

# Countess MATTERS

ISSUE ONE – AUG/SEPT 2010

Countess of Chester Hospital **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Your **NEW**  
Trust  
Newsletter

Linda de  
Cossart  
Awarded  
CBE



See the full story inside!

**Trust  
Celebrates  
Staff  
Achievements**

**Moonlight Success for 5th Year** Stopping the Clot in the North West  
**Governors' Update** Plus much more...

# Your NEW Trust Newsletter!

Welcome to the first edition of the Trust's new newsletter, **Countess Matters**. This new exciting newsletter replaces **The Pulse** and **Foundation Feedback** and we hope it will be an interesting read for both Trust members and staff.

We recently asked all members of staff and Governors to put forward suggestions for the title of this newsletter. After receiving a number of suggestions, we are pleased to reveal that 'Countess Matters' – put forward by Gordon Donaldson – was voted as the best entry from a final shortlist.

Our aim was to not only refresh the look of the newsletter but also to re-think the way that we utilise it by incorporating a wider variety of Trust information. With this in mind, as well as the traditional updates that were featured in **The Pulse** and **Foundation Feedback**, we will now be giving regular updates relating to other important Trust developments.

In addition, information from Governors and our Trust members will also be incorporated from now on in order to appeal to a wider audience.

Although we are confident that you will find this new format interesting, as this is the first edition, we are still very much open to your comments and suggestions as to how we can improve it further.

## Tell us what you think!...

If you have any thoughts, please email [andrew.duggan@coch.nhs.uk](mailto:andrew.duggan@coch.nhs.uk) or post comments to **Andrew Duggan** (c/o Facilities Directorate).



# Staff Achievements Celebrated...

**T**he Trust's annual **Celebration of Achievement Awards** took place on **Friday 25th June** to reward staff for their efforts and commitment over the past year.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Chester was the venue for a glittering night of congratulation and celebration for a wide variety of Trust staff. Over 300 members of staff, along with colleagues, friends and family members joined in the celebrations.

The awards offered an opportunity for the Trust to acknowledge

the hard work of individuals, wards and departments who have excelled in areas such as service improvement, customer service, and training and development. As a result, a high volume of nominations were received from departments, along with patients and the public, who wished to show their appreciation for the hard work of individuals and teams.

**Over 100 people were put forward to receive an award of recognition for achievements in work and academics, which included:**



## Celebration of Achievement Awards – The Winners and Finalists



Dr Ravi Jayaram addresses the crowd



Dr Colm O'Mahony with Hannah Bradshaw

leadership and management, health and social care, cleaning, pharmacy, and accountancy. A number of awards were also presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Trust including awards for service improvements, customer service, and self-development.

Staff Development Officer, Lizzie Shevlin, who co-ordinated the Celebration of Achievement Awards, said: "The event was really fantastic again this year. It was great to see so many members of staff enjoying themselves and

celebrating their achievements among colleagues, friends and family. It showcases the high level of commitment that is put in by staff all across the Trust, be it to improve their services for patients or to develop themselves."

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the Lifetime Achievement award which was won by the recently retired Sarah Hoyle, Divisional Manager for Women and Children's. She was rewarded for her commitment to the improvement of women and children's services over the many years that she has spent working for the Countess.

**Category One:** *A team who have worked effectively together to make improvements in service provision*

**Winner – Sexual Health Team**

Finalist – Domestic Supervisors

Finalist – Clinical Theatre Team

**Category Two:** *An individual or team who have demonstrated excellence in customer service*

**Winner – Margaret Mitchinson**

Finalist – Linda Gendler

Finalist – Elizabeth Cliff

**Category Three:** *An individual who has shown exceptional commitment to their own learning and development*

**Winner – Margaret Parry**

Finalist – Jane Jackson

Finalist – Paula Povey

**Category Four:** *Outstanding Contribution to Patient Care*

**Winner – Karen Townsend**

Finalist – Ruth Millward, Margaret O'Neill & Divisional Ward Managers

Finalist – Sian Williams

**Category Five:** *Volunteer of the Year Award*

**Winner – Hannah Bradshaw**

Finalist – Breastfeeding Peer Supporters;

