Hodgson has investigated as part of her work on familial cancers.

Since Stephen's death, Pauline has campaigned tirelessly not only for research funds but to raise awareness.

'Men know about prostate cancer and testicular cancer, women know they can get cervical cancer.'

'But no one ever tells a man to check his breasts.'

Around 300 cases of male breast cancer are diagnosed each year in the UK – around five per cent of all cases, according to Cancer Research UK.

Pauline and Stephen were first alerted to his cancer by an



Spread the word: Pauline Cooper hopes her husband's story will encourage men as well as women to look out for signs

inverted nipple, although her husband, even though he was a scientist by profession, did not recognise the signs.

'Initially he roared with laughter and said, 'I think I'm changing sex', said Pauline.

'When he was diagnosed, he was so positive. He wanted to get on with the treatment. He was never going to die of this.'

After Stephen's mastectomy, the couple enjoyed eight 'fantastic' years during which they visited Peru and Australia doing all the things you ought to do when you retire'.

But the cancer returned and spread to Stephen's lungs. He died on May 25, 2004.

While Pauline is full of praise for the way the NHS looked after Stephen, she is frustrated by the

lack of publicity surrounding male breast cancer. Even the NHS Direct website says: 'Few men are aware of it.'

Recently Pauline had 'my remaining boob' checked for signs of cancer during a health promotion event at a supermarket.

'I asked why they didn't have a poster about male breast cancer,

and they said they couldn't because they were only catering for women. Yet it's so simple.'

'Once men know they can get it and spot the signs, they can go off to their doctor – and, of course, save the NHS thousands.'

'People say, 'Oh, but breast cancer only affects a few men'. But even one is too many.' ■

MALE BREAST CANCER: HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS

The commonest symptom is a lump (usually painless) in the breast area. Other symptoms can include:

- Nipple discharge (may be bloodstained)
- Breast swelling
- An ulcer in the skin of the breast
- Nipple retraction
- Lumps under the arm

For more information, go to www.cancerhelp.org.uk

News

Darling, I share your pain (and that's official)

HE cries in public, does the dishes and even has his own skincare regime. Now today's new man has gone one step further – by 'getting pregnant' in sympathy with his partner.

A study of men whose partners had babies at St George's Hospital has shown that the vast majority experience 'pregnancy symptoms', ranging from food cravings to swollen stomachs.

Study author Dr Arthur Brennan, Senior Lecturer in Research Methods and Statistics and Psychology at the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences, said: 'These men were so attuned to their partners, they started to develop the same symptoms.'

A group of 282 expectant fathers aged from 19 to 55 were monitored through pregnancy and the results compared to a control group of 281.

Most men in the test group developed symptoms including mood swings, morning sickness

and even pseudocyesis – where the abdomen swells to mimic a pregnant stomach.

With the exception of the false 'baby bump', which continued to grow post partum, symptoms worsened in early pregnancy, peaked during the third trimester and disappeared soon after birth.

Stomach cramps were among the most common symptoms. One father-to-be told researchers: 'My stomach pains were very much like a build-up of a woman's contraction as she's giving birth. They started mild and then got stronger and stronger.'

Closely following were morning sickness and changes in appetite. One dad admitted: 'I had an unstoppable craving for chicken kormas and poppadums. Even in the early hours.'

No one knows exactly why men experience what is known as Couvade Syndrome, but Dr Brennan says: 'Far from being attention-seeking, these



symptoms are involuntary. Often the men haven't got a clue about what's happening. Doctors don't recognise Couvade Syndrome – there's no medical diagnosis. Yet this research proves that Couvade Syndrome really exists.'

The results of the study, the largest of its kind in the UK, were echoed by the experience of St George's midwives. Dr Val

Collington, Head of the School of Midwifery, said: 'Midwives might not be surprised at these findings. One midwife told me that in her experience, men often complain of nausea during the early stage of their partner's pregnancy.'

The research was presented at the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences' annual conference on April 25. ■

Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences News

Faculty gears up for globalisation

MORE than 150 Faculty staff and research students came together for the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences Annual Conference at Church House in Westminster on April 26. The theme for the conference was 'Towards Globalisation' and highlighted the international work of the Faculty.

Keynote speakers included Professor Peter McCrorie who presented on 'St George's

Contribution To Global Healthcare Education' outlining the institution's involvement in a wide range of international education activities stretching from Australia to Ireland. Talks were also given by Dr Heather Foreland from Kingston University and Dr David



Going global: Peter McCrorie

Percy, who is currently working with the Tropical Health and Education Trust, on secondment from the Department of Health.

