
St. Luke's Trust

Newsletter

December 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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Computers in Practice

The practice prepares for a big step

Over the six years that I have worked in the practice, the use of computers at St. Luke's has been a regular item on meeting agendas and a common topic of conversation. Some doctors who have come to work with us have been taken aback at being asked to work without a computer on their desk, and found it very difficult. Other, generally older doctors, have been pleasantly surprised and found it a relief to work with paper notes again. I have also heard various comments from patients. Some have really appreciated seeing a doctor who engages with them rather than focusing attention on the computer screen. Others have thought it high time that we move into the 21st century and have seen it as ridiculous that we do not make better use of technology.

While we are known for being "the practice that doesn't have computers", this is not strictly true: The medical secretary and practice manager have worked with computers for many years, and more recently the receptionists have also used them. What

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is true is that unlike other practices the clinicians are not working with computers in their consulting rooms.

For many years, St. Luke's has resisted pressure from the NHS to have computers on the consulting room desks and to fully computerise our medical records. While other GP practices have transferred their patients' medical records onto computer systems and enter all their notes from consultations, we have continued to use paper notes. This has been because of concern about the impact the computer would have on the quality of the consultation and the doctor / patient relationship. The doctors' concern has been that their attention would be taken away from the patient by the presence of the computer screen.

In 2004 we took the step of introducing a clinical computer system in the practice, but kept it out of the consulting rooms. We therefore continued to work with paper medical records, but had an electronic database of all our patients' names, addresses and NHS numbers. We also started entering some clinical information after consultations, particularly of patients with chronic diseases such as asthma or diabetes. This enabled us to more easily see who was due to have a review and to invite them to come for an appointment. We were also able to demonstrate that we were fulfilling criteria for the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), a national system which rewards GP practices for hitting various targets for patient care. With changes in NHS funding, we have become increasingly dependant on this income .

Nationally, despite the much publicised problems with the new NHS computer system, I.T. is becoming ever more integrated into primary care. Working without computers therefore becomes increasingly difficult as our administration becomes increasingly burdened by replicating on paper systems designed to be run on computers.

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After much thought and discussion, we have decided to extend our use of computers and have them in the consulting rooms. While the reasons for not having computers have not changed, these are now, we feel, outweighed by the benefits, or, to put it the other way round, the disadvantages of not having them.

We plan to transfer our paper records to the computers in stages. For example, we already receive all test results electronically, but because the GPs have not had access to them during consultations, we have continued to work with paper copies. Once the computers are in the consulting rooms, we will be able to stop working with the paper copies, and no longer need to

double up on filing. Similarly, we will be able to stop writing prescriptions in the paper notes, as the record will be on the computers.

We will, for the time being, continue to write consultation notes in our paper records.

There are a number of potential benefits of having computers in the consulting rooms and computerised medical records, including improved quality of our medical records, better access to patient information leaflets by clinical staff and more efficient working for administrative staff.

*We will endeavor
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This has not been an easy decision to make in the practice, and some patients will no doubt be disappointed and find it difficult to understand why we are taking this step. We believe that, considering the current NHS agenda, it is in the best interests of the practice and our patients to take this step.

We are aware of the potential disadvantages, and understand the concern that the computer screen will detract the clinicians' attention away from the patient. Their awareness of this will, I believe, help them to develop ways of working which prevent that from taking place. We will endeavour to work in such a way that computers are used as a tool to help us deliver good patient care, rather than let ourselves be led by them.

At the time of writing it is not yet clear when the new computers will arrive. There will need to be some preparatory work done before they can be installed, but we hope they will be installed in the new year. Once there, we will, no doubt, take some time to get used to new ways of working, and will try to keep any disruption to a minimum.

Adam Beard
Practice Manager

The Living Way Support Group at St Luke's, Tuffley

A New Impulse for a Social, Therapeutic & Educational Group

*'...understanding for the past,
care for the present,
seeds for the future...'*

Two therapists connected with the St. Luke's team (Sibylle Eichstaedt & Marah Evans) are looking forward to opening a social, therapeutic & educational group in 2009 as part of a creative, new impulse for the Tuffley and Gloucester area. The new Living Way Group is designed to encompass:

- supportive, mutual sharing & helping conversation
- arts for health
- respect for personal & spiritual values

The group is for anyone over 18 who may be experiencing life crises or personal challenges due to physical or emotional health issues. This can also include carers and individuals who may feel isolated in their roles.

When will the group take place?

The group will meet on Thursday mornings, usually for 10 weeks per term, from 9.30 am – 12.30 pm with mid morning coffee/tea breaks. Participants are welcome to attend two initial sessions to see if this is what you are looking for. After this, group members will be asked to commit for a term at a time.

What can I expect to happen in the group?

