Celebrations at the NOC to mark the 60th anniversary of the NHS spanned the generations

See centre pages for more on the special events including some of our ‘NOC Heroes’

News from the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust
Therapy garden opens up

A new therapy garden designed by Clinical Director Karen Barker and former Head of Occupational Therapy Claire Ireson combines a therapy area for patients where they can practice the every day challenges of walking outside in a safe environment.

Karen Barker said of the idea: “We wanted to design a garden with graduated slopes and various steps of different sizes. This will help patients’ recovery and get them used to different terrains in order for them to be better prepared when they have been discharged. The railings are needed to aid balance and have provided the perfect outdoor area for physiotherapy.”

Colourful flowers have also been planted to create the perfect ambience for rehabilitation. The garden is also perfectly situated between the physiotherapy gym and the hydro-pool and is not only sheltered but maintains privacy for the patient.

WHAT WE DO

The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC) is an internationally recognised centre of excellence, providing routine and specialist orthopaedic, rheumatological and neuro-rehabilitation services to the people of Oxfordshire.

Our patients include people needing a new hip, shoulder or knee, those with severe back pain or sports injuries, children with curvature of the spine or cerebral palsy.

Also on site is the renowned Oxford Centre for Enablement which provides a wide range of services for people with long-term conditions and disability.

DID YOU KNOW…?

We see around 83,000 outpatients each year. Around 8,000 patients are admitted for treatment.

Each year we replace around 740 knees and 670 hips.

We have operating theatres running six days a week with MRI facilities running seven days a week and in the evenings.

We have additional outpatient clinics on Saturdays and in the evenings.

Looking to the future

In a recent report by Lord Ara Darzi on the way ahead for the NHS, the Government announced its intention to create a small number of Academic Health Science Centres (AHCSs) which will bring together world-class clinical services, teaching and research.

There is a strong commitment from local NHS Trusts and the University of Oxford for the establishment of an AHSC for Oxfordshire. We believe this option has the potential to support the continued development of our specialist services and deliver high quality translational research to the benefit of our patients. While this option is explored, discussions around an alternative model for the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, including progressing a commercial process to partner the Trust with another organisation, have been suspended.

We are now actively working with our NHS partners and the University to develop an application for designation of an AHSC for Oxfordshire. The national accreditation process will consider AHSC applications based on excellence in research, education and clinical care. The Oxfordshire AHSC programme will be delivering key streams of work to develop the vision for the partnership model over the coming months.

It is expected that the first designations will be made by the end of March 2009 and we hope to bring you more news on the progress of these new centres of expertise in the next edition of NOCLife due out next spring/summer.

To read more go to: www.noc.nhs.uk/aboutus/FutureoftheNOC.aspx
New day surgery unit supports infection control

A new day surgery unit at the NOC is helping maintain the hospital’s excellent record on MRSA infection rates.

The hospital has not had a case of MRSA bacteraemia since October 2007 and only two in the previous year. It ranks among the top ten specialist hospitals in the country for the lowest MRSA infection rates.

The day surgery unit, which opened at the beginning of October, provides routine surgery such as minor hand, foot and ankle surgery, arthroscopies and epidurals for back pain. It is located directly adjacent to the hospital’s theatres with a dedicated entrance and car parking. This prevents unnecessary contact between longer-stay patients on the general orthopaedic wards.

Grace’s cakes pull in the pounds

Little Grace Manning’s fairy cakes pulled in the crowds at a fundraising coffee morning in aid of the hospital.

Grace and her family were stunned when they added up the takings and realised they had raised £1050 – hundreds more than they had hoped for.

Staff at the NOC’s paediatric outpatients department are now deciding how to spend the money.

Grace, nine, has been a regularly visitor to the hospital for four years.

Her mother Kathryn, from Wellingborough, Northants, said: “We like the positive and active attitude of the team at the NOC and their understanding of the condition.”

Appointments strengthen NOC Board

Trust Chair Joanna Foster CBE has been invited by the Appointments Commission to serve for a further two years. Also appointed by the Commission is Christopher Goard who brings his international commercial, marketing and voluntary sector experience to the board.

Commenting on both her appointment and that of Christopher Goard, Joanna said: “I am delighted to have been asked to extend my position as Chair of the NOC and welcome Chris Goard as a Non- Executive Director. His skills and experience will strengthen the NOC Board at a significant time for the Trust, when, as a partner with Oxford University and the local NHS Trusts, we are bidding to become one of the new, and probably very few, Academic Health Science Centres in the country. This initiative enables us to contribute our own internationally reputed clinical and research work to this Oxford partnership.”
Annual health check results reflect progress

The NOC’s excellent progress in achieving shorter waiting times, successfully maintaining its low MRSA infection rate, and delivering high standards in the patient experience are reflected in the latest performance ratings published by the Healthcare Commission.