Julia Price, Annaliese Freeman, Emma Dowling

Finalist – Bob Ward

**Category Seven:** *A team who have consistently achieved or exceeded high quality standards, cost savings and targets*

**Winner – Catering Department**

Finalist – Equipment Library and Decontamination Unit (ELDU)

Finalist – Spinal Injury Bundle Team

**Category Eight:** *Living the Values Award*

**Winner – Katie Johnson**

Finalist – Debbie Kadum

Finalist – Pre-Operative Assessment

**Category Nine:** *Countess Unsung Hero*

**Winner – Neil Richards**

Finalist – Phlebotomy Department

Finalist – Julie Fogarty

**Lifetime Achievement Award:**

**Sarah Hoyle – Divisional Manager, Women & Children's**



# Moonlight Success for 5th Year

**The Trust's Moonlight Walk 2010 proved to be a huge success again this year, raising approximately £20,000 for the Trust's Relative Comfort Appeal – the Critical Care Appeal which provides accommodation for relatives of patients who are critically ill within the hospital.**

Over 300 walkers joined up on Saturday to complete the 10 mile route around Chester, with the majority of ladies completing the walk at around 1am after a 10pm start.

A variety of women took part, including members of Trust staff, patients, members of the public and staff from Dorothy Perkins (Broughton Park), Slimming World (Dorin Park), Jane Lewis Health & Social Care, Bronyffynnon Surgery, and Cherrybank Resource Centre in Ellesmere Port.

The Heart 103.4 radio girls were also present with live music and support to help motivate the ladies with words of encouragement before the main event.

Jill Bender and Joan Long (the event's oldest walker at 89) who have both raised a total of £1,000 over the last three events were presented with a much deserved bottle of champagne to great applause from the crowd of fellow walkers before the start.

Then after an energetic and fun aerobic workout, the ladies lined up for the start after chomping on a chocolate bar to help set them on their way. With the extra bonus of kind weather, the ladies then began walking, led by Chester's very own Roman

Soldiers who escorted them for the first leg.

Dressed in colourful outfits, costumes and complimentary flashing headbands, the walkers arrived back at the Countess in the early hours of Sunday morning. They were met yet again by the Roman Soldiers who presented each lady with a medal and with tired feet, each participant was met with hot drinks and a bacon roll, courtesy of Chez Jules whose efforts ensured that the walkers could smell their tasty reward on the home straight.

Heather Lannin, a Staff Nurse at the Countess, was among a group of four ladies who finished the walk first. She said of the event: "I really enjoyed the walk and there was a great energy about the whole evening. I met lots of new friends throughout the night and the challenge of the walk itself was a great motivator to keep going, as well as the importance of taking part in the event to help such a worthy cause."

The Trust's Fundraising Events Co-ordinator, Kathy Kenney, commented on the event's ongoing success by saying:



"This event proves to be successful every year and it was great to receive the ladies' ongoing commitment. Like last year, the new route was a great success and the ladies set the streets alight with their flashing headbands. Kathy also took the time to thank the event's organisers, sponsors and volunteers who helped make it a success: "As well as the walkers I'd also like to sincerely thank everyone who helped out with the walk, from local companies who sponsored the event including; Home Instead, LWC, Cruise nightclub, First Buses and Bakemart, to St John's Ambulance and all the volunteers who acted as marshals at various points along the route – they truly are our unsung heroes every year."

If you would like get involved with fundraising events at the Countess of Chester, please visit the **Fundraising** section of the Trust's website ([www.coch.nhs.uk](http://www.coch.nhs.uk)). You can also phone the Fundraising team on 01244 366672, or email **katherine.kenney@coch.nhs.uk**.



# Breast Care Pamper Day...



A member of staff gets the relaxing treatment

**T**he Breast Care Nursing Team recently held their annual pamper day – now in its 5th year and still as popular as ever with our patients.

This year, Di Evans from Gemini Health offered to come and show the team how to undertake relaxation therapy. The ladies went in small groups for deep breathing, relaxation and visualisation techniques. The Breast Care Nurses all went in for a session and found it very relaxing.



