

Newsletter

Issue 10

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Practice News

On the 1st April 2017, Station and Waterloo Medical Groups merged to form the Railway Medical Group.

Dr Nicky Shiell and Chris Watson, Practice manager, have summarized recent activity.

As you will all know, in April 2017 the merger of Station medical group and Waterloo medical group was formalised from a contractual point of view after more than two years planning. Having been to hours and hours of meetings and writing extensive business plans for various supervisory bodies, we hoped the hard work was behind us, but in fact the hard work had only just begun.

The first quarter of the year saw computer systems, financial, managerial and some staff 'merge' but the two practices still operated as separate entities from a clinical sites point of view. As part of the merger there was building work to extend the waiting room at Gatacre Street (old Station) and also to create three additional new consulting rooms at this location. This was done by moving patient records and some back office admin functions over to Blyth health Centre (old Waterloo). This building work was carried out in June and completed at night in less than two weeks by a very efficient team of builders.

The complete clinical merger officially occurred on 1st August, with GPs working mainly from the Gatacre and Newsham sites with a continued GP and nurse presence as before at the 'BAS' (Blyth Acute Service) at Blyth Community Hospital. Our nurses are working across all four sites and healthcare assistant clinics; 'coils', minor surgery and joint injection clinics at the Health Centre (old Waterloo site). Later this year some of the clinical rooms at the Health Centre will be returned to NHS property services as we do not need as much clinical room there.

PRACTICE OPENING HOURS:

- ❖ **Main doors are open from 0830-1830. Appointments available 0830-1115; 1355-1745. The reception is open but there is no clinical cover between 12.30-1.30**
- ❖ **Main telephone number: 01670 542630 AND 01670 355080 Telephone lines are open from 0830-1830 Monday to Friday – (includes prescription line option - available from 0930-1200 and 1330-1600)**
NB You can still phone either practice to make appointments
- ❖ **Out of hours phone: for Medical Emergency 999; for routine medical assistance 111.**
- ❖ **Website: railwaymedicalgroup-blyth.nhs.uk**

Practice News (contd)

A new partnership

We appreciate that there has clearly been a lot of upheaval for staff and patients with this amount of change and we are so grateful for the hard work and resilience of the staff and the patience and support of our patients and colleagues, during this challenging time.

We are already seeing positive changes because of the merger;

- We now have **seventeen GPs working at Railway**,
- We became a **GP training practice** on the 1st August; Dr Rebecca White joined us to become Railway's first GP registrar and we also had four 3rd year medical students join us weekly for a year. A welcome return to our work training undergraduates for Newcastle medical school.
- We can now offer GP dermatology appointments 'in house' and have four GPs who do joint injections, two who fit coils and two who do minor surgical procedures.
- The practice continues to be involved in many primary care research projects, work with the Vanguard team to develop MDT (multi-disciplinary teams) working for our complex and frail patients, and carry out ward rounds regularly at our named nursing and care homes. Much of this would not be possible as smaller practices.

Still to come in the next five months are the challenges of a new phone system and full new computer system, which will enable us to communicate more effectively with community and hospital teams and other local GP practices. We thank you in advance for your ongoing support and understanding.

NB Contact numbers – patients are still able to phone either practice to access appointment: 01670 - 542630 & 355080

Staff News

- Nurse Alison Anderson left in June 2017.
- Kath Pogue and Julie Foster have both joined the nurse team.

Trial Collaborative Patient Service

Extended opening hours

Trial - to 31 March 2018

Extended opening hours: 0630-2000 hrs, Monday to Friday

The practice is well aware of the pressure on all health care provision in the area and since October 2017 a trial has been underway with GP, health professional and support cover, allowing extended opening hours from 0630 to 2000. This service is currently available at Blyth Health Centre.

This service will be operated by Railway and Marine in an attempt to relieve A&E visits in the evening. Its effectiveness and longer term feasibility will be reviewed in March.

Saturday 0800-1200 appointments will continue to accommodate working patients who have difficulty attending appointments during the normal week working hours.