● Launch of a new network for carers working with young children

The first step in the creation of a new network that will promote partnership opportunities for people working with children, young people and families is set to be

launched on May 24. Called 'A Grass Roots approach to enhancing the emotional well-being of children and young people,' the event is to feature the winner of the UK Woman of the Year 2006 title, Camila Batmanghelidj, as well as to provide networking opportunities and to facilitate group work.

For further details of the event please contact Harjinder Sehmi by email on hsehmi@hscs.sgul.ac.uk

News

Contraceptive coil may help prevent cancer of womb

NEW research will aim to discover whether a form of contraceptive coil can stop women developing womb cancer.

A study being carried out by St George's is examining whether the Mirena IUS device can cut the rate of endometrial cancer, or cancer of the womb lining, among high-risk patients.

The IUS (intrauterine system device) is inserted into the womb

described as 'promising'. Now scientists are recruiting 220 high-risk patients to carry out a four-year, UK-wide trial.

Each patient will undergo a baseline examination, ultrasound and biopsy. If these results are normal then individuals will be randomly divided into a group fitted with the Mirena IUS and a control group.

Annual ultrasound and pipelle biopsies will be carried out on all

New four-year UK trial targets high-risk group

and releases progestogen, blocking the entry of sperm by thickening the mucus made by the cervix until it forms a 'plug'.

It also reduces the thickness of the womb walls, which scientists believe could be the key to reducing rates of endometrial cancer among patients with cancer-predisposing syndrome HNPCC (hereditary colon cancer syndrome), which is hereditary, or Lynch syndrome.

Endometrial cancer is the fifth most common cancer in women in the UK, with most cases being diagnosed after the menopause.

While two per cent of British women will develop it, among those with HNPCC the rate rises to 60 per cent.

In a pilot study, 15 women at St George's Hospital had the Mirena brand of IUS fitted by Tom Bourne's team, with early results

patients to check for any signs of cancer and a questionnaire used to analyse the psychological effects of the trial.

Professor Shirley Hodgson, Professor of Cancer Genetics at St George's, said: 'We are uncertain of the efficacy of screening for endometrial cancer in women at increased risk of this cancer, so prevention is the key.'

She added: 'There is some evidence that the Mirena IUS reduces the risk of endometrial cancer in all women, and we hope that this study can show that it has this effect in this important group of women at high risk, who otherwise might opt for hysterectomy.'

The research is being carried out in collaboration with Queen Mary, University of London, with St George's Hospital, with funding from Cancer Research UK.

Eavesdropping on molecules



Future perfect: The Akubio can analyse hundreds of samples using a robotic arm

A robotic machine that analyses samples with soundwaves is helping St George's scientists develop vaccines for HIV.

St George's is the first medical and healthcare school in Britain to get the Akubio, which uses soundwaves emitted by vibrating crystals to examine how molecules interact in samples such as serum, urine and cell cultures.

The Akubio analyses molecules by pasting them on to the surface of the crystal. Changes in the frequency of the crystal's vibrations reveal how quickly they interact, how strongly they bind and the amount of active molecule.

The process (resonant acoustic profiling, or RAP) has been dubbed 'eavesdropping on molecular interactions'. The Akubio will be used to examine immunoglobulin make-up of patients with immunodeficiency disorders. It was

funded by grants won by three different groups. Professor Robin Shattock's group, working on development of microbicides, will use the technology to investigate HIV/cell interactions to help design HIV vaccines.

The machine will also help the Molecular Immunology Group, headed by Professor Julian Ma, which is looking at ways of developing novel recombinant vaccines. It will allow them to assess the functional integrity of recombinant proteins produced in plants with a view to large-scale manufacture.

The Molecular Vaccinology group, headed by Professor Martin Cranage, will primarily use the Akubio in multiplex assays to measure immunogenicity – the ability of a particular substance to provoke an immune response – in phase one HIV vaccine trials. ■

News

Anorexia Leading the way

GROUNDBREAKING therapy and practical techniques have turned St George's Eating Disorders Unit day service into a world model.

Anorexia is the biggest killer of any psychiatric disorder – 15 per cent of patients die before the age of 40. It is most common among young women.

St George's Eating Disorders Unit treats 2,000 patients a year – many of whom have had unsuccessful treatment elsewhere.

Providing day services for anorexics has seen widespread failure across the UK, with many projects failing as patients' symptoms proved 'severe and enduring'.

But St George's is bucking the trend. On its day programme, patients gain weight at the same rate as the in-patients – an average of 0.8kg a day – despite only attending from 8am to 4.30pm five days a week.