We aim to provide a safe, confidential space for supporting the growth of new ways to carry and engage with personally challenging life circumstances.

The weekly morning programme will include:

Time for empathetic listening and supportive sharing. A gradual understanding of personal biography can help us to see how crises and turning points in life may provide keys for change and growth. This can help towards improving communication and social meeting.

Time for exploring new ways of responding to

experiences, adapted to the needs and to the pace of group members.

Space for engaging with varied arts for health aimed towards enabling confidence for each individual's personal creativity. This can benefit confidence in other areas of everyday life. Media will include guided painting, clay modelling, drawing, creative writing, music and creative speech work. Absolutely no previous experience is necessary in any creative or artistic work.

What is the cost?

The fee rate for the morning is £25 however a reduction is possible for those unable to pay the full fee. We encourage anyone to apply regardless of financial means if you feel you can benefit from the programme.

How do I apply?

If you are interested you can arrange for an initial individual appointment with Marah or Sibylle by contacting one of the numbers below. The Living Way Support Group at Tuffley has grown out of The Life Pathways Biography Work Training and The Schooling Course. Marah and Sibylle aim to promote further links and helpful connections with other excellent Support Group Initiatives such as Oasis and with other NHS surgeries and care initiatives.

For further information contact:

Marah Evans (Art Therapist, Counsellor, Life Pathways Biography Work Trainer): 01453 750089

Sibylle Eichstaedt (Therapeutic Speech Practitioner & Teacher) 01453 887426

Marah Evans
Art Therapist

Sibylle Eichstead
Therapeutic Speech

Tuffley surgery has been secured!

A message from "The St Luke's Patients' Community Trust"

"The St Luke's Patients' Community Trust" is a trust set up by individuals within the patient community to secure and hold loans. Its purpose is to facilitate the raising of finance to secure 10 Tuffley Lane as a short-term base for the continuation of anthroposophic medicine, until a more permanent home can be secured.

After a long period of nail-biting twists and turns, the Tuffley surgery has been rescued from closure by its purchase by a member of the patient community.

You will recall that in the May Newsletter readers were asked whether any supporters would be in a position to offer an interest-free loan for three years.

The generous loan offers that came did initially cover the vital deposit and allowed the whole purchase to proceed, but unfortunately one of the loan offers had to be withdrawn, so we are urgently seeking another lender(s) to join the group and make up the shortfall, over £10,000 of which is currently being carried on the purchaser's own home mortgage - not something they anticipated or can carry for long!

To remind you of how the loan scheme works:

Your loan (a minimum of £1000) would be secured against property in the way a mortgage is and held in a Trust Fund administered by a solicitor, so its return is guaranteed after three years.

In the event of the value of the property being higher in three years time, the purchaser 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 any such increase in value, although in the current climate that does seem unlikely it must be said. Nevertheless, if property prices fall, the loans will be repaid in full, though without interest.

Please would you consider supporting the situation. The purchaser had not intended and does not have the means to fund the Tuffley surgery. He intended only to be the vehicle for the mortgage which would secure its use as a surgery.

It is important to emphasise that St Luke's Trust is not involved in these loan arrangements, and is not in a position to advise or offer assurances in these matters. The loan trust is a separate body, "the St Luke's Patients' Community Trust", of which I am one of the three trustees.

To make a loans please contact Mr Bishop at Madge Lloyd Gibson, 34 Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1JW, where he can give further details of the Trust fund which secures them.

However, do also contact me if you wish

Adam Beard
Trustee of "the St Luke's Patients' Community Trust"
Practice Manager, St Luke's Medical Practice

Step by Step We Progress

Latest Developments for the Tuffley Surgery

Since February '08 we have enjoyed several heart warming events including a coffee morning, sponsored walk, a splendid and varied concert and a rousing but modest ceilidh. The dancers came in all ages, shapes and sizes and great fun was had by all. This together with the profit from sales has raised £1419. A big thank you goes to everybody involved in the recent events, especially to all the musicians and callers at the two musical 'happenings' and to everyone who

helped with setting up and refreshments.

There is also a group making cards which will be sold in Tuffley and at the Stroud Surgery .

We will have another burst of energy for events later in the New Year so watch out for posters. (see events, pages 5 and 6)

Meanwhile there has been a well attended work weekend in November, during which the surgery

room, hallway and waiting room and toilet were redecorated, and the building given a thorough clean. Still to come are new floors for the two rooms downstairs, and lino for the toilet and bathroom upstairs. The chairs in the waiting room have been replaced, and a new sign for the garden wall has been ordered.

Recent developments at 10 Tuffley Lane

Anyone attending the Tuffley surgery for a morning appointment will have seen that there are now 'volunteer receptionists' there, which has proved to be very positive. They provide a presence, look after the clinicians, water the plants and also raise money by selling Weleda products, books and cards.

