



Dear fellow patients,

Our quarterly newsletters are getting increasingly interesting as more readers send us their contributions. Keep them coming. This is your newsletter, your chance to have your say. It has been a good quarter. We had an excellent presentation from Dr Ash Thakore on Diabetic Care in the Practice, and we have already launched our incontinence campaign. We are privileged to have Mr Mike Stafford, the eminent surgeon from Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, coming to address our public meeting in the New Year. That is a real coup by the PPG.

We are looking forward to our CHRISTMAS JOLLY on 8 December with its theme of First Aid. I am sure the St John's Ambulance team will be very earnest about our education in First Aid, but it will also be great fun - with seasonal food and drinks.

There is a lot happening in the Practice and it will be interesting to watch it develop further services for us. The new mini-polyclinic people started work refurbishing the old Vincent Square Clinic in November. We look forward to improved services there in due course. I look forward to seeing you at our JOLLY and wish you a peaceful time in the last days of the year and into the New Year.

Best wishes,

Gillian Guy, (PPG Chair)

PPG *Christmas Jolly* and FIRST AID PARTY

Do you know how to identify the signs of a stroke? Could you help someone who is choking, or suffering from burns or bleeding? More people die during the Christmas festivities from strokes and heart attacks caused by stress, over-eating and drinking and accidents in the home than at any other time. Join us at lunchtime on 8 December and find out how you might save someone's life this Christmas by your swift action. Come to the PPG CHRISTMAS JOLLY and meet the St John's Ambulance team and their dummies! See details over page.

THE TABOO OF INCONTINENCE

We are all born incontinent and it takes time for us to learn to contain our bodily waste until it is convenient to dispose of it. Age, disease, traumas and other problems can all undo that training. I am doubly incontinent and realise that there is only one word left in the English language that we cannot mention in pubs, around the dinner table or at a party: 'INCONTINENCE'.

When I first started to look into the subject I discovered many interesting facts. One is that 76% of women suffer from it at some time in their lives. Another is that incontinence can take several forms. Some can be cured by medication, some by small operations and many just by re-training.

Another interesting fact - and I bet you did not know this - is that after the age of 60 there are more MEN than WOMEN who suffer this miserable disability. Some people's lives are completely ruled by incontinence and they do not know that there can be relief if they seek their doctor's advice. There are now facilities available in our area to suit all types of incontinence.

Our PPG Committee has decided it

is time we blazed a trail and OUTED this taboo word. The PPG has managed to persuade a leading surgeon on the subject to come to a public meeting at the Surgery one Monday lunchtime in the New Year.

Mr Mike Stafford and his special advisor to patients will try to counter all the myths, untruths and facts about this problem. Now surely you must have a relative or close friend among your circle who has suffered in silence. Why not come along and learn how you can help them? And bring them along too.

We have no date yet, but if you want to come please drop a note in at the Surgery with your name, telephone number or e-mail address so we can let you know the date. Address the envelope to Gillian Guy, PPG Chair, Mr Stafford's Presentation. Alternatively contact Gillian Guy direct. We cannot hold the meeting unless we have enough people to make it worthwhile for this respected surgeon to come and talk to us. Men and women alike are very welcome and there will be helpful literature to take away.

Signed DD

Don't let that old villain Hypothermia creep up on you. Keep warm and well this winter - here are 4 hot tips from a district nurse:



- Dress warmly
- Eat healthily
- Keep physically active
- Keep your home warm

WHAT'S NEW AT THE VICTORIA MEDICAL CENTRE

SWINE FLU IMMUNISATION

The Practice now has its allocation of Swine Flu vaccinations. Please ask a receptionist, who will make an appointment for you if you are at risk.

OSTEOPATHY and ACUPUNCTURE

The Surgery now has an osteopath and an acupuncturist available to help with musculo-skeletal problems. You can be referred to the facility by a doctor. The service has been set up as a pilot scheme for a year and if it is successful it may be continued for longer.

IN-HOUSE PHARMACY

Our new in-house pharmacy called CLINICHEM, located on the ground floor of the Victoria Medical Centre, will be providing the following services:

- * Dispensing of NHS and private prescriptions
- * Repeat prescription service
- * Some over-the-counter medicines
- * Ostomy and stoma products
- * Independent living aids

OPENING HOURS:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 8-6
Tuesday, Thursday: 8-8
Saturday: 9-11.30

DIRECT LINE: 020 7834 6182

BESSBOROUGH STREET CLINIC

These premises have now closed down for 18 months for refurbishment. During this period services have been re-allocated to the Victoria Medical Centre and various other local sites.