Meet the Team

The GP and professional team at Railway

GP Registrar

Dr Rebecca White

**Details of our GPs, health care professionals and support staff will be covered in future issues.*

Meet the Team **GP Registrar – Dr Rebeca White**

For those who don't know me, my name is Rebecca White. I joined the Railway Team as a GP Registrar (Trainee GP) just after the merger between Station and Waterloo, so I have known nothing else but the great big happy family we have here at Gatacre Street! I completed my medical training at Newcastle University in 2014 and then worked at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead for 3 years before deciding on a career in General Practice. This is my first job as a GP Registrar and I couldn't have asked for a better start. The patients I have met have been wonderful and the team here are very supportive.

I was born and raised in Ashington and Cambois so I know the Blyth area pretty well. In fact, I learned how to dance in Blyth and continue to teach locally which I love. I am trained in ballet, tap and jazz and regularly perform at Charity and Business events in the Newcastle and Northumberland area. I love hearing the stories of some of the older patients of nights spent at the Roxie and wish I'd been there too! I hope to keep dancing as long as I can. My husband and I currently live in Gosforth but hope to move back to Ashington soon to be near our families. We enjoy going to music gigs, specifically rock and rap and going out for food.

I have had a fantastic welcome so far and it's been a pleasure to work at Railway. Sadly I will be moving on in February 2018, I hope I will enjoy my next placement as much as this!

Promoting Health

In every issue we will highlight a particular health topic.

This issue covers

- **Services and activities for the over 50's and 60's.**
- **Help for Carers**

Promoting Health



Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. It exists to ensure that people are at the heart of care. As a statutory function since 2013, there is a Healthwatch in every council area in England. Healthwatch Northumberland would like to hear about your experiences of GPs, pharmacies, hospitals, care homes, opticians; any health or care service that you have used. They share your feedback with those with the power to change things – the commissioners and providers of care. As well as seeking the public's views, Healthwatch Northumberland also encourages services to involve people in decisions that affect them and will make people aware of events and meetings where they can get involved.

Promoting Health contd.

Health Watch

Who cares for the carer

- *Information on these topics is available in the waiting area*
- *Please take a "Golden Guide" booklet for over 50's. These can be found in all patients' waiting areas.*
- *Carers Northumberland information will be displayed in all the patients' waiting areas.*

Please take leaflets, cards and books available.

A signposting service is also available through **Healthwatch Northumberland**; Whether you want to register with a new dentist, find out where your nearest urgent care centre is or need support from a local support group or national organisation, they can help you find the services you need.

You can find out more and leave feedback at the website: healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk or call: 03332 408468.

General email: info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk

Web: <http://www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk/>



[@HWNland](https://twitter.com/HWNland)



[healthwatchnorthumberland](https://www.facebook.com/healthwatchnorthumberland)

Please take a Golden Guide book for over 50's . This gives you a comprehensive guide on health and other services available in your area.

Who cares for the Carer?

You may look after your husband, wife, child, parent, another relative or a neighbour or friend. You probably don't stop to think about yourself while you're so busy every day. It can be overwhelming.

You are not alone. There are an estimated 35,000 carers living in Northumberland.

Carers Northumberland is a charity dedicated to improving the lives of carers by:

- informing them of their rights and entitlements
- supporting them to access help for the person they care for
- reducing the social isolation that so many carers feel
- empowering them to have a voice

Carers Northumberland's information line : **01670 320025**, offers a single point of contact for any enquiry linked to caring responsibilities. They work closely with specialist agencies across Northumberland and beyond to secure the most appropriate information and advice to carers.

Carers Northumberland also provide carers with a regular newsletter, events activities, training and carer groups.

If you would like to register as a carer, contact Carers Northumberland on:

Tel: 01670 320025 Or visit: infor@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

It happened to me...

It could happen to you?

KNEE REPAACEMENT

A personal perspective from one of our patients

As a regular topic we include an anonymous article from one of our patients about their own very personal experience with an illness. This is their own experience, in their own words and not a professional view, but it might be of interest to help fellow sufferers or

It happened to me - Knee Replacement

"After some years of suffering a painful right knee, with periodic injections into the joint having some effect, it was decided that a new knee was on the cards. More injections into the joint were not possible, increasing restriction in mobility and the need for pain killing tablets was affecting my quality of life.

