
St. Luke's Trust

Newsletter May 2008

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This Newsletter is produced for patients of the St. Luke's Medical Centre as well as friends of St. Luke's Trust. To receive a copy please fill in a form in the surgery or write to us. If you would like to receive it electronically, please email newsletter@stlukesmedicalcentre.org

Adam Beard
Editor

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Update on the future of the Tuffley surgery

A cheery group of supporters warmed up St Michael's Hall on a bright but cold Saturday in February where we gathered for a modest but successful fund raising event for the Tuffley surgery. Any worries about who would turn up on a chilly February morning were soon cast aside. We raised £241.00 indicating a fair number of cakes and cups of coffee consumed!

Special thanks to everyone who prepared and donated towards this event and to all those who supported on the day.

Many good ideas for future events brewed alongside the coffee. Three supporters have kindly offered to facilitate the sale of cards, books on health topics and Weleda products on three mornings a week in the Tuffley surgery. Hopefully we can get this up and running by the summer.

Three therapists whose backgrounds include the Life Pathways biography work, education, art therapy, counselling and therapeutic speech plan to start a new health and support group based in Tuffley at the St. Michael's Hall. A creative programme will offer social and biographical support as well as therapeutic arts. The project will maintain strong links with St. Luke's and be available to St. Luke's patients as well as individuals from other practices in Gloucester. The aim is to meet the needs of carers and individuals who themselves have long term health issues or are in life crisis. Enquiries about this new project can be addressed to Marah Evans at St. Luke's. In addition to this, Christine Allsop is planning to run a sequence of eurythmy group sessions for patients with various health problems, such as circulatory or breathing conditions and back pain. Look out for further details.

To begin with, fundraising is primarily aimed at covering the extra rent still needing for the third year of our new tenancy of the existing building (see last newsletter for details). Positive efforts continue for securing the present building to enable the surgery to remain at least for the next three years. Questions surrounding the future of the Tuffley surgery still remain but the prospect of a new home for the surgery has been positively discussed with the NHS. Much still depends on the energy and interests of new doctor(s) who join the team as a result of our current advertising and the new activity of Tuffley supporters. Ultimately, if the future Tuffley surgery and therapies are to thrive then a dedicated team may need to develop over time that focuses specifically on this surgery and extended project.

Meanwhile we would be delighted to welcome you to the events detailed on page 7. Any other fundraising ideas would also be warmly welcome. Thanks once again to an intrepid band of Tuffley supporters who are helping to put together a programme of events.

Marah Evans

See also article on page 6.

Patient satisfaction survey

In February we carried out our annual patient satisfaction survey. This was done by handing out approved questionnaires to patients coming to the surgery to see a doctor.

The survey concentrates on the areas where it is appropriate to ask the patient what his or her experience was. The main aspects covered by the questionnaire includes the following:

- Access, including getting through on the phone, opening hours and waiting times
- Treatment by receptionists
- Continuity of care
- Experience of the consultation with the doctor

The responses are collated to give a 'satisfaction rating', (presented as a percentage with 100% being the best) which can then be compared to previous years' surveys as well as to the national average, or benchmark figure. It is interesting to note that in the last few years since the survey was introduced, the national average has increased significantly in many areas of the survey.

At the end of the questionnaire there is also space for comments under three separate headings;

- Is there anything particularly good about your healthcare?
- Is there anything that could be improved?
- Any other comments?

Changes since the previous survey

Since the previous survey was carried out in November 2006, the following changes were implemented:

- An second phone line was used in the mornings in order to make it easier to phone through to the practice during the busier time.
- The practice nurses have taken on more work, seeing patients with chronic diseases for their reviews.
- We have reviewed the process for new patients to register with the practice. This resulted in introducing a two sided information sheet giving details of how to access our services, a new patient health questionnaire to speed up the registration appointment, and the nurses taking over new patient registration appointments from the GPs.
- A receptionist has trained in phlebotomy and now runs weekly clinics taking blood samples,

freeing up nursing time.

- Unfortunately, for much of the year, we were short of GP time as we were not able to replace Dr. Pead. This led to a reliance on locum doctors.

The Survey

128 questionnaires were completed by patients attending both the Stroud and Tuffley surgeries. The results were largely similar to those of the previous year.

Comparing our results with the national average, we are 4 points or more below the benchmark figures for satisfaction with opening hours, satisfaction with the availability of doctors, satisfaction with waiting times at practice and satisfaction with continuity of care.

