

The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Nurses League

82nd Annual Reunion

Charity registration number 290546

The Annual Service preceded the 82nd Annual General Meeting and Reunion of The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals Nurses League in the Benjamin Gooch Hall at the hospital on Saturday 12th May 2012 at 1.45pm. This year it was taken by Reverend Stella Green with Winifred Rogers reading the Gospel and the pianist was Annette Jude.

The President, Mrs Lavinia Gordon-Gray, chaired the meeting welcoming about 90 Members on International Nurses Day (Florence Nightingale's birthday). Unfortunately Nick Covenly has resigned and is leaving the health service so Sister Zena Aldridge of Elsing Ward kindly agreed to speak to us about "Living well with dementia". Sister Aldridge is the first person in the region to make a switch from mental health nursing to a senior role in the acute hospital setting. She was a buyer in London before working as a nursing auxiliary at the old N&N prior to qualifying as a mental health nurse in 2003. Zena joined Elsing Ward in 2011 as a staff nurse after working in the community and specialising in crisis intervention for mentally ill older people. She is now studying for a Master's degree in mental health. Her appointment in 2011 is the latest in a series of new initiatives at the NNUH designed to improve services for patients with complex physical and mental health problems, predominantly dementia. This came about with the 2009 Department of Health dementia strategy – "Living well with Dementia". The aim was to ensure better knowledge about dementia and remove the stigma, ensure early diagnosis, support and treatment for people with dementia and their family and carers. In an ageing population there is a need to change perceptions of society and organisations and develop services to meet changing needs better.. The needs of the patient and their carer have to be addressed and ongoing work is taking place to look at provision of care, skill mix and knowledge base within the Trust.

Changes are under way to make Elsing Ward more environmentally and user friendly to patients, carers and their families. Money has been made available, approx £30,000, from the Health Innovation and Education Cluster to change the environment on Elsing Ward. Ipswich Hospital has been given close to £250,000 from the same source. They have made changes such as removing the nurses' station, adding sofas to encourage engagement, using colour to define spaces, adding activity areas, and altering lighting and signage..

NNUH staff have visited a number of hospitals learning valuable lessons from others making the changes. This has led to the introduction of red toilet seats, split meal service and open visiting especially at meal times along with cognitive stimulation therapy and dementia awareness training for all staff at the hospital.

Links have been made with outside agencies such as Age UK (previously Age Concern) to create information packs for carers dealing with dementia but also offering practical support with information about benefits and support groups. The charity now sits on the Dementia steering group at the NNUH. Currently Elsing staff are working with others to produce more relevant documentation for the client group to make it more person centred. Networks are being developed with other acute trusts in the area to share good practice and innovative ideas. The perception of others needs to change to ensure that the patient and carer experience is positive. Staff must learn to enable patients to maintain the skills they have retained instead of concentrating on the skills that are lost so that people can live well with Dementia.

The presentation was well received by Members who asked several interesting questions afterwards. Mrs Lavinia Gordon-Gray thanked Sister Aldridge and told her the Chapel collection had raised £303 for equipment to forward their project with the patients on Elsing Ward.

The business of the AGM then commenced.

Apologies for absence 80 apologies had been received from absent Members.

Minutes of the last meeting, having been circulated with the 2012 Journal, were confirmed and signed by the President. There were no matters arising.

Trustees/Executive Committee Elections.

There had been one unopposed nomination for the vacant position of Treasurer – Mrs Mary Dolding. Existing Trustees Miss Ann Cosey, Mrs Wendy Hobbs were both nominated to continue as Trustees. Mrs Vivien Meayers-Norkett had resigned for personal reasons and Mrs Hilary Barker (Carrick) 1967-70

had been nominated to take her place. All were re-elected from the floor with full support to serve as Trustees of the League for a period of three years. The Members were requested to give some thought to volunteering as a Trustee as without a committee the charity could not survive.

The Treasurer, Mary Dolding commented on the Financial Statement copies of which were available for perusal. She pointed out a few highlights occurring during the last financial year. Although income from subscriptions is slightly down we have received some helpful and generous donations from Members. We continued to be successful in claiming Gift Aid tax relief for past subscriptions and donations (£308.37p) and thank those who are able to support this process. Some income has also come from the sale of our surplus celebration mugs and even investment income is slightly higher at £683.42p. Journal costs were less this year but expenditure in relation to the heritage work has increased, this includes petrol expenses. The same level was spent on Christmas Benevolent expenditure. The result is a surplus of £459.93p in our income/expenditure for 2011-12. Our Savings and community accounts remain untouched. Mary reminded Members that there was financial assistance available and encouraged Members to apply. She thanked our President and Trustee colleagues for their support. Thanks were also given to Brian Allerton who independently examined our books and for the continued support of Chris Rengert as our financial advisor. Douglas Beattie proposed thanks to our Treasurer and stated it was important that money was available for the Members benefit when in need.

The Membership Secretary Miss Ann Copsey reported we now had 410 members. She had received many letters of encouragement and thanked Members for informing her of changes in their addresses. Ann asked if Members knew of the whereabouts of Mrs S Pettit (Blowers) from Thorpe St Andrew Norwich – Service Member, since the Journal sent to her had been returned.

Joint Editors Mrs Elizabeth Blaxell and Mrs Doreen Betts reported that they had enjoyed compiling the 2012 Journal and thanked everyone who had contributed. They were dependant on contributions from Members about anything – experiences, unusual hobbies or holidays in any form was acceptable as they could adapt to suit.

Heritage Sub-Committee. Miss Betty Lee gave the Members an update on the Heritage committee's progress as Vivien Aldridge was unwell. She was greeted with cheers around the Benjamin Gooch Hall. Miss Lee reported that the committee had met four times in the last year at Margaret Allcock's home where all the material is kept and in danger of taking over her home! The first priorities were to find a permanent home and catalogue the whole collection. It is hoped to establish links with other Nurses Leagues and with education via UEA, schools and Norwich Forum. They had applied for a Lottery Heritage grant for a new project. Advice has been sought for storage of the uniforms and photographs taken of the medals and hospital badges. They look forward to the day when some can be on permanent display but Members can see items on display outside in the East Atrium after the meeting. Any articles which are donated to the League will be treated with special care and attention.

President's Report. **The President Mrs Lavinia Gordon-Gray** thanked everyone for coming, Reverend Stella Green for leading the Service, Bobbie Weston for arranging the Chapel flowers, Annette Jude for playing the piano and Winifred Rogers for reading the Lesson. A special thank you was given to Ruth McNamara who had continued as our Secretary during a very stressful and difficult year. She also thanked the Heritage Committee for the amount of hard work they have already put in but this will be a long haul and costly for the League. She went on to say that sadly the Deli Restaurant, where we will have our tea, is being taken over in June 2012 by Starbucks Coffee shop. Discussions will take place to find another venue on site for 2013.

She spoke of the friendship and emotion and support the Forces Wives Choir gave to each other and she related it to the Nurses League. Annette was requested to play 'We will meet again' and the Members joined in enthusiastically. She then asked - How old was Vera Lynn this year? The answer: 95 years was revealed during the teatime. Winner of a voucher was.....

The portrait shown in 2012 Journal was identified as Marjorie Carlton and it will be donated to her family.

All except three United Hospital badges had been sold by sealed bids raising £235.34p for League funds. One Member kindly donated her unsuccessful bid. Two more United Hospital badges were sold after the meeting with donations of a further £60 – only one remains unsold.

Dates of next 83rd AGM & Reunion: Saturday 11th May 2013 & 84th AGM Saturday 10th May 2014.

Signed.

Date.