IF YOU BOOK IT, KEEP IT!

The number of patients not keeping their appointments is still very high. Please let the practice know – even on the day – if you are unable to attend so that the time can be made available to others in need.

LETTERS from patients – it's good to hear from you

GOD BLESS THE NHS!

Dear PPG,

Easter 1930, I was two and was given a basket of chocolate eggs. Attached to the handle were painted flowers. I sucked the flowers which were painted with lead paint and became desperately ill. My father earned £3 per week and the rent was £1.10/-, half his wages. My mother did not have the 5/- (1/6th of their income) to take me to the doctor; she had to borrow from a neighbour. She then had to get a bus to the doctor eight miles away. He said I only had about half an hour to live. Fortunately he knew what to do, and here I am at 81 – still alive and being looked after by our wonderful NHS. Let us be grateful.

Margaret Rowe

Dear PPG,

I am not at all happy about having my medical records and personal information transferred to the Care Records System of the new National Data Base. Could you please tell me what I must do to stop this happening? M. Murphy

Reply: Since this is a concern to many patients we shall cover the issue in the next newsletter. Meanwhile if anyone wants to raise a question about this topic, please contact the PPG or leave a note for me at reception. Gillian Guy

Alex Johnston, MSc Linkworker for the Elderly



I started working as a Linkworker for the Victoria Medical Centre in 1994. The Doctors believed that employing such a person to offer a home visit to all their 75-and-over patients annually, but more often if necessary, would be an innovative way of underlining their commitment to their patients' ongoing needs and general well being.

There are at present 671 people who fall into this age group within our Practice and numbers are continuing to rise.

My brief is essentially a practical one, although initially I carry out a general health assessment together with a blood pressure check. However, finding out what my patients need in the way of home care, equipment to make their homes safer places, benefits, information about local facilities, such as social and lunch clubs, and what voluntary organisations can provide, plays just as important a part in my visit.

After 17 years working in the Pimlico area (my first two years with another surgery) I have acquired some useful knowledge of the workings of statutory and voluntary organisations and have made, in many cases, lasting contacts with people who work there. This has often led to my finding a way through seemingly illogical government or council practices, innumerable almost impenetrable forms, unexplained time delays and frustrating phone systems, better designed to deter potential beneficiaries rather than assist them! I have relished these challenges and found my work immensely rewarding.

Over the years I have met many exceptional patients, often coping with debilitating illness, crippling physical pain or the pain of bereavement, with great courage and stoicism. Listening to them, often hearing their life stories and doing all I can to assist them has been a privilege. They have always given me so much more in wisdom, humour and common sense than I have ever been able to give them. Alex Johnston

Note these local services

NHS Direct: 0845 4647

Social Services: 020 7641 7535

Citizens Advice Bureau: 0844 477 1611

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

(PALS): 0800 587 8818

Pimlico City Guardians (street-based

problems): 020 7641 6019

Senior Passport (facilities for older

residents): 0800 587 8818

Age Concern: 020 7724 6930

News from the Practice

Nurse Sam Bick has now left the Practice to work nearer to her home and we wish her well. The Surgery is currently looking for a replacement nurse. Meanwhile we welcome the arrival of Ms Edyta Dzjuba who has joined our team in reception.

Our new muscular skeletal facility offering osteopathy and acupuncture is already up and running and early feedback has been very positive.

In the New Year we will have an in-house pharmacy run by the Bas

Pharmacy, which has been operating in premises opposite the surgery for the last thirteen years. There is no obligation for patients to use the in-house pharmacy, which will be open during Surgery hours.

The Practice has been given the opportunity to open a new surgery in Mayfair. A site has been identified and we will be employing additional doctors and nurses to run it.

Dr Susan Rankine

CHRISTMAS JOLLY

Tuesday 8 December 2009

12.30 for 1.00 pm

Topic

FIRST AID

Demonstration of life-saving
First Aid by a team from
St John's Ambulance –
plus audience participation!

in the Group Room, ground floor,
Victoria Medical Centre
(with refreshments)