

Holistic therapy and chaotic photoshoots – welcome to the RSH neonatal unit

It is with great pleasure and some pride that I introduce the neonatal unit at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH), situated in beautiful rural Shropshire. It is a busy 22 bedded unit, committed to providing family centred care. With six cots designated for intensive care, it provides for all babies born either sick or premature, covering approximately 5,000 births per year in the large geographical area of Shrewsbury, Telford, Powys and into north Wales. It regularly accepts babies from other areas.

The facilities on the unit are second to none, offering a variety of ventilation techniques and treatments, superb parents' accommodation, and the regular transferring and retrieval of babies. The neonatal team consists of three consultant neonatologists, three registrars, six neonatal nurse practitioners, junior doctors in training, and 40 plus dedicated

and reflexology to parents and staff, which is fantastic after a long shift!

We also boast a great dedicated Neonatal Outreach Team, thanks to Sisters Toni, Jo and Katie, providing excellent ongoing support and guidance to the families at home.

I have been a Sister on the unit for nearly three years and have found Shrewsbury a great place to live and work. The unit has a very friendly and warm atmosphere; much like a very large extended family.

A relatively new asset to the unit is the very dedicated and enthusiastic support group called BUTONS (Baby Unit Team Of Neonatal Support). The group has been established for the last two years, providing much needed friendship and support to the parents and the families both on and off the unit.

BUTONS is run by the parents themselves, and supported by myself and Sister Gail Wilkinson. The parents hold fortnightly coffee mornings, for a light hearted coffee and a chat, and monthly group meetings. They have also been



The January page of the BUTONS calendar features a birthday celebration in honour of the support group, while Eleanor Davies stars as Miss July.

nurses and support staff, providing a professional and caring service to the babies and their families. In addition, to the babies' care, the unit also provides much needed support for both the families and the staff. For example, Sister Carol Davies works once a week providing counselling for the unit's staff, parents and families, while twice a week Nannette and Joyce, our holistic therapists, give treatments such as Indian head massage



Christmas dinner dance, two very successful Summer Balls, raffles and the hosting of the unit's annual Baby's Christmas Party.

Their latest venture is a baby calendar 'By Special Delivery 2005'. It is such a refreshing glimpse into all the positive work that goes on within the neonatal unit. The children in the calendar have all struggled against the odds when they were born, to become the charming children in the pictures – without the specialist care of the neonatal team at RSH, their stories would have been very different.

The idea came following the film

FOCUS ON A UNIT

SUBMITTED BY Diane Rogers



Diane Rogers, Julia Fryer and Julie Houlston showing off the BUTONS' calendar.



Sue Ellis enjoying an Indian head massage from Joyce, one of the unit holistic therapists.

Calendar Girls last year. Everyone agreed that perhaps the nude staff calendar was a non starter, notably because the stethoscopes are so very tiny! The inspiration came from the special babies themselves.

Picture a room full of 17 babies and children aged between three months and seven years along with their siblings, doting parents and grandparents, then add some straw, wheat, sand, bubbles, polystyrene snow and yes a real live rabbit called Bea (No animal, child or photographer was hurt during the shoot.) This was the mayhem that became the BUTON's calendar shoot.

Despite the photographer's admirable patience throughout the sand and the bubbles and the snow, the group photo was the final straw!

All the proceeds from the sale of the calendar will go to the neonatal unit at RSH, and in turn to the babies we care for. The calendars are on sale now just £5 each. Please contact the group's treasurer Debbie Whitby on 01691 656485 for more information.

Is your unit special?

Why not contribute to our focus on a unit feature?

Contact kate@infantgrapevine.co.uk