So, what did it entail?

- First of all I attended the pre-operative assessment clinic to check that I was fit for the operation. I had checks on my heart and lungs, blood and urine tests and was questioned about my medical history. I would be admitted to hospital on the day of the operation and would probably be in hospital 2-3 days.
- I was also seen by an Occupational therapist to check whether I would need any equipment in my home, to ensure that I would be able to manage daily living tasks after the operation
- A Pharmacist talked to me about the medication I would be given pre and post operation. I would also need heparin injections for several days after surgery, to prevent the risk of a blood clot.
- A Physiotherapist went over the exercises I would need to do after the operation and I was given a leaflet illustrating how to do them.

All patients can choose which hospital they would prefer for their op. I had opted to have my operation at Hexham Hospital. We arrived at hospital early on the day of surgery and after settling in to my room, I was seen by the anaesthetist who, happy with all my results, explained about the spinal anaesthetic which would stop me feeling anything in my lower body and sedation which would make me unaware of anything which was happening.

I went off to theatre and knew nothing until I woke up back in my bed. The nurses regularly checked me, particularly whether the feeling was returning to my leg and lower body.

Two hours after return from theatre I was encouraged to get out of bed with the help of a Physio and Nurse. They showed me how to walk and move my leg and how to get back into bed. After this I was walked periodically, using a walking frame.

I was given a combination of pain killing drugs which kept me pain free and a cuff which went round my leg and contained very cold water which was refreshed and cooled periodically to maintain its effect. I had to wear a pair of knee length pressure stockings which were refitted each day and which I wore for 6 weeks to help prevent the risk of blood clots.

The following day I was able to get to my bathroom, stand and wash and shave. The rest of the day was spent walking with the aid of a walking frame, taking pain killing medication, using my cold cuff and generally trying to get back to normal.

It happened to me

Knee Replacement

Knee Replacement

The Physio saw me each day and among other things, taught me how to get in and out of the car. You cannot be discharged home until you can manage stairs. Once I mastered them I was shown how to use the crutches and I was allowed home with a letter for my GP and an appointment for Physiotherapy.

A Nurse from the hospital telephoned me a few days after I got home and after 4 weeks I went back to see how I was getting on, which I thought was very good. I continued to do my exercises regularly, taking painkillers regularly at first, reducing them as necessary. I also used the cold cuff periodically. It was June and the warm weather enabled me to go for steadily longer walks around my estate. The District Nurse came to remove the clips in my wound after about 2 weeks and it healed without any problems. The skin on the leg was rather dry and my wife used Bio oil on my leg daily when changing the pressure stockings which solved the problem. It was probably due to wearing the stockings.

I saw the Surgeon about 6 weeks after the operation and he was happy with my progress, giving me a follow-up appointment after 12 months. Soon after my 6 week appointment we went on holiday and I was fine walking. I did use a walking stick at times, mainly to keep people away from my knee, rather than anything else!

It is nearly 4 years since the surgery and I have had no problems other than a little discomfort in bed for about a year. I can kneel and walk for miles without any problem so I consider it has been a great success.

Did you know?



Did you know there are 5,555 lonely older people in Northumberland?

Thank Social Fridays It's Friday

Why Age UK Northumberland's latest social group is the place to be on a Friday afternoon

Launched this summer, Social Fridays is an open social group for older people in and around Ashington. Each week the group meets at The Round House to enjoy friendship, activities or simply just a cup of a tea and a chat. (Over 60s not living in Ashington, why not use your bus pass and enjoy the bus ride.)

Did you know?



Signposting Local Support and Social Networking Activity Groups in the community

- **Social Fridays –Age UK**
- **Tai Chi**
- **Singing groups**
- **Shore Art and Craft group**

Throughout the sessions there is the opportunity to get involved with games, quizzes, gentle exercise and members even bring their own musical instruments to the group to entertain their new friends. As there is no fixed theme, the group is led by members and their interests. Each week absolutely anything can happen and that is the beauty of Social Fridays.