Professor Hubert Lacey, head of the unit, puts St George's success down to expert preparation work before patients come in, very strict rules, clear aims and award-winning multidisciplinary methods.

'We work as a multidisciplinary team, with psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric nursing psychotherapy, occupational therapy, drama therapy, art therapy, exercise and nutrition working together.

'No one knows exactly what gets anorexics better, so by all those professionals having an equal input, we have developed treatment programmes that are stunningly successful.'

The day service has become so successful that primary care trusts in Surrey are now contracting into it. Based at Springfield Hospital, the unit's award-winning therapies

Illustration: Susanna Modaresi, Media Services

include body image classes in which patients examine their bodies in the mirror under the supervision of therapists to try to address the distorted view they have of their weight.

'Anorexia is a fear of normal body weight, but also an extreme disparagement of the body,' explains Professor Lacey.

'So while most women have concerns about their bum and thighs and suchlike, these patients will be horrified by the

sight of any body fat – some of the more disturbed ones will even try to stab the fat out. So this therapy seeks to address that.'

Art therapy helps those who find it difficult to express their feelings by talking.

This is particularly successful with youngsters and older people who have been unable to talk about their body issues for many years.

Other classes that the patients are required to take as part of a

timetabled routine include group therapy for anger and anxiety management and low self-esteem issues, plus family therapy.

'There's a lot of practical stuff, too – going out to the shops, buying food, cooking it, eating it with others,' says Professor Lacey.

'Also, they tackle things that they find difficult, or even terrify them, such as going into a canteen.

'They learn how to deal with restaurants, bars, pubs, even men.'

Anorexics often suffer extreme social anxiety, becoming withdrawn and even losing interest in the outside world altogether.

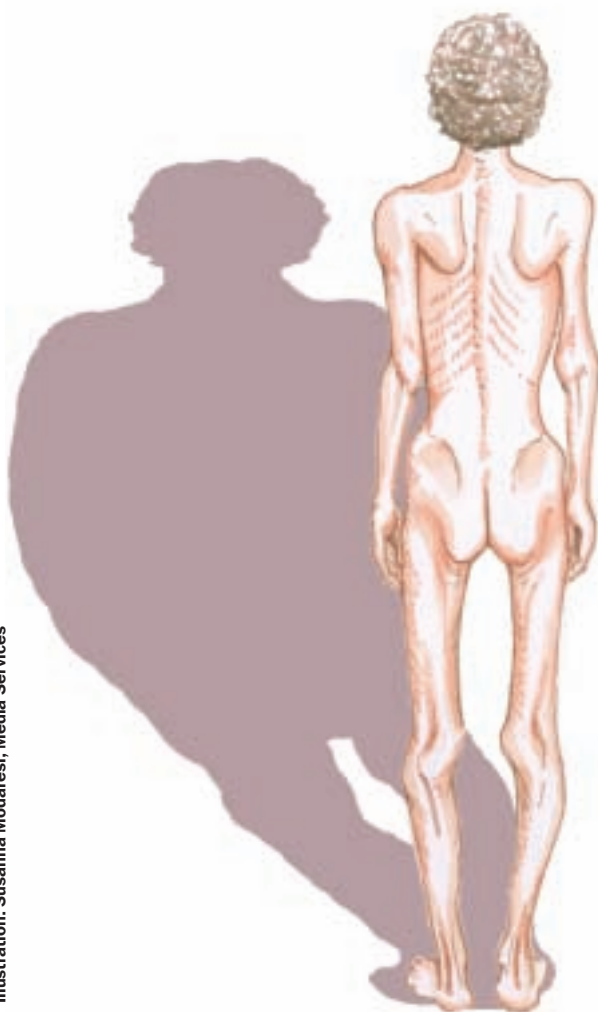
If their condition is left untreated, their social and emotional skills can be severely affected. Part of St George's day programme concentrates on teaching patients how to cope with social situations from making friends to dating.

'Their minds are emotionally immature,' says Professor Lacey.

'So you may have a 22-year-old whose body changes from emaciation to that of a normal woman during the treatment, while the mind has not yet caught up.

'They don't have the emotional or social skills to be able to handle relations with men. The therapy concentrates on helping them to develop the mature skills to deal with people who they haven't engaged with up until then.'

The success of the day service won plaudits at the recent three-day London International Conference on Eating Disorders, co-organised by Professor Bryan Lask, Emeritus Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at St George's. ■



News



Rooms with a view



Cutting edge: Principal Michael Farthing and Mayor of Wandsworth Jim Maddan

MOVEMENT activated heating, Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol phones and 'secret storage' are just some of the stunning features of the new en suite student rooms that were officially unveiled this month.

