

Electronic Marmite

What's that I hear you ask? Computers, you like them or hate them. They have been part of my working life since 1970 and my home life since the mid 1990's so I think its safe to assume that I like them. So why are you reading this in the League of Friends Newsletter? Well we have a web site but not a lot of people know that or use it. How do I know that? Well I'm the guy who maintains it and I can see some quite detailed statistics on who visits the site, how they got to it, what they looked at on it and how long they stayed looking at the site.

For example, we only had 107 "hits" on the site during September, 96 of those were visiting the site for the first time and 11 were returning visitors. 79 of those visitors used a search engine to find the site using words like Alexandra, League of Friends, hospital & Redditch in their search. 20 were referred to the site from another site, mostly the NHS Worcestershire Acute hospital site, and the other 8 (probably me) typed in the web site address directly.

Interestingly 90 of the visitors were from the UK, 4 from Norway, 2 from Italy and the rest individuals from as far afield as Russia, Saudi Arabia

and Singapore! The average time on the site was just over a minute with 78% of visitors leaving after seeing just the one page they landed on.

So am I a computer anorak for such trivial detail? No! I just want to make the web site an effective tool for the League of Friends and to do this we have to go back to basics. Why do we have a web site?

To my mind there are two reasons. Firstly it's a tool that can be used to keep in touch with the LoF Volunteers and Members, people who know about the LoF already. Secondly it's a tool to bring the LoF, and all the good work we do, to the attention of those who don't know us, who are not Members or Volunteers. The first reason is a "nice to have" but the second one is a "must" if we are to continue to offer the services we do already and grow those services.

We need more volunteers and already many of our new volunteers come to us via the web-site. We need more Members who support us by attending the Fayres, coming to the sales, donating books and other items etc etc. and we need more of the ordinary Redditch residents to know what we do.

So how can the web-site, and you,

help do this?

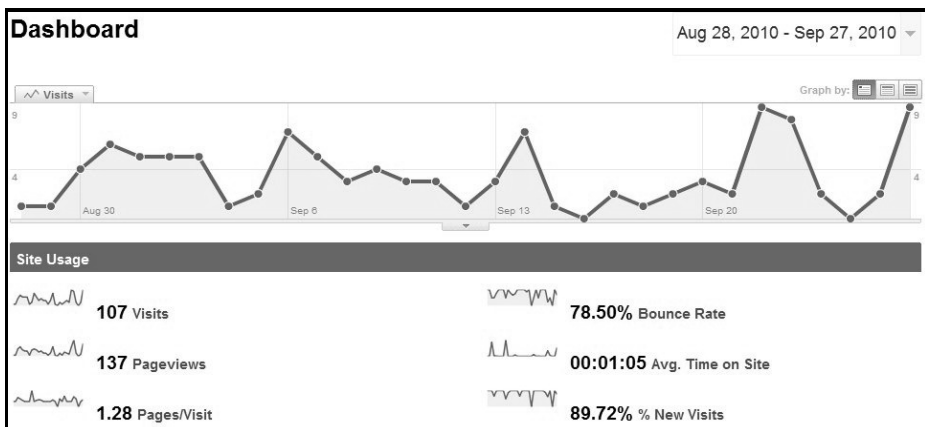
Firstly, if you have not already done so, visit the site, look at the content and let us have your feedback on what to add, change and improve. Is it attractive? Is it informative? Does it encourage you to want to know more? Please let us have your comments. (If nothing else that will make me feel better the next time I look at the usage statistics).

Secondly, publicise the site. Tell your family, tell your friends, if you use email why not add "**Support the League of Friends of Alexandra Hospital – visit www.lof-alex.co.uk**" to your signature. If you have a web site, or can influence your organisations web site, add it as a link. The more publicity we get the better.

Lastly, and I have to be careful how I word this, we have the marmite haters who do not currently have or use a computer possibly due to fear, age or other reasons and do not see the benefits of a web site. Well we only have to look around today to see how much of daily life has been "computerised". Generations have now been brought up on computers for the last 20 years and if we are to attract these younger generations to the League of Friends we must speak their language. The web will be their first source of information and if they are directed to an attractive and informative web site that may also encourage them to join the League of Friends. Therefore we all have our part to play in making that attraction.

Derek Coombes
LoF webmaster

Support the League of Friends of Alexandra Hospital – visit www.lof-alex.co.uk



Colin "Santa Claus" Kershaw



**Passed away
31st October 2010**

For the past few years, at approximately 10:00am every Christmas morning, Colin Kershaw would arrive at the Alexandra hospital. Not that many of the few people about would have recognised him. Dressed in a fur trimmed red suit with a black belt and boots, and sporting a magnificent white beard, anyone looking would have simply seen Santa Claus.

With his hand bell ringing and his sack over his shoulder "Santa" would make his way to the children's ward to hand out presents and put a smile on the face of any child unlucky enough to be in hospital at Christmas. After a mince pie, and a photo call with the nurses, "Santa" would then make his way to the adult wards to distribute more presents and bring a little yuletide joy to the older patients.

Although profoundly deaf, and often struggling against his own ill health, Colin never missed his Christmas visit and always had time for a chat with the patients. I remember the time when he told an elderly patient how sorry he was that she had to be in hospital over Christmas.

The dear lady retorted with—"Not half as sorry as I am!"

The Alex wasn't the only venue for "Santa's" visits. Several charities and schools benefited from a visit by Colins alto ego.

In his business life Colin worked for the Redditch Development Corporation and was a governor at Oakhill school. For some time he was also known as "Mr Carnival" as a result of his commentating at the Redditch Carnival, a role that carried over to the annual hospital fete.