Boots were on hand again for make up and skin care advice, and offered a goody bag to every patient. Massages and reflexology were given by the hospital complementary therapists and manicures and nail painting by Leanne from Jayz. Claire from Pure and Cathy from Hair and Beauty also offered their services to the ladies. Headstrong, based at Clatterbridge Hospital, came and demonstrated how to make the most of hats, scarves and hair pieces for ladies who are undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

The day raised £180 through the raffle with gift tokens from Leanne, Cathy and Claire, gifts from a support group meeting with a Jamie Oliver Party and other prizes from the unit staff. Of course the day would not have been complete without the team's delicious cakes and savouries, which as always went down a storm.



## Pre-op Masters

As part of the ongoing development of the Inpatient pre-operative assessment service toward a nurse-led service, staff have been trained in

Clinical Examination skills at MSc level.

To date, the staff who have been successful in achieving this fantastic level of training are:

**Jeanette Devine, Helen Owen, Ann Blythin, Sue Homer, Sonia Boulton, Cath Taylor, Katharine Lee and Eve Carter.**

Jeanette Devine, Manager of Pre-Operative Assessment Dept, said:

“This training is highly relevant to the anaesthetic assessment of patients in the pre-operative phase, so congratulations to everyone for your ongoing hard work in developing this valuable service.”



# Stopping the Clot in the North West...

**T**he Countess of Chester Hospital has launched its most important health initiative of the year to prevent blood clots and as a result has become the first North West hospital Trust to earn 'Exemplar' status, which ensures the Trust is doing everything it can to prevent VTE – Venous Thromboembolism.

More than 25,000 deaths yearly are caused by Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) nationwide, more than breast cancer, AIDS and road traffic accidents put together – and many of these are preventable.

The Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, expects all adult patients to be risk assessed for VTE. As a result, throughout 2009 the Countess of Chester Hospital's Thrombosis Team worked extremely hard to launch a major initiative (which went live in January) to reduce patient harm in the Trust from unnecessary clots. This initiative is called Stop the Clot 2010 and will ensure that a detailed Risk Assessment is carried out in all adult in-patients and day cases when they are admitted to the hospital.

Mr Sameh Dimitri, Chair of the Thrombosis Team and Consultant Vascular and

General Surgeon, said: "Stop the Clot 2010 is the biggest patient safety initiative that we will undertake this year and it will aim to tackle VTE in all adults in-patients and day cases. The important thing to remember about blood clots is that they are preventable with the correct care and attention. It is our aim to ensure that everyone that comes into the hospital is given a full assessment in line with their potential risk – based on their age, health and other factors such as family history – in order to minimise the likelihood of them suffering a clot.

"Depending on a patient's health, the actions we take will vary. For example, a young, fit and healthy adult may require a simple measure such as compression stockings based on their risk assessment. However, more at risk patients with a family history of venous thromboembolism may require more complex management. Each course of treatment is tailored to the individual's needs."

As a result of the Trust's tireless hard work, the Countess was chosen



Dr Sameh Dimitri has great pride in 'Exemplar' status



STOP THE CLOT 2010

## STOP THE CLOT

Have **YOU** assessed **YOUR** patient?



STOP THE CLOT 2010

as the first Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Exemplar Centre in the North West of England following the All Parliamentary Thrombosis Implementation Working Group visit and assessment of the Trust in January.

Mr Dimitri commented: "VTE Exemplar Centre status is given to Trusts that excel in VTE prevention and care.

As well as implementing the patient risk assessment process, this includes ensuring that

continuous clinical training is in place, that information is available to patients on the risks, symptoms and treatment for VTE, and that the team has the skills and ability to offer verbal information and support to patients as and when required."

In addition to the initiative being embraced within the Countess of Chester Hospital, part of its success will depend on its implementation within the community. As a result, the Countess is working closely with Western Cheshire Primary Care Trust to ensure that the knowledge is extended to

GP surgeries and to the community in general. As Mr Dimitri points out: "The risk of suffering a clot goes beyond a patient's hospital stay, and in some patients it remains there when they are discharged so our aim is to work closely with the PCT to ensure that 'at risk' patients are followed up after they have left the hospital, to further reduce the risk."