The Mayor of Wandsworth, Jim Maddan, and Principal Michael Farthing cut the ribbon on the roof of the new halls of residence after the first room was completed, on May 8.

With TV, satellite and radio aerials – plus phones that use the Ethernet to make calls – in each room, students will never be short of entertainment in the new halls at St George's Grove. Two drawers under the bed provide storage plus there is a 'secret' compartment built into the bed head.

For relaxing in a more social setting, each common room comes equipped with 42-inch plasma TV screens. Within the

halls complex, there will also be IT rooms, a laundry, bike sheds and management suite, and every block will have its own lift. The plumbing has been designed so that repairs can be carried out via access panels in the corridors – so students don't have to worry about leaks ruining those nice new carpets.

They can also rest assured that they are helping save the planet – the whole design is eco-friendly, with 'A' rated energy-efficient windows, extra fibre in the wall to help insulation, and a strengthened roof that can accept solar panels.

Six students will live in each wing, with 332 rooms in total, replacing about 290 rooms yet taking up half the space of the old site. The first residents are due to move in this October.

From the top floor, they will be able to see across Wimbledon and

Crystal Palace to as far away as Canary Wharf – with a good view of the BT Tower.

During the topping-out ceremony, the Mayor was taken on a tour of the roof space before an address from the head of contractor InSpace and an enthusiastic endorsement from Principal Michael Farthing.

John Duffy, Mark Bery, Karl McPherson, Claire Smyth, Stewart Jones, Laura Gunputrav, Bryan McLure and Tamsin Starr were joined by members of In Space and architect firm Hunters and Partners for the presentation, where the Mayor was given an engraved glass bowl.

Current students who have seen pictures of the new rooms were particularly impressed by the en suite bathrooms, which were 'tested' out first by Karl and Claire in Prague, where they were constructed. They were transported by truck as completed 'pods' and dropped into place by crane. ■



First-year physiotherapy student Tom Jacobs said: 'I'm not high maintenance, but when I see

something like those new rooms, I think 'Wow, I'd like that!' I really like the amount of storage, it uses all the space. The bathroom is cool.'



Ebruba Ayerume, a first-year Biomedical Sciences student, said: 'The room is quite perfect! The

en suite is really, really nice and the whole thing looks really spacious.'



My space: New student rooms at The Grove are designed to be eco-friendly

News

AT JUST 26, a former international student at St George's, Vino Apok, has become one of the youngest people ever to qualify as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. George's News reports

MEDICAL school interviewers are wearily familiar with most of the possible answers to: 'Why did you decide to study medicine?'

The teenage Vinothini Apok's reply – 'Because my elephant died' – may have come as a surprise to the panel at George's.

But Vino, who graduated last summer, has made a habit of doing things her way. Born into a professional Indian family in Singapore, her CV demonstrates both impressive natural talents and a refusal to compromise.

At 18 she became the youngest person ever to serve on the United Nations' youth environment panel, lobbying governments on global strategy.

At school she won fistfuls of awards, represented her country at international youth events and secured top marks. Aged just 11, with her family's support, she even became the youngest person in Singapore with a professional typewriting qualification – breaking through red tape that prevented under-16s from sitting the exam.

Now in her F1 year and working in general surgery at Kingston Hospital, Vino is believed to have become the youngest person to pass the membership exams of the Royal College of Surgeons, just a month after she turned 26 in February. It's a remarkable achievement by any standards. But she says the point was not to challenge the system, but to challenge herself – with the help of a recent change in RCS regulations that allowed future surgeons to take the membership exam earlier in their career. 'When



Young talent: Vino Apok has already earned herself a place in history, although her future in the UK is in doubt

I sat this exam straight out of medical school, some people laughed,' she says. 'A couple of surgeons said: 'I studied for all these years for an exam you're

'Medicine, law or engineering was what they wanted for me. And there I was coming home for four years with elephant dung on my trousers.' The death of 'her'

time jobs she needed to survive. She was president of student society Medsin, published papers and shone academically.

But last March the Government decided that international medical students – even if UK-trained – have only a limited right to remain for postgraduate studies. So as of August 6 2008, Vino, who has a Singapore passport, may have to give up her dreams of working and teaching in either academic neurosurgery or psychiatry in the UK – though, as she says: 'I've been here six years. I've lost the friends I had in Singapore – they don't even understand my accent. I feel like a displaced person.'