Marah Evans is now seeing patients in Tuffley for counselling, and is working on starting a new patient support group together with Sybille Eichstaedt (therapeutic speech practitioner) which will take place on Thursday mornings in the waiting room and the art rooms upstairs. (see article on page 3)

Christine Allsop is also available to see patients for

eurythmy therapy at Tuffley. She can be contacted on 01453 767898.

New surgery development

There has been some progress on the new surgery development. Due to the forecast expansion of the practice population in Gloucester, it looked as though we would be building a 'two GP surgery', which would allow for a floor area similar to that on the main floor in Stroud. Although the NHS is not able to fund therapy rooms, it may be possible, with flexibility, to use some spaces for eurythmy, art etc. The Primary Care Trust have confirmed that St. Luke's would be the only surgery in the building, but that we may share with other organisations. Looking at sites, there are two which are currently under consideration, each of which has advantages. We have been led to believe that the PCT would support the building of ecological surgery premises.

Given the complexities of NHS bureaucracy, there are still many 'hoops to be jumped through', but we hope to be able to maintain the momentum we currently have.

Marah Evans & Adam Beard

Sponsored walk in aid of the Patient Therapy Fund

Saturday 28th March 2009

Come and join us for a most enjoyable walk in our glorious countryside, and help replenish our much needed patient therapy fund.

Our previous walks have been very successful, not only in terms of raising funds, but also by generating a wonderful community spirit, bringing together our friends, patients and therapists. This year we would particularly like to encourage children to come; each child under 12 years who registers at least one week before will be given a special surprise gift and certificate to celebrate their achievement.

There will be 3 options this year: The first will be from Stroud to Nailsworth, a distance of about 4 miles along the cycle path. This stretch would also be most suitable for small children or for people who cannot go on a longer walk for other reasons.

The second will be from Nailsworth to Westonbirt, which is about 8 miles long.

The third will be to go the whole length from Stroud to Westonbirt. From there we will be picked up to come back to St. Luke's.

If you are not able to you could still get involved by offering a taxi service, help with publicity or designing the certificate for the children.

Sponsor forms will be available in the New Year from the surgery. As it is a fair distance, we will start promptly at 9.30 am from the car park at St. Luke's in Stroud. We will endeavour to do this walk in all but the worst weather, so please come suitably prepared. Please bring a packed lunch and sufficient amount of water to drink. One can buy refreshments at Westonbirt.

There will be no "taxi service" from Nailsworth for those who do the first leg, but there is a bus service to Stroud.

The terrain will be varied but not too challenging, but I certainly recommend good walking boots and blister plasters, just in case.

For all information and to register, please contact Karin Jarman on 757436 or e-mail indigo@phonecoop.coop

I look forward to meeting you in either Stroud or Nailsworth.

Karin Jarman

Patient Therapy Fund

Join us to help celebrate and raise awareness for our Patient Therapy Fund

We are so fortunate to have our anthroposophic medicines available on the NHS. We are also proud to have available an exceptionally wide resource of therapies for St. Luke's patients. Unfortunately we are *not* so fortunate with NHS funding for art therapy, counselling, eurythmy, therapeutic speech and music. The aim of The Patient Therapy Fund at St. Luke's is to provide funding for those in need who are not able to pay the full costs for therapies. This fund relies totally on generous support from friends and subsidy from the practice and the Trust. The fund only continues through donations and ongoing fund raising events. Thank you for all who have helped to date.

We want to really celebrate the fact that St. Luke's can and does offer something different through this exceptionally wide and valuable resource of our therapies. Every event is an enjoyable, social occasion for meeting old and new friends. These are opportunities to come together in a positive spirit for a very worthwhile cause.

Please put the following dates in your diary.

Winter warmer coffee morning
10 am-12 midday, Saturday January 31st
at St. Luke's, Stroud

Come in for a warm drink before or after shopping! Delicious Home Baking available to take home!

A wonderful sponsored walk
Saturday, March 28th:

A walk with three options to suit all abilities. Once again we rely on helpers who we need to volunteer to collect walkers who finish at different points and times along this all day walk. This will be a gentle ramble through lovely countryside finishing with a glow of achievement at the end. For more information see page 5

Marah Evans
Art therapist

New surgery times

Some patients will already be aware that we have extended our opening times, and now offer appointments in Stroud every other Saturday morning and one evening a week (usually on a Monday) after 6.30pm. This is with the aim of making it easier for people who work, especially further away, and find it difficult to come to the surgery during the normal working day, to see a GP.

It is important to note that these new times are for pre-booked appointments only. If you require urgent medical attention during these times you should contact the out of hours service on 08454 220 220.

With the arrival of Dr. Hedda von Schwarzenfeld, we are also now offering longer surgeries in Tuffley on Monday mornings and Tuesday afternoons.