The hospital has made significant improvements and achieved maximum scores in many areas resulting in an overall rating of ‘Good’ for the use of resources element and a ‘fair’ rating for the quality of services element.

The Healthcare Commission’s annual health check ensures we are meeting standards across a range of areas. Once again, the Trust received an ‘excellent’ score in meeting new national targets which measure the experience of patients, waiting times and MRSA levels – the hospital has not had a case of MRSA bacteraemia since October 2007. The Trust also ‘fully met’ existing national targets which include maintaining low numbers of cancelled operations.

Chief Executive Jan Fowler said: “These results are a tribute to our staff and demonstrate our efforts to continually strive for excellence across the board. We have made significant improvements over the last year and have achieved maximum scores in many areas. We are especially pleased with those areas where it has been recognised that we provide high quality care to patients.”

Natasha’s our very own singing idol

The NOC’s very own singing receptionist Natasha Budd is in preparation for a National Talent Show that could see her win £25,000 and a possible recording contract. Natasha will hope to wow judges in the regional final which will be held at the Princes Theatre in Aldershot - success will secure a place in the grand final of the talent show in December 2008. More than 10,000 people entered the contest which is open to both singers and dancers, making it the largest talent show in the country outside ITV’s X Factor.

Natasha said: “I’ve been practising at work in the evenings when I’m working late – it sounds great and occasionally I get a patient coming out of their room to see what is going on. I know I will be a little nervous when I get to the day, but I’ve performed in front if the judges for the auditions so I know what to expect.”
To mark 60 years of the NHS patients and staff at the NOC were asked to nominate their very own ‘NOC Hero’.

We had a huge response with nearly 60 staff or departments being nominated. Here are a couple of the heart-warming messages that were left:

Bridget Mackey (Plaster Room) – Always helpful, quiet, calm, robust. One of the long serving staff of the NOC who provides constant effort and quality

OCE and Physio Ali Pick – While I was recovering from GB syndrome I spent 7 weeks with the OCE – part of the Nuffield. During this time my physio Ali Pick was absolutely amazing. She patiently stretched me in more ways than one and started ‘putting me back together’. Without her care and attention I would not have progressed so quickly. Thankyou Ali

David Enoch – David is the loveliest porter. Never fails to improve everyone’s day.

One of the NOC’s longest-standing patients 84-year-old Mrs Joyce Silvester shared her hospital memories with pupils from Cheney School as part of a heritage event to mark the NOC’s pioneering history.

Mrs Silvester, pictured centre left, first came to the NOC as a 14-year-old girl for treatment of scoliosis and is now being treated for rheumatoid arthritis.

She joined around 30 students from Cheney School in Headington who are involved in a project to trace the history of the NOC and its influence on surgery throughout the world. This will support their studies on the history of medicine at GCSE level.

The pupils are involved in creating a mural to chart the NOC’s history which will be displayed in the entrance atrium. The project is being funded with a grant of £24,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund with donations from the Trust’s General Charity, League of Friends and the NOC Appeal Art Fund.

Visitors, staff and patients viewed photographic displays, old uniform exhibits, surgical orthopaedic instruments through the ages and voice recordings were taken to capture memories both past and present of the hospital and why it is special to patients and staff. The League of Friends also kindly supplied a special NHS 60th birthday cake.

Joanna Foster CBE, Chair of the NOC, pictured bottom left, said: “We wanted to share our proud heritage with local people and this event demonstrates our outstanding international reputation among both orthopaedic surgeons and patients.”

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The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre is one of five specialist centres nationally caring for patients with bone cancer and soft tissue sarcoma. The service treats patients from across the UK and overseas.

Helping to support the many patients requiring highly specialist care and treatment is Helen Jefferies, a Macmillan Cancer Nurse Specialist, whose role is partly funded by the charity Macmillan Cancer Support.

The post is a specialist role and Helen, a dedicated cancer nurse, gives patients one-to-one support at a very difficult time and the opportunity to discuss the diagnosis, treatments and possible outcomes.

Helen’s role means she is here for not only the patients but their families too. Helen said: “Families sometimes find it harder to deal with a cancer diagnosis than the patient does and they need a lot of support too. I find the post is also an advisory role for other health professionals. I support staff who do not have the specialist knowledge relating to sarcoma and also do teaching both internally and externally to the trust, for instance on the post-graduate nursing course at Oxford Brookes University.”