True to form, she intends to fight her corner. 'I've never wanted to be a troublemaker. I just set out my principles, and refuse to budge. Some people define themselves by the people they love. But I think the ultimate definition of you is your principles. If they change, then there's nothing.' ■

'Medicine, law or engineering was what my family wanted for me. And there I was coming home for four years with elephant dung on my trousers'

taking six months out of medical school?' But I've learned there is no reason not to start so early. I didn't do it because I wanted to be first, I just did it. If you set a standard for yourself there's no competition. It's a win-win situation.'

Competition was a fact of life at home, where Vino attended the elite Raffles Junior College. But she was uncomfortable at the prospect of further study in a 'pressure-cooker system'. Her first love was the natural world. She planned to be a vet and worked part-time in a zoo, which didn't fit in with her parents' views.

elephant wasn't the only factor in her decision to pursue medicine, but it taught her something about the qualities she believes are important in a doctor.

'I think people make a mistake that you've got to be compassionate the whole time. I think that's a very shallow view. You are not there to be the patient's friend, you're there to treat the patient. I felt I had the detachment, and medicine seemed a natural option.' She decided to study in the UK, fell in love with George's and quickly found a balance between her studies, social life and the part-



News

Long service awards

BETWEEN them they have clocked up 250 years of service at St George's and this month they were rewarded with gifts from a pair of tortoises to a composter.

Each member of staff who had been at St George's for 25 years or more was allowed to choose a gift worth up to £250.

Staff were presented with a certificate by the Principal Michael Farthing, followed by a delicious buffet, in a ceremony on May 8.

The members of staff honoured joined the college in 1981, apart from Jean Woolley who has been here a whopping 29 years – she missed the previous presentation.

Staff Development Officer Margaret Harris said: "It was a pleasure to assist in organising this special event. In his speech, the Principal congratulated all

Match the staffer with their gift ... (answers at the bottom of the page)



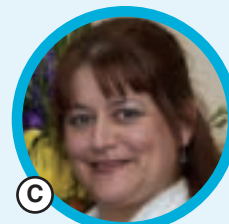
(A)

Ian Connoley might be shell-shocked when he picks up this gift



(B)

Jean Woolley had the time of her life at the Long Service Awards



(C)

Tea on the terrace is on the menu for Julie Norwood

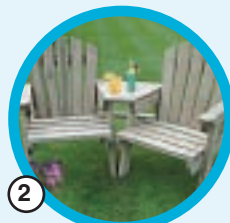


(D)

Dominic Catt will be waking up the neighbours with his new toy



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

recipients on their commitment, dedication and contribution to SGUL over the past 25 years.

"His comments were endorsed by members of the friends and guests in the audience, while several people commented that the group didn't look old enough to

have worked here for more than 25 years!"

For those of you who need a bit of prompting to remember the events of 1981, when the staff members first joined, here are a few highlights:

France abolished the death

penalty and with it the guillotine
 IBM launched its first personal computer
 NASA space shuttle made its maiden flight
 Lady Diana Spencer and Prince Charles marry
 Beer cost 62p a pint! ■

Tasteofmedicine.com tops ten thousand new visitors each month

St George's website for aspiring medics, A Taste Of Medicine, has celebrated attracting its 145,000th 'viewing'.

The website, aimed at encouraging students from all backgrounds to think about a career in medicine or healthcare, was only launched in October, but has already proved a huge success.

The website has now been viewed more than 145,000 times. March saw the number of visitors top the 10,000 mark, with a



further 12,000 new visitors in April – and the numbers are still rising.

Visitors to www.tasteofmedicine.com can find games, video clips of St George's students, and a rundown on different careers in healthcare.

The website forms an important part of the college's Widening Participation Strategy.



"In order to ensure that all those who have the ability to benefit from a medical or healthcare education also have the opportunity to benefit, it is necessary for us to level the playing field; to raise the awareness, aspiration and attainment of those from disadvantaged or less well



supported backgrounds," said Kenton Lewis, Assistant Registrar (Fair Access).

"This website challenges the misinformed and outdated stereotypes that medicine is socially elitist, reinforcing the idea that students from any social or educational background can be a success in healthcare."



Answers to the above questions: Jean Woolley, Research Assistant at TIC TAC - a bookcase, plus watch and bracelet set. David Element, Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer – camcorder. Teaching Support Team Leader Sandra Garrett and Secretary Julie Norwood – garden furniture. Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer Sheila Talbot – composter. Chief Technician Ian Connoley, – pair of tortoises (for his son, apparently!). Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer Dominic Catt – guitar gadget. Electronics Technician Martin Duckett, Secretary Lesley Skilton and Lecturer in ion channels and cell signalling Sally Prestwich have yet to choose their gifts.