Mr Dimitri concluded: "I would like to emphasise the fact that the Stop the Clot 2010 initiative's successful launch and our subsequent exemplar status accreditation are a richly deserved recognition of the hard work and dedication of my colleagues in the Thrombosis Team and all members of staff. I'd like to thank Virginia Clough, Linda de Cossart, Hillary Leggat, Lucy Langan, Chris Green, Martin Sedgwick, Jed Hawe, Mark Webb and Sally Goode for their valuable contribution over the years. We take great pride in providing high standard, quality care to our patients and continuing to be one of the leading health providers in the North West."



## A Week of Creative Prayer



**A Week of Creative Prayer took place in the Spiritual Care Centre last month and it proved to be very successful.**

John Kingsley, Chaplaincy Co-ordinator, said: "There was a wonderful response and we are grateful for everyone's support. Thanks to Susannah (above), our student on placement from the University, for inspiring this event. With all the positive feedback we hope to continue to use the resources to offer the various prayer stations on a rolling programme, so please use the Spiritual Care Centre as a space for quiet and reflection."

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Following our Hospital Annual Thanksgiving Service on St Patrick's Day (17th March) I was asked to offer a prayer to give thanks for the work of the Countess of Chester Hospital...*

Father God, we thank you that you promise to be with us in all the ups and downs of life, and that you rejoice and suffer with us.

We give thanks for modern medicine and for all that has been achieved over the years;

For all that has been done and is being done throughout this hospital;

For the Trust's corporate values and objectives;

For all the hard work, dedication and commitment of staff and volunteers;

For all the care and support that is given and received;

For Holistic care as we work together for the good and wellbeing of every patient.

We offer this prayer and give thanks for everything which brings you glory, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

*John Kingsley – Head of Chaplaincy Services*



# Board of Governors' Update...

## The challenges and rewards of the Board of Governors

**I** have been retired from full time employment for 3 years. I have been a member of the Board of Governors since 2008, representing Chester and rural Cheshire. My reason for becoming a governor was initially to continue to use my 45 year experience of working in the health service as a professional nurse and also a senior manager.

What I attempted to bring to the Board of Governors is my knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the systems and processes that make

up such a complex organisation interplay, and how from my experience, decisions about priorities are reached. I believe that the Countess is an excellent hospital with truly caring and committed professional staff, and with a Trust Board who have been proven competent and forward looking over a number of years.

Research by the Foundation Trust Governors Association has highlighted 6 areas where governors are actually making a difference:

- Involvement in quality improvement
- Reconfiguring services
- Appointing Chairs/non executives
- Recruiting and communicating with members
- Participation in trust committees
- Building external relationships

The research findings highlighted specific processes that need to be in place in order for governors to be effective, and therefore to make a difference. These are:

- Constructive support from trust chair and chief executive
- Induction and training to develop governors in their role
- Relevant and regular information

The Board of Governors of the Countess of Chester Hospital have excellent information and support systems, we have regular and relevant access to the trust chair and chief executive, The Chair of the Board of Governors is the deputy trust chair, we have clerical support, and access to any and all information the trust produce. We have formal structured fortnightly meetings with the trust chair in attendance, the agenda for that meeting is decided by governors.

Issues that affect our Foundation Trust status, its sustainability, and ability to continue to provide high quality healthcare, is always going to be a complex mixture of external political and financial imperatives all of which could ultimately have an effect on the level and provision of the service we provide.

The challenge for governors as one of the bodies responsible for holding the trust board to account on behalf of the public and particularly during this period of recession and financial shortfall in funding, continues to be to keep a watching brief on the quality of the service provided and care delivered to the patient.

**Richard Taylor**

*Chester and Rural Cheshire*

## Good news for Flintshire

Since my last report, I understand payments for patients from Flintshire are being made to the Trust by the Betsi Cadwaladr (North Wales) Local Health Board at the full "Payment by Results" tariff, as agreed between the Welsh and UK governments.