Helen added: “People may think that being a Macmillan nurse must be very depressing, that could not be further from the truth. “Of course it is upsetting at times however, the majority of our patients have a good life expectancy if we can diagnose the cancer in a timely fashion and start treatments as soon as possible.

“Some patients only need surgery, some need surgery as well as chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Each patient and family is treated as the individuals they are and their care plan is worked out accordingly.

“This job is sometimes very challenging, but it is also very rewarding, if I can put a smile on the face of a cancer patient and their family my job is done!”

CARING FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Macmillan Musculoskeletal Cancer Nurse Specialist Helen Jefferies offers an insight into her unique role

Hand hygiene awareness

Patients, visitors and staff have been testing how good they are at cleaning their hands with a special ‘glow-box’ as part of a campaign to raise awareness of hand hygiene. Sue Holloway, pictured right, Infection Control Nurse at the NOC, said: “We want to highlight the importance of good hand hygiene practice and its role in minimising the spread of infection.”

YOUR SHOUT!

Air your views on the Trust and its services ... become a member of the NOC Network

Thanks to all readers who have already shared the Network’s efforts to support the NOC. If you want to come aboard to ensure that the services are there when you or your loved one need them just register your name with Karren Hughes on 01865 737502 or email karren.hughes@noc.anglox.nhs.uk

The Network has been very active in presenting the patients’ views, not only to the NOC Board, but also to the Strategic Health Authority, the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members of Parliament, and organisations such as Probus Clubs and University of the Third Age.

On Page 2 you will have read about future options for the NOC to be part of an Academic Health Science Centre. We hope you will join us in taking an active role in supporting us to protect the NOC’s services.

Geoff Feasey
NOC Network Steering Group
A unique scooter is being developed at the NOC for amputees in Africa. BBC South Today featured the development of the Scooter on its local evening news.

Professor Chris Lavy, an orthopaedic surgeon at the NOC has undertaken trials on the scooter in the gait laboratory with help from Dr Julie Stebbins and Physiotherapist Jennifer McCallum. Two of the prototypes have just been sent to Malawi for further tests.

The scooter has been designed by his colleague Dr John Church, a retired orthopaedic surgeon from High Wycombe and built by Bristol-based design engineer Andrew Bachelor. The scooter, using the working title ADS (African Disability Scooter), has been purposely designed for people in Africa who have lost a leg and find it difficult to get around, particularly because of the rough terrain.

Professor Lavy, pictured left, said: “Malawi is a desperately poor country. Amputees don’t get artificial limbs made for them; the vast majority have nothing other than a crutch. The aim of the scooter is to give them something to get around on.”

This unique design uses a seat similar to that of a unicycle to prevent slipping both to the front and side. It is a ‘one size fits all’ design that should need only basic adjustments which can be used by older children as well as adults. It doubles up as a walking frame to aid climbing steps once the scooter is turned side on and the brake is applied.

The vast majority of amputees have nothing other than a crutch
Prof Chris Lavy, Orthopaedic Surgeon, pictured above

Patients can now say what they think about the NOC at the touch of a button!

The ‘Patient Experience Tracker’ system enables both patients and visitors to comment on their experiences via an electronic keypad. Twenty terminals have been set up around the hospital. Each has five questions with a scale of five possible responses from ‘poor’ to ‘excellent’.

The terminals are placed in both public areas and on the wards for patients to record their views prior to discharge.

The data is collated daily and reports are produced and fed back to the ward managers who can see at-a-glance areas of satisfaction or where there is a need for improvement. Staff are able to monitor more closely standards of service and ensure prompt action can be taken.

Kathy Wilshaw, Patient Advice and Liaison Service Manager, said: “We listen and learn from our patients in many ways but these electronic keypads provide more speedy results than traditional paper questionnaires and customer satisfaction forms.

They will help us to ensure that everybody’s experience of the hospital is a positive one.”

Graphical reports are produced on a weekly basis and posters display results to both staff and patients around the hospital.
England rugby player Andy Gomarsall MBE officially opened a new £45,000 children’s play garden at the NOC. The England international brought along his wife Fran and his two-year-old twin daughters Olivia and Indianna to help him cut the ribbon and try out some of the new play equipment including a specially designed playhouse with access for youngsters in wheelchairs. The new play area provides a welcome outside space for children attending outpatient clinics. The NOC specialises in treating children with complex disorders such as cerebral palsy, curvature of the spine, and developmental dysplasia of the hip. Many children have mobility difficulties because of their conditions and the new play area has been constructed using smooth rubber flooring with a variety of large toys and games including noughts and crosses, wavy mirrors, a springy horse and parrot seasaw. The play garden was funded by the NOC Appeal, the hospital’s League of Friends and many patients and benefactors.