News

Skilled Gemma is the Gucci of St George's

SAY 'sewing' to most medical students, and suturing or a career in surgery instantly comes to mind.

Gemma Price's skills with a needle are already earning her money even before she qualifies. But she works not with flesh and skin, but with silks and satins.

Gemma, 22, has been putting her long-time love of needlework to good use by creating custom-made ball dresses for her St George's colleagues.

While other fourth-year medics do bar work or tutoring in their spare time, Gemma trawls the fabric shops around Tooting for materials and patterns. Then, in her student room near the hospital, she runs

up stunning frocks to her customers' exact specifications. The result is made to measure, more affordable than couture – and, best of all, definitely a one-off that nobody else will be wearing at that smart summer ball.

'People usually have an idea about the design and the kind of fabric they want,' says Gemma.

'I find a pattern and some material, we discuss it and I give them an idea of cost, then we'll do fittings depending on the style they choose.'

Gemma, from Herefordshire, began making her own clothes years ago. She studied both art and science at A level and for a while thought seriously about a career in the creative arts.

'I loved design, but I realised that I'd be able to go on doing it as a hobby if I became a doctor – it wouldn't have worked the other way round!'

Her fashion flair has found a regular outlet in organising the costumes for the last three productions of St George's Musical Society. So, what about a career in surgery? Gemma says: 'When I started studying medicine, I did think about it. But since then I've decided I'll keep the sewing separate.'

To ask about Gemma's dressmaking service, email her on m0100988@sgul.ac.uk



Musical crash course is 'unique challenge'

LECTURE theatres, wards and labs will be alive with the sound of screeching strings and crunching keys as St George's staff and students attempt to pass a Grade 1 music exam in an instrument they've never played before – with just one month's training.

In just two weeks' time the volunteers, some with no prior musical experience, enter the exam in aid of charity in George's 'Grade-1-athon'.

They are being taught by members of the Music Society, with staff and students taking up violin, saxophone, cello, flute, harp, oboe and piano.

Radiologist Alison Gauld is tackling the guitar. She says: 'My whole family is very musical and my mum plays the guitar – I'd

watch her play when I was younger, so it was always something I wanted to try.' Alison has a head start – she has passed Grade 8 piano and flute.

Second-year medical student Chris Searle, learning piano, says: 'Medicine is about learning and recalling, but music is about giving the best performance you possibly can on demand. In some ways it's more challenging.'

Society co-president Carl Lane said: 'This is a unique project that really shows just how diverse charity can be.' Fellow co-president Ruth-Anna Macqueen reminded George's News readers: 'Our orchestra is open to anyone of any ability, either staff or student, and we welcome everyone to our flourishing choir.'

News

Arthur Crisp Memorial

On St George's Day – April 23 – the college hosted a Memorial to celebrate and remember the life of Professor Arthur Crisp who died on Friday, October 13 last year.

Arthur was Professor Emeritus at the University of London, having been Professor and Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at St George's for the greater part of his professional life. He was Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Chairman of the Education Committee of the GMC. He was also Chair of the Advisory Committee on Medical Education to the European Community, and Vice President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Professor Michael Farthing, Principal of the School, welcomed 200 people who knew and worked with Arthur at various times in his



From left: Professor Pat Hughes, Mrs Irene Crisp and Nita Mitchell-Heggs

professional life. Professor Pat Hughes and Professor Hubert Lacey acted as co-chairs and the latter spoke of Arthur's life and contribution to psychosomatic

research, particularly research into anorexia. Professor Hamid Ghodse spoke on Arthur's contribution to St George's and Ms Chris Halek on his work with non-medical

professions. Professor Ross Kalucy from Adelaide spoke of Arthur's international contribution to psychiatry.

Lord Walton of Detchant told of Arthur's contribution to medical education and strategy at the GMC. Mrs Vanessa Cameron, Chief Executive of the Royal College, gave an account of his role in addressing stigma within psychiatry, and Mr David Giles, a family friend, talked of Arthur, the family man.

Their various contributions will be brought together for an internet publication.

There was one minute's silence before the School hosted a reception in Arthur's honour.

The Memorial at St George's was also attended by his wife, Irene, his three sons and their families. ■

Words: Professor Hubert Lacey

Taste the difference

LAST month saw the opening of the new Student Union Cafe, named Eddie Wilson's after the famous polar explorer and George's alumnus.