We are 4 points or more above the benchmark figures for satisfaction with time doctor spends. Comparing the results to last years' survey, there was a 5 point decrease in satisfaction with the availability of a particular doctor (as opposed to any doctor) and in satisfaction with continuity of care, both of which can be attributed to our shortage of doctors. There was also a 4 point drop in satisfaction with how well the doctor puts the patient at ease and the patients' ability to

*"The general
ambience is
healing itself"*

understand the problem after visiting the doctor. Satisfaction with phoning through to the practice rose 4 points, taking us above the benchmark for the first time. This would seem to be a direct result of the introduction of a second phone line for patients in the mornings. For full details see the table opposite.

Comments

The comments received on the questionnaires showed a high level of appreciation for the approach of the practice. Given the possibility to write rather than tick boxes, patients have commented on access issues, but have put far more emphasis on our approach to healthcare, particularly mentioning anthroposophic and holistic medicine, the time spent with the patients in consultations and the caring attitude of the doctors and staff.

Specifically, looking at what is good about our healthcare, 44 patients mentioned our approach to healthcare, 14 the GPs, 10 the length of our appointments and 8 the practice staff.

Looking at what could be improved, 23 mentioned issues around access, 3 the waiting times in the surgery and 4 the services at Tuffley. 6 respondents specifically said that nothing could be improved.

Consequences

There is clearly a high level of overall satisfaction with the practice, demonstrated by the comments

"The wait to get an appointment could be improved"

on the questionnaires, with particular appreciation for our approach and the time we spend with patients. Given finite resources, this can be in direct conflict with access, expectations over which are constantly being raised by the government aiming for quick political gain rather than responding to clinical need or even to public opinion.

The general trend in primary care over the past few years has been to move work away from GPs to nurses, and from nurses to health care assistants. While this makes economic sense, as nurses are cheaper to employ than doctors, and St. Luke's has gone a little in this direction, we feel a lot of the

benefit of our holistic approach would be lost if we go too far down this route.

While we take issues over access seriously, it is

"the long waits are more than made up by the good care and attention given by the doctors"

clear that much of what patients feel is particularly good about their healthcare would be lost if we further reduced appointment times from our standard of 15 minutes or fragmented the care patients receive too much. We therefore aim to work with the question of improving access while maintaining 15 minute appointments, except for the duty doctor's morning surgery, which has short appointments designed to deal with acute conditions.

Adam Beard
Practice Manager

Full survey results

Survey Question	Mean score	Score Nov 06	Benchmark
Satisfaction with receptionists	76	76	77
Satisfaction with opening hours	59	60	67
Satisfaction with availability of particular doctor	45	50	60
Satisfaction with availability of any doctor	60	57	69
Satisfaction with waiting times at practice	51	50	57
Satisfaction with phoning through to practice	60	56	59
Satisfaction with phoning through to doctor for advice	58	57	61
Satisfaction with continuity of care	65	69	69
Satisfaction with doctor's questioning	82	82	81
Satisfaction with how well doctor listens	85	86	84
Satisfaction with how well doctor puts patient at ease	83	87	84
Satisfaction with how much doctor involves patient	84	85	81
Satisfaction with doctor's explanations	83	85	83
Satisfaction with time doctor spends	84	81	80
Satisfaction with doctor's patience	86	85	84
Satisfaction with doctor's caring and concern	84	86	84
Ability to understand problem after visiting doctor	68	72	69
Ability to cope with problem after visiting doctor	68	68	66
Ability to keep healthy after visiting doctor	65	65	62

Therapeutic speech

What does speaking have to do with healing?

An interview with Sibylle Eichstaedt

Question: Sibylle, you work as an Anthroposophic Therapeutic Speech Practitioner. That is quite a mouthful! What exactly do you do, and how did you get into it?

Sibylle: I've always loved the spoken word. In my twenties, I was thrilled to find out that there was a training course ~ inspired by anthroposophy ~ where you could study speech as an art just like singers study singing. So I enrolled. After I'd finished and began teaching, I became interested in how speaking can affect the speaker in a therapeutic way. There were colleagues all over Europe who had begun to pioneer in this field, and gradually *Therapeutic Speech* became an established profession.

Is it different from 'speech therapy'?

Yes, although there is definitely some overlap. Speech therapy specializes in speech and language disorders, whereas therapeutic speech addresses a wide range of illness and crisis situations as well as developmental problems. It works with the artistic elements of speech: the sounds and rhythms of language, poetry, drama, storytelling, gesture, movement and, underlying all, the breath.