I am very pleased to report that in the recent reorganisation of Community Health Councils in Wales, from being a co-opted member of the Flintshire Committee I have become a full member of the Community Health Council (CHC) for North Wales as a nominee of the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council.

The CHC will continue to provide a free and independent advocacy service. In the Countess we have the PALS service to receive complaints (and praise) from patients and relatives and it has an enviable reputation for dealing informally with most problems. For complex matters or problems likely to go to the formal complaint phase, CHC advocates can give advice, do necessary research, write letters and provide support at meetings. They can be contacted on 0845 226 7292 or 01978 346873.

As a Governor and a Community Health Council member, I would be happy to hear about any issues that concern you or any services which you would like to commend.

**Gordon Donalson**

Flintshire



Keith Higham at a meeting



Flintshire Governor, Barry Harrison

### We need to talk...

As a Foundation Trust Hospital, the Countess has certain freedom from central government control. It has the freedom to take decisions on how to improve services locally but is still subject to statutory requirements and has a duty to function effectively, efficiently and economically. It is accountable to the community it serves and it is through the Governors that it achieves this two-way communication with its membership.

During the past year, the Governors have held six Road Shows, which have been opportunities for us to go out and meet the public who elected us. It is good to interact and hear your views, which can then be taken back and conveyed to the Board of Directors, so influencing strategy. These Road Shows have been held in church halls, retail parks, a golf club and a car boot market to name just a few.

Would YOU like to have a Countess of Chester Hospital Road Show in your area - for example at a church/club/school etc? We will gladly come along to any meeting that is arranged. Just let us know the details.

It is good to hear your stories and your ideas of what you want from YOUR hospital. You can get involved now by calling 01244 365292.

Eleanor Hornsby, Flintshire



## A pleasure to lead...

It has given me great pleasure to be the lead Governor since our authorisation as a Foundation Trust six years ago. In that time I have been able to witness the many changes and progressive programmes that enable the Trust to remain within the top 40 hospitals in the country.

However economic times are changing and nobody doubts that the next three or four years are going to be very challenging for the NHS both nationally and locally. We will have to get used to change and it is here that we require the input from both members and the public to assist us in our role to work with the Trust Board and deliver smart quality focussed services.

We have over 10,000 members, organise presentations to interest groups and deliver three road shows covering each of our major constituencies.

Finally, you can always contact your individual representative via email, or contact me directly at the hospital.

Michael Hemmerdinger, Lead Governor

## A warm welcome to Sue Sheldon

I feel privileged to introduce myself as one of your most recent Governors. Having been elected as a staff representative and I attended my first meeting in November 2009.

My professional life began with Unilever in 1966 having trained as a Secretary. In 1969 I trained as a Computer Programmer with part of the Unilever group of Companies.

In 1979, my husband died suddenly and – after a period of bewilderment – I decided to take on the challenge of becoming a Mental Health Nurse. I began training in 1980 at West Cheshire Hospital, qualifying in 1983 – moving to the Royal Liverpool Hospital in 1985 – Park Day Hospital in Tuebrook in 1987 – Ashworth Top Security Hospital in 1993 –

Crawfords Walk Nursing Home in 1994 – Oxton Lawn Nursing Home in 1997 – returning to the Health Service in 1998 as a Community Psychiatric Nurse.

In 2004 an opportunity arose at The Countess to work in the IM&T Department combining my experience as a Clinician and knowledge of Information Technology – I have spent the past 6 years training Clinicians in

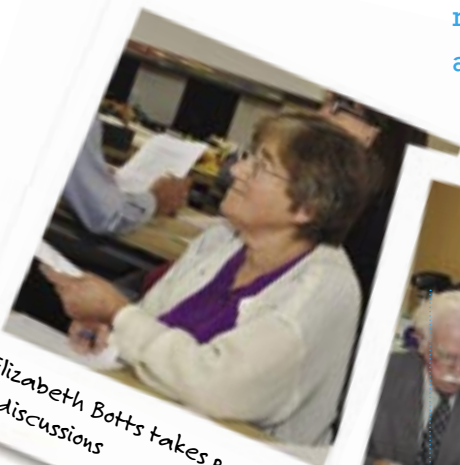
the utilisation of the Meditech system and working on development – especially within the Nursing module. My main pieces of work have been:

- The introduction of a Clinical Alerts and Allergies system.
- The development of the Liverpool Care Pathway within Meditech.
- The introduction of a Malnutrition Scoring Tool.