Adam Beard
Practice manager



St. Luke's

Christmas festival

Wednesday 17th December
at 8.00 at the Stroud surgery

You are warmly invited to join us for this festive evening

Story told by Stoylle Eichstaedt

Bell ringing by the St. Luke's Players

Music by the Gannicox orchestra

Singing

Mince pies & punch



Events

Our programme of Tuesday evening talks will start again in the New Year with something for everyone. The theme is life's phases from birth through to death.

Do you wonder about your children / teenagers? Are you an adult and want to know how to be truly "grown up"? These and many other questions will be addressed through the series.

The talks about old age will be at a different time - on Saturday Mornings - to make it easier for older people to come.



The Seven Ages of Man - William Mulready (1786 - 1863)

Life phases series

To take place in the Stroud waiting room

Tuesday 20th January 8.00pm	The experience of being born with Annie Lestor and Mandy Rowbotham - Midwives
Tuesday 27th January 8.00pm	Who are you? Discovering childhood with Emma Tyer
Tuesday 17th February 8.00pm	Childhood - 7 to 14 with Dr Hedda von Schwarzenfeld - General Practitioner
Tuesday 10th March 8.00pm	Teenage Kicks: Anecdotal evidence with Richard Aylward - Waldorf Teacher
Saturday 21st March 10.30 am	The Wisdom of old age with Terese Curwen and Susanne Steffen
Tuesday 24th March 8.00pm	Adulthood - Juggling the balls with Andrea Sprenger - Counsellor
Saturday 18th April 10.30 am	Is there such a thing as a good funeral? Some issues, questions and choices which face us all with James Showers - Family Tree Funerals
Tuesday 19th May 8.00pm	Time for a change - The menopause with Karin Jarman, Art therapist

Other events

Saturday 31st January 10.00 - 12.00 Stroud Surgery	Winter Warmer coffee morning Raising funds for the patient therapy fund
Saturday 28th March 09.30 from the Stroud surgery	Sponsored Walk Raising funds for the patient therapy fund (see article on page 5)

How I found myself at St Luke's. . .

It was 2 years ago when I came to register myself at St Luke's and went home not only with a great doctor but with an invitation to apply for the post of Medical Secretary.

I had just moved to the area two months previously, after major upheaval in my life, and when I was offered the job I thought it would be a good way to make a new start.

Little did I know then that I was to become part of a wonderfully caring team of doctors, therapists, nurses and receptionists. I was made to feel immediately welcome. The two years have flown by and I have made some wonderful friends. The working day can sometimes be a bit fraught but without the support the team give each other it would also be dull. The humour and tea and biscuits keep us going through many trials and sometimes we are even allowed chocolate digestives!

Being an employee and a patient here gives me two perspectives. I also sometimes feel the frustration of not being able to get through on the phone immediately or being able to see my doctor as early as I would like but what keeps me as a patient here is the care I and my three children receive. Being on the 'inside,' I know how busy it can be at times and how much in demand the doctors and nurses are. So rest assured; it's not my bad jokes that keep them from the phones! We have a very conscientious team and I feel privileged to be a part of it. St Luke's has also given me a sense of belonging and community.

But I mustn't forget the unsung hero who keeps us on our toes and looks after us; Adam Beard. I can truly say he is our favourite practice manager and I cannot imagine working any where else.

Rina Nash
Medical Secretary

News from Germany

Many of you may have wondered what has happened to me since I left St. Luke's; I too have wondered : How is St. Luke's; the patients, staff, friends? I'm truly very grateful for all the support, understanding, appreciation and gratitude I have received from many during the difficult process of me leaving.

I'm now living in a small town outside Berlin and am a part time dad and part time GP. The children live half the time in my house, the other half with their mother. Following British tradition I have a terraced house. It has almost no garden, but is in a very child-friendly estate – the children can cycle on the streets and have a choice of 7 playgrounds nearby. I'm pleased to say they have made good contact with other children and seem to like it here. However they also miss Stroud. The move and the new situation are quite a challenge. Understandably there are a few things familiar to me, being "back home".

At work I'm still trying to find my feet. Everything seems different to what I've experienced in the NHS and what has become so familiar to me – the way of thinking, expectations, restrictions, administration, names of medicines, prescribing, policies, procedures. Some are unduly complicated, some easier. I have to drive 40 minutes to work compared to 10 minutes walking in Stroud. Although I'm now employed by an anthroposophic provider (a bit like a polyclinic) the practice still needs to get a lot of care, decorating, and inner work to create a healing atmosphere for both our patients and the co-workers. This may take years.

Right now we have a beautiful Indian Summer here, all the autumn colours one can imagine, blue sky once the morning mist has cleared.

Dr. Markus Csipai, October 2008

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