Could you give some examples of illnesses where therapeutic speech has helped?

There are fascinating case studies, 'success stories' so to speak, about conditions as diverse as anxiety, asthma, cardiovascular and thyroid imbalances, just to name a few. A colleague of mine worked with a patient who for years suffered from iron deficiency. She worked with 'alliteration', the old Norse style of poetry, where the beginnings of words get spoken quite vigorously (e.g. "True is the tale that I tell of my travels"). When she practiced this regularly, her iron count rose to a normal level. The Greek 'hexameter' rhythm, which Homer used for his Iliad and Odyssey, has been shown to have a balancing effect on certain cardiovascular and respiratory disorders.

It's amazing to think that speaking can have such a strong effect on the body. How do you explain that?

Human beings are an integrated whole, and how we speak or move has an effect on the whole organism. The entire organism is needed to produce a speaking voice, and the speaking voice in turn works back on the organism. The stronger my engagement, the deeper the imprint. Speaking



engages the breath, the voice, the mind, the 'self', and close to a hundred muscles! It reaches 'down' into our physiology and 'up' into our consciousness. Speaking is a total engagement ~ balancing, integrating, invigorating, and health promoting. Rudolf Steiner pointed out years ago that practicing speech in a particular way could, for example, strengthen the immune system.

So what exactly happens in a therapy session?

The sessions last about 45 minutes. In the first session, after meeting each other, we will do a few basic exercises that help me form a 'speech diagnosis'. I assess, for example, what kind of sounds (e.g. sculptural earthy consonants, dynamic fiery ones, or melodious fluid ones), what rhythms and breathing exercises would best benefit the client, and what poetic text would best meet their constitution and life situation. Clients are asked to practice their therapy sequence at home. Together we monitor changes and progress, and I'll adapt my approach accordingly.

Do you have special areas of expertise?

My work experience has been especially with fear, anxiety, depression, and confidence related issues ~ helping people to 'find their voice'. This hasn't been a conscious choice - it just so happened that certain clients have come to me, recommended by the therapists or doctors, or self-referred.

St Luke's offers a variety of therapies. What's best when?

That's a complex question. Each of the therapies engages the forces of body, soul and spirit differently. It depends on the client's condition which of the therapies is most appropriate at any given time. For example, if a patient were very weak, speech probably wouldn't be the place to start. But there is also scope for personal inclination towards one or the other.

For appointments or an initial consultation, please ring Sibylle on 01453 887426.

See Page 7 for details of taster sessions.

Singing therapy

What is it?

Sibylle Eishstaedt interviews Pia Poulsen

Pia, I would like you to give a general picture of how singing can be healing?

When you sing you can have the experience of giving voice to your inner reality. Your inner soul life flows into the outer world expressed in sound. At the same time an inner flow is also happening. Tones and breath are vibrating and moving inside. One can therefore use singing as a tool for self-expression or one can let this inner vibrating flow of tone and breath work in a healing way.

What are the elements that you are working with?

I bring specific therapeutic exercises to the client. The exercises will be given according to individual needs. Each exercise consists of a sequence of vowels and consonants and can be sung on just one tone. Many of the exercises combine sound with gentle bodily movements. The movements relate to the issues we are working with i.e. if we are working with balancing the breathing then we might use a movement that engages the muscles we use for exhalation. I also invite the client to listen to the flow of the tone and to the quality of the vowels and consonants. So the elements I am working with are tone, breath, movement, listening, vowels and consonants.

You have told us that the tones we sing vibrate inside us. Can you explain this?

Each frequency has its own form and these forms can be found in the plant and animal world. The tone is carrying an archetypal forming principle that is visible in nature. Thus when we sing, the tones vibrate in the body and it is possible for this archetypal forming principle to work in the human organism. Blocked energies are brought into movement and a stimulation of the organism, as bearer of forces for self-healing, is brought about.

And breathing; how does that relate to our sense of well-being?

Our breathing is influenced by how we feel. When we are rested and relaxed our breathing is different from when we are anxious or stressed. Singing can help to balance our breathing and this can then have a harmonizing effect on the whole human being.

Can you say some more about listening?

We are surrounded by lots of different sounds all the time. They are there in the background, but



we do not consciously listen to them. In order to pick out specific sounds we need to actively reach out into the world through our ears. When we attentively listen to the flow of the tones or the quality of the vowels and consonants we sing, then the listening can guide us to deeper self-awareness and help us find a stronger

sense of self.