In March 2010, I decided to retire from the Trust and am hoping to continue as a Governor – perhaps to represent the Chester Area if elected.

## Sue Sheldon

Staff representative



Elizabeth Botts takes part in discussions



Gordon Donaldson and Pat Clare

# Mrs Linda de Cossart Awarded CBE



**Surgical Consultant, Mrs Linda de Cossart has been awarded a CBE in Queen's Honours List.**

Linda, who is currently the Director of Medical Education at the Countess of Chester Hospital, was elected to the position of Vice President of the Royal College of Surgeons for England in April 2008 as only the 5th female executive member in the 208 year listing of the college.

Dr Virginia Clough, Medical Director at the Countess said, "I am so proud that our colleague and friend has been honoured for her contribution to surgery over many years. This is a

wonderful achievement and all of us at the hospital want to send our warmest congratulations to her."

Mrs Linda de Cossart graduated in medicine from the University of Liverpool in 1972, and then continued her training for a surgical career in Merseyside. In 1978 she became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and after a period of full time research gained by thesis, a ChM from Liverpool on the

subject of venous disease. With co-author Della Fish, Linda has also published two books; "Cultivating a Thinking Surgeon", and "Developing the Wise Doctor".

Linda was appointed as Consultant General Surgeon with an interest in vascular surgery at the Countess of Chester Hospital in 1988 and was first elected to the 26 member council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1999. As Associate Post graduate Dean in the Mersey Deanery from 1993 to 2006, she has been closely involved with the changes in both Specialist Registrar and SHO levels in surgery and their educational implications.



## Therapists Win Challenge

**Two of our therapists, Nicola Brown and Carla Teasdale, recently took part in the North West AHP (Allied Health Professional) Leadership Challenge, and won.**

Nicola and Carla joined with four other AHPs from the North West to form a team who then took part in this all day challenge against 10 other teams. Their team won the challenge and they now go forward to represent the North West in the national challenge in London against all other SHA's. In the meantime, for winning the North West challenge they will receive some leadership mentoring before the London challenge.

Michelle Redgard, Manager and Clinical Lead for Therapy Services, said: "This is obviously excellent news and great to develop the talent within therapies. I am very keen to support this sort of development in the department and would like to congratulate them on their achievement."

## Inca Trail Trek Success...

**Congratulations to recently retired Sarah Hoyle who completed her Inca trail in Peru in aid of Relative Comfort.**

Sarah said: "I just want to thank all of you who so kindly offered me sponsorship to complete the 4 day Inca Trail Trek. For those who doubted that I would get to the end, firstly I certainly did complete the walk and secondly once you started there was no going back as which ever way you go it is up and down all the way.

"The walk was an experience of a lifetime. A beautiful country reaching heights of 4,200 metres, magnificent scenery and

unbelievable Inca buildings which it is hard to believe people built so beautifully many hundreds of years ago. Yes the trail is tough for an old one like me but everyone is very encouraging and our guide kept willing me on. I can recommend the trip to anyone who wants a challenge and enjoys walking."

Accompanied by her son Chris and his friend Ed, Sarah's efforts raised money for a washing machine for Kisiizi Hospital which will undoubtedly go some way to improving the working lives of those staff who currently wash the laundry by hand and hopefully improve overall hygiene and reduce infection.



Staff show appreciation for Sarah during retirement lunch



## Countess MATTERS

EDITORIAL TEAM

**Tell us what you think!...**

**Darren Appleby: Graphic Designer – Design and Layout, ext 5431**

**Andrew Duggan: Marketing and Communications Officer – Editor, ext 6381**

Deadline for next issue: 24th September 2010