As a member of the League of Friends Colin had been a committee member and a trustee for some considerable time. He was also the League's press liaison officer to the local newspapers.

Sadly, 2009 is now the last year that this will happen as Colin passed away on 31st October in the hospital that he worked so tirelessly to support.

He will be sorely missed by all his fellow volunteers in the League of Friends.

Bob Beard

From the Chairman

I would like to thank all those who turned up to our A.G.M. on Tuesday 9th November.

The Mayor of Redditch, Councillor Kath Banks, and members were welcomed by our President Elsie Haden. We had a very good meeting and the talk by Heather Gentry –Senior Infection Control Nurse – opened our eyes to all aspects of how infection can be passed on.

May I take this opportunity to remind you all of our Christmas Fayre on Saturday 4th December in the Coffee Shop from 1:30pm. to 4:30pm. As this is one of our fund raising events please come along and join us—we have lots of interesting stalls to tempt you.

May I also take this opportunity of wishing you all a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Pat Hadley

Chairman

Pam Day Resigns as Trustee



Pam Day has been a member of the League of Friends since it's beginning some twenty four years ago.

In the early days she organised the flower arrangers before taking over the Daisy Wheel which she ran for many years until the area was reclaimed by the hospital.

Pam was always to be seen at any League fete or fayre where anything floral was involved.

During her time with the League Pam has been a highly respected committee member, trustee and vice-chairman. Pam resigned in October and will be sorely missed for her expertise.



In
Memoriam

David Christian
Jack Field
Peggy Ann Gresswell
Charles Hood
Hilda Horsley
Audrey Hughes
Mrs Francis Hulmes
Joan Juggins
Diana Lloyd
David Saunders
Alice Walker
Joan Wallen



Thank You

Pauline would like to thank all the ladies who provide her with knitted garments for sale at the hospital.

The best month to date was October when the one day sale raised a massive £215!

Alexandra
League of Friends

Please visit & support us
on the web site at

www.lof-alex.co.uk

for information about
what we do
how we do it
when we do it
and who does it

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Feedback on the web site to
Leagueof.Friends@worsacute.nhs.uk

From the Editor



The Annual General Meeting, held on 9th November, was well attended despite the adverse weather conditions.

Opening the meeting the Honorary President, Mrs Elsie Haden, paid tribute to the late Colin Kershaw. She praised him for all his hard work and dedication to the League over many years.

The annual accounts were presented by the Honorary Treasurer, Mrs Gill Smith, who told the meeting that the League had had a successful year and was in a very healthy cash position. The Mayor of Redditch, Councillor Kath Banks, was then invited to propose acceptance of the accounts, which she did, the proposal being seconded by Maurice Powell. The Mayor then addressed the meeting and spoke of changes to come within the NHS. She went on to praise the work of the League since they had begun some twenty four years ago, adding that in that time they had raised, and spent, in excess of £34 million to the hospital's benefit. The Mayor finished her address with an anecdote advising the meeting that old doctors never die—they just lose their patients!

Next to speak was the Chairman, Mrs Pat Hadley, who thanked all the volunteers for their hard work over the past year. She went on to advise the meeting that work on the new reception area, and the League's new unit, was due to commence, hopefully, in January 2011. Picking up on the Mayor's mention of money raised, the Chairman told the meeting that for the period 2008 to 2010 the League had spent £444,000 on equipment for the hospital.

Mrs Hadley then reported the retirement of three League Trustees: Mrs Irene Gardner, Mrs Pam day, and Mr John Wilkinson. She thanked them all for their hard work and support. There was one nomination for appointment as a Trustee, Mr Ray Hinckley. Appointment of Mr Ray Hinckley, along with Mrs Gill Griffin and Mr Bob Beard, who were due for re-election, was proposed and all were elected unanimously. Finally, Heather Gentry, Senior Infection Control Nurse at the Alexandra, gave a most interesting and informative presentation to show the measures being implemented to combat infections such as

MRSI, CDI, and our old adversary—the Norovirus. As part of the programme new signage is to be introduced in and attempt to make staff and visitors alike more aware of the situation should an outbreak occur. The signs will also highlight the measures that can be taken to prevent the outbreak from spreading Heather advised the meeting that overall the hospital was being successful and staying within the parameters set. Following the presentation, questions were invited from the members and the matter of patients leaving the building to smoke was raised. Heather explained that while the patients could not be stopped every effort was made to try and dissuade them. They are even offered free "patches" during their stay in hospital to help them "kick the habit." This will be my last newsletter for this year so may I take this opportunity to wish all my readers a very happy Christmas, and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Bob Beard

Editor

Equipment Purchased year to 31st July 2010

Up to 31st July this year the League has spent a total of £92,944 on equipment for the hospital.

Additional equipment totalling £6,287 has been ordered but not invoiced as of 31st July.

A further £200,000 has been committed towards the cost of the front entrance refurbishment and the provision of a new League information area.

CLOSING DATE

To have your news included in the next issue please contact the editor on
01527 522887
OR VIA
THE LEAGUE of FRIENDS OFFICE.

Material for the February edition to be received by

28th January 2011
PLEASE NOTE

Material received after this date
WILL NOT be
included in the February issue

Christmas Fayre

Saturday 4th December

1:00pm - 4:30pm

In the COFFEE SHOP



Crafts

Cakes

Tombola

Raffle



Table Decorations



Knitted Baby Wear

Raffle to be drawn at 4:00pm

Organised by the League of Friends