Lisa Mordue, Information and Advice Manager said: "Social Fridays was developed to provide an opportunity for older people in Northumberland to join a group with no agenda. We wanted to launch a group that was accessible to everyone no matter what their personal circumstance is. It has been a delight to be a part of Social Fridays, we have witnessed new friendships blossoming and found out so much about what we can do to help older people in the county."

In Social Fridays, Age UK Northumberland has created a new concept in befriending, members have created friendships that extend out of the group enabling them to enjoy later life in Northumberland.

If you or someone you know would like to join Social Fridays just drop in to The Round House on Friday afternoons or call for further information: 01670 784 800

Details: Day: Friday; **Time:** 1pm – 3.30pm

Location: The Round House, Ashington (opposite Lidl); **Cost:** Free

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/northumberland/activities-and-events/social-groups>

Often it just takes a small, brave first step to make new friends and enjoy a new activity and potentially improve your health and social life...

All of the groups below provide a friendly welcome and an informal way to try something new, or regain an old skill. They run on an ad hoc basis and charge a nominal fee, which usually includes a drink and biscuit and chance to have a chat with all sorts of people.

Tai Chi at Central Methodist Church Blyth

Why not join this active group. They meet every Wednesday from 1.30-2.30 pm. You will learn how this gentle form of exercise will help to improve your health and mobility, as mind and body work together in harmony to create inner calmness.

You will be taught by teachers with 30 years of experience both at home and abroad. You can just pop in to have a look or join in. If you need any further information ring Norman on: 01670 356718

Signposts...

- **Singing groups/Fun Choirs**
- **Art and Craft group**

Fun Choirs

Several choirs operate in the area that anyone can join. One Fun Choir, **The Silver Singers**, meets every Tuesday from 10.30-12.00 at **Seaton Sluice Community Centre**. All are welcome. You don't have to be Katherine Jenkins or Alfie Boe! Your voice will just blend in with the others and you will probably feel positive and uplifted after this vocal exercise.

Arts and Crafts

Do you enjoy Arts and Crafts? A warm welcome awaits any budding artists/crafters with **Shore Art Group – based at the Dave Stevens Centre, Blyth Beach**, with a wonderful view overlooking the sea. All abilities welcome. You just need to enjoy socialising, painting, drawing or creating. Just pop in to have a look, or ring Linda Neslund on 01670 356241 for more details.

Recipe – Auntie Mary's Christmas Pud**Auntie Mary's Christmas Pudding**

2 oz suet	½ lb sultanas
2 oz brown sugar	½ lb currants
2 oz grated, boiled carrot	4 oz soft apricots
2 oz mashed potatoes	4 oz soft prunes
2 oz plain flour	1 tbs marmalade
	½ cinnamon
	Pinch of salt

Delivering a service for approximately 15,000 patients in the Blyth area

Please use the Suggestion Box on Reception and PPG to voice your views.

Newsletter: We welcome ideas for topics of interest from all ages, and would especially like to hear from young people.

Grease a 1 pint basin. Place disc of greaseproof or baking parchment in bottom of basin.

- Mix all ingredients together.
- Line top of basin with a disc of greaseproof and seal top with a 'lid' of foil lined with greaseproof and secure around the sides about 1½ deep. Secure with string.
- Place in a pan filled with boiled water and boil 4 ½ - 5 hours, topping up water periodically.
- Double wrap when cooled with greaseproof and foil.
- Store in a cool, dark cupboard for up to 2 months.
- On Christmas Day, reheat by boiling for another hour or place in microwave for 3 mins.
- Serve with rum sauce or brandy butter.

*Wishing everyone a healthy and happy
Christmas & New Year*

PPG The Patient Participation Group is made up of volunteer patients who attend meetings approximately every two months with practice staff, often a GP and the Practice Manager, to give feedback from/to represent all patients. They take a proactive role in building the relationship between the Railway Medical Group and their patients.

The PPG produce this Newsletter for the practice with input from patients, practice staff and external health related groups.

We would like to represent all members of the community and all ages. If you would like to be involved, particularly if you are 18-30, we would like to hear from you. Ask at reception if you would like to get in touch with us.