Are there other ways in which singing therapy can guide us to find a stronger sense of self?

Yes. To explain this I would like to give the following picture. Most people have had the experience of getting up in the morning and not feeling fully present; not feeling fully connected to your body and it is difficult to focus your thinking. On other days you feel very centered, strong and ready to meet the world. Singing therapy can support one in developing a stronger centre and finding a deeper connection to the body.

Who can benefit from singing therapy?

Singing therapy can be beneficial for people with wide ranging symptoms such as vocal problems, disturbances in the breathing process i.e. asthma, illnesses related to metabolism, degenerative and chronic inflammatory illnesses, muscular-skeletal disorders, anxiety, depression and psychiatric illnesses. It can also be an accompanying therapy for cancer-patients as well as a support for children with developmental problems.

Does one need to have a background in singing in order to benefit from singing therapy?

No not at all. I always sing with the client and the whole session can be done on just one tone. You can also benefit from singing therapy if you are not able to sing at all. Being present in the room with me doing the exercises can also have a healing effect.

For further information or to book a session contact Pia Poulsen on 752 559

See Page 7 for details of taster sessions.

Doctors at St. Luke's

As many people will already have heard, Dr. Markus Csipai will be leaving the practice in the Summer to return to Germany. He will move to Berlin, where he will work in an anthroposophic clinic. It has been a great privilege to work with him over the past four years, and his patience and understanding will be missed by colleagues and patients alike.

As many patients will also have seen, Dr. Andrew Pride joined the practice in January. Dr. Pride comes to us with many years experience of work in general practice, having been senior partner at his previous practice in Hertfordshire. He has moved to St. Luke's with a wish to work holistically and to deepen his relationship to anthroposophic medicine.

Tuffley surgery funding

We would like to ask that any member of the community who supports the continuation of the Tuffley surgery and who is in a position to offer an interest-free loan to contact us. The loan would be secured and repayable after three years when the property will be resold. This would reduce the mortgage on the building and thereby reduce the rent that St Luke's Trust needs to pay. This, in turn, would make all the current and future donations made to the Trust for the Tuffley surgery last longer.

Furthermore, in the event of the value of the property being higher when sold again, the

buyer would return interest on the loan up to the annual building society deposit interest prevailing for each of those three years (simple interest, not compounded) as the buyer has stated they have no intention to profit from such an increase in value. Nevertheless, if property prices fall, the loans will be repaid in full, though without interest.

If you would like to support St. Luke's Trust in this way, please contact me.

Adam Beard
Practice Manager

Repeat prescriptions

Patients taking regular medication may request repeat prescriptions by filling out a form and sending it to the surgery.

We aim to have all prescriptionions ready for collection by yourself or the pharmacy within two working days of receiving the request. Please help us to get prescriptions ready as quickly and efficiently as possible by taking care to give us all the information we need.

If your prescription is computer printed, it will have a request form attached. This will give you options for where you would like the prescription to go and list all the medicines you are currently taking. Please tell us what items you require, as not everyone needs all items with every request. If your prescription is hand-written (we are not able to issue all Weleda remedies through the computer) it should come with a form attached to fill in with your details, where you want the prescription to go and what items you require. These forms are also available to pick up at the surgery.

Due to the risk of error, we do not take prescription requests over the phone.

Requests must be made to us in writing in one of the following ways:

- By filling out a form as detailed above and sending it to the surgery
- By faxing a form to 01453 756573

We are now able to receive requests electronically through our website in one of two ways:

- By emailing a form (which can be downloaded from the prescriptions page on our website)
- By filling in an on-line form at www.stlukesmedicalcentre.org/prescriptions

The options available for the prescription are:

- To collect from the Stroud surgery
- To collect from the Tuffley surgery
- To collect from Superdrug, Stroud High Street
- To collect from Co-Op Pharmacy, Cainscross, Stroud
- To send an SAE to you or the pharmacy of your choice with your request.

We are now also able to send prescriptions direct to Lloyds Pharmacy, Holmleigh Parade, Tuffley.

Please note that if you do not tell us what you want us to do with your prescription, we will keep it in Stroud.