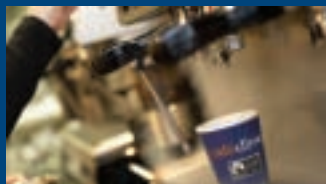
Those attending the inaugural reception included the Principal of St George's, Professor Michael Farthing, and the past and current Presidents of the Student Union, Richard Bamford and Karl McPherson.

Guests toured the facilities and sampled some of the treats on the menu, which features a wide choice of hot and cold platters and even exotic smoothies.

The cafe took about two years from its conception as part of the second-floor redevelopments to be finished, having been started by Richard Bamford and the

members of Exec. It was carried through by Karl McPherson and the current Exec and was an endeavour in which collaboration between students and staff proved an unmitigated success. The cafe is run by staff chosen by the Student Union, and profits are returned to the Union.

Sleek metal fixtures combined with smooth glass surfaces, comfortable leather sofas and armchairs provide a unique place for students and staff to relax with a cup of coffee or a bite to eat.



The Principal congratulated the Student Union on the success of the project, wished it profitable returns and hoped staff as well as students would enjoy using it.

The name Eddie Wilson's was chosen by current Heritage Officers Mike Dunne and Ben Irving. Future ideas for the cafe include music and waiter service.

Words: Nicholas Lelos

Meet the new Council members

BUSINESS chiefs responsible for the birth of broadband and bringing eco-friendly transport to Croydon are joining St George's Council as independent members.

Graham Turner, who masterminded Croydon's tram network, and David Greggains, who headed up the company that promoted broadband globally, start on June 5. Graham brings a wealth of expertise in construction (he founded Rydon Homes) while David has spent many years as a management consultant for blue-chip companies.

Graham is a governor at the University of Brighton, and one of his sons is a newly-qualified doctor. David is a Non-Executive Director of NHS Blood and Transplant.

Directory

Grants

EC Leonardo da Vinci

Towards improved quality – developing nurses' continuing vocational training in psychiatric hospitals and inpatient units (ePsychNurse.Net)
Professor Mary Chambers – **£38,228**

Department of Health

Database Meta-Analyses of Prevalence and Cohort studies of Air Pollution and Asthma project
Professor Ross Anderson – **£127,550**

Cancer Research UK

Cell senescence and the biology of melanoma development
Professor Dot Bennett, Dr Julia Soo – **£58,448**

Wellcome Trust

Cognitive impairment in cerebral vessel disease: a prospective imaging study
Professor Hugh Markus – **£447,377**

Medical Research Council

Is Mycoplasma genitalium in women the new chlamydia? Community based prevalence and prospective cohort study
Dr Pippa Oakeshott, Phillip Hay and Fiona Reid from SG, and Jorgen Jensen (Copenhagen), Ian Simms (HPA) and David Taylor-Robinson – **£189,525**

Stroke Association

The Stroke Association Allied Health Professional Research Bursary
Professor Valerie Pomeroy, Linda Hammett – **£60,000**

Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus

Forty-year follow up of the Cambridge Cohort of Open Spina Bifida: Community Based, Prospective Cohort Study
Dr Pippa Oakeshott, Gillian Hunt – **£9,836**

Awards

Petros Mouratidis (PhD): March 31 2007

An investigation into the role of apoptosis related molecules in pancreatic cancer.

Stephen Bremner (PhD): April 30 2007

Exploring early-life risk factors for childhood hay fever in two primary care databases.

● YOU can now book annual leave via the Yourself web interface on the SGUL portal (log in to to Portal and type hrw in the address bar). Step-by-step instructions appear, but remember your username is the six-digit employee ID on the top right of your payslip, not your

email one. The new system aims to cut time spent on administering leave. St George's staff can also view payslips and contractual information, and amend personal details on the system. Further details from Ricky McMaster, email mcmast@sgul.ac.uk

New Staff

Administration

Mrs N Doyle Finance Assistant

Cardiac & Vascular Sciences

Mrs P Tripathi Research Technician

Cellular & Molecular Medicine

Miss E Hegarty Research Technician

Dr J Lambourne Clinical Research FE

Dr E McGowan Research Assistant

Dr MJ Paul Research Scientist

Clinical Development Sciences

Mr C Gomez Grants & Teaching Administration

Information Services

Mrs C Carter Learning Resources Co-ordinator

Internal courses

May 25 OSCE Examiner Training (finals)

June 1, 12.30-2pm Good Management Practice Seminar

June 5, 9.30-11am or 11.30am-1pm PDR briefing for Reviewees

June 8 Managing Personal Information

June 14, 9.30am-12.30pm PDR Training for Reviewers

June 27, 9.30am-12 noon Techniques for interview

June 27-29 WestFocus Bright Futures Course (see www.enterprise.sgul.ac.uk/events.htm)

For more details, contact Vicci Aquilina (staffdev@sgul.ac.uk)

Staff Survey

St George's is commissioning its first-ever college-wide staff survey. The survey will be designed over the coming months and will gather employees' perceptions and opinions about working at St George's, including its strengths as an employer and areas for improvement.

The Personnel Office will be responsible for coordinating the development of the survey and is taking several steps to ensure the survey is well designed and professionally conducted.

The survey will be distributed between September and October this year with the dissemination of

results to begin in November. Survey results will feed back into a wider review of HR practices and will result in the development of action plans and a new HR strategy.

Follow-up action plans will be posted on the St George's web portal.

Further information regarding the survey will be sent to staff through emails, posted on the Personnel web page and discussed at various staffing forums.

In the interim questions regarding the development of the survey are welcome and can be directed to Marina Malorgio in the Personnel Office on extension 5128.

Events

Conference

23/05/2007, all day

Rheumatology update for the primary care physician and other health professionals, The Sir Joseph Hotung Centre for Musculoskeletal Disorders

Seminar

02/06/2007, all day

BBSRC Intellectual Property Seminar. For more information see www.enterprise.sgul.ac.uk/events.htm

Graduation

18/06/2007, all day

Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Science Class of 2007 Graduation, Barbican

Open Forum

26/06/2007, 1pm-2pm

Open Forum with Prof Michael Farthing, Michael Heron Lecture Theatre

Euthanasia debate

Baroness Elaine Murphy gave a spirited defence of a doctor's right to assist terminally ill patients to die in a recent nurses' debate.

The high-profile cases of Diane Pretty, Kelly Taylor and Dr Anne Turner, who all travelled to Swiss clinic Dignitas, where assisted dying is legal, have highlighted the issues surrounding a patient's right to choose.

'We have choices at every other time of life,' Baroness Murphy told a packed audience in the Michael Heron Lecture Theatre, who were there to listen to a St George's Nurses' League debate on whether assisted suicide should be legalised in Britain. 'Then right at the end we have all of our choices taken away from us.'

'People should be able to ask for this help without fear.'

She talked about the State of Oregon, in the US, which has had legalised assisted dying for the past eight years, and statistics show it has not created a 'slippery

slope' effect, where death rates have soared.

The quality of palliative care for terminally ill patients was a hot topic, with speakers on both sides of the argument singling out the need for improvement. Dr Paddy Stone, MacMillan Senior Lecturer in Palliative Medicine at St

George's, called funding for palliative care in the UK 'particularly grave', despite arguing against the motion.

Baroness Audrey Emerton, who trained as a nurse at St George's, echoed Dr Stone's concerns. Opposing the motion, she argued: 'This debate has aired a lot of issues about end of life care, but at the end of the day, to have a law for a minority [people who choose assisted dying] is not the way forward.'

Though 82 per cent of the UK population agree with the concept of assisted dying, Baroness Murphy failed to sway the audience, who voted overwhelmingly against the motion.

'People should be able to ask for this help without fear.'



Addy Babajide after collecting her finisher's medal at the Flora London Marathon

Congratulations to our marathon runners!

Our runners did themselves and St George's proud, achieving excellent times for the Flora London Marathon 2007 despite temperatures hitting a stifling 22C.

Below is a list of the times for those featured in last month's issue:

Dr Tom Swallow:	3:28:45
Paul Westren:	4:18:06
Tom Linton:	4:13:01
Dan Salmon:	3:48:23
Laura Segal:	6:12:48
Sam Hart:	3:17:19
Addy Babajide:	4:45:38
John Crawshaw:	4:22:40
Katharine Sheppard:	4:47:04
Theresa Hague:	6:04:43
Li Low:	3:17:36

Commiserations to Max Martensson, who couldn't run because of a throat infection – good luck for next year!

Win a George's bear

He's been to Everest, and now he can come home with you – yes, it's your chance to win a George's bear in this month's quick quiz competition (entry details below).

To stand a chance of winning, simply answer these questions:

- A) Who was Vice Principal George Griffin called out to meet in the middle of the night?
B) What is the name of the false 'pregnancy stomach' sometimes developed by men whose partners are expecting?



April quiz winner Fintan Phelan

- C) How many 'viewings' has the Taste Of Medicine website had?

Email your answers marked A), B) and C) to tstarr@sgul.ac.uk with "competition" in the subject line. Good luck.