Jane Clark
Reception Manager

Events

Tuffley fundraising events:

All the following events are at St. Michael's Hall, Robert Raikes Avenue (opposite the shops just around the corner from the Tuffley Surgery)

Spring Fete	Saturday 26th April	11.00am — 3.00pm	Come and meet your friends and visit the stall in aid of the Tuffley Surgery. Cakes, clothes, cards and preserves
Concert	Friday 16th May	7.30 pm	Music performed by Trevor Smith, Holly Birt, Caroline Mason and friends. Donation on the door (£5 suggested)
Ceilidh	Friday 13th June	7.30pm — 10.00pm	Come and dance the evening away! Light refreshments available. Tickets on the door: £5 children: £3 Family (2 adults + 2 children): £15.00

Therapeutic speech taster sessions

With Sibylle Eichstaedt
At the Stroud Surgery

Thursday 22nd May	7.30pm
and Thursday 12th June	7.30pm

Introductory sessions for anyone wishing to find out more about therapeutic speech. For more information please see article on page 4. Collection on the door.

Singing therapy taster sessions

With Pia Poulson.
at the Stroud surgery

Thursday 29th May	7.30pm
and Thursday 5th June	7.30pm

Introductory sessions for anyone wishing to experience or find out more about this therapy. For more information please see the article on page 5. Free.

In Search of childhood

With Emma Tyer
at the Stroud surgery

Starting on Friday 9 th May	9.30am -12.00
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A series of 5 morning workshops for parents of young children (0-9yrs)
Cost: £50.00

Friday 9th, 16th and 23rd May and 13th and 20th June 2008

Through discussion and crafts we will explore some of the questions that meet us as parents and find practical, helpful and creative ways that we can support the growing child at home as well as learning to support and nurture ourselves as parents and as individuals.

Parents' support group

With Emma Tyer
Starting September 2008

9.30am-12.00

A fortnightly Friday morning group with time to share, to listen and be heard, time to be silent and time to be creative.

During the morning we will discuss relevant questions in our lives as parents as well as creating a craft project and singing together. Refreshments provided. Cost; £10 a session (cons available) payable termly in advance. For further information contact Emma on 01452 770963

Poetry

During the winter I took part in a creative writing course at The Space in Stroud, during which we wrote some poetry. I wouldn't claim that my writing is particularly creative or my poetry especially imaginative, but I did find the act of writing brought a sense of inner peace and fulfilment.

After one session we were given homework to write a poem on a choice of three titles, one of which was 'When Beset by Illness'. It was clear to me that I was not going to take that one — It seemed too close to work to me, so I went home and sat down to write about 'When You Win the Lottery'. After an age of trying to think of a rhyme for lottery other than pottery, I gave up and decided to tackle the other title, 'When Time Runs Out'; I have plenty of experience there, I thought—No problem!

But nothing came.

Then, as I sat idly wondering about nothing in particular, a couple of lines drifted into the empty space in my mind. As I wrote them down, more followed until I had a complete poem.

There's just no escaping work!

When beset by illness
Stay at home
Preserve the peace and stillness
Unplug the phone

Your malady will teach you
The lesson
Tell you what to do
If you listen

So make the most of it
Now time is rife
Take the chance to sit
And ponder life

I share this in the hope that it might set some others to writing, and I would like to ask for poetic contributions for the next newsletter. Perhaps we could have a regular 'Poets' Corner'? I know that some surgeries have even run writing groups as a therapy for their patients and staff. Contributions should be on the subject of illness, health and healing in its broadest sense.

Adam Beard
Practice Manager

Eurythmy therapy group

A patient's experience

I jumped at the opportunity of joining the eurythmy therapy course Ursula Browning was offering in the Autumn, firstly because I love doing eurythmy in a group, and secondly, as I am an octogenarian with a heart condition, I reckoned it would be a good thing to do as a winter tonic.

At our first get-together, Ursula cheerfully asked us what ailments we would like her to treat. And she confidently accepted the sad list of colds, depression, circulation disorders and so on... Wow! So imagine my amazement when, despite the fact that we were a group of mixed ages, I found the first session so gentle I could manage all of it. Though the work became more complicated, it remained gentle, yet

the improvement in everyone's stamina was soon visible. My shortness of breath when walking has become a lot easier, my shaky ankles were becoming firmer, and everyone else looked considerably more cheerful.

By the eighth session we were unanimously so enthusiastic that we pressed Ursula to give another course.

A patient

We welcome your feedback on any experience you have had at St. Luke's, whether for the newsletter or for our own information.

www.stlukesmedicalcentre.org



Member of the Association of
Camphill Communities in Great Britain

Gannicox Camphill
Community
57 Cainscross Road
Stroud
Glos. GL5 4EX



St. Luke's Medical Centre
53 Cainscross Road
Stroud
Glos. GL5 4EX
Tel (01453) 763755