

The Baronscourt News

Volume , Issue

October 2007

Welcome to the autumn 2007 edition of the Baronscourt News

Included in this edition –

No Smoking

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'A quarter of a century at Baronscourt' by Dr F O George

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No smoking please

As many of our patients will be aware Scotland became the first part of the UK to ban smoking in enclosed public places when legislation came into force at 6am on Sunday, March 26, 2006 There are fixed penalty fines of £200 for permitting others to smoke in no-smoking premises, £50 for smoking in no-smoking premises. Health care premises are classed, as 'non-smoking' under the regulations as are public toilets and **doorways** unfortunately there seems to be a problem with people smoking in these areas within the Practice as fixed penalties are in place we would have no option other than to enforce this. We would therefore appreciate if people would kindly respect the law that is in place and refrain from smoking in these areas. We can also offer advice and help if you need help to give smoking up!

Protected Learning Afternoon

The next staff protected learning afternoons will be:

Wednesday October 24th

Wednesday November 28th

The Practice will be closed from 12 noon on those days. This provides the staff with valuable time to develop as a team and learn about new services.

Flu vaccinations 2007/08

The Flu vaccine campaign will be underway by the beginning of October

Patients who are eligible are:

- All those aged 65 and over and/or have:
- Chronic respiratory disease including, Coronary Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, cystic fibrosis
- Asthma that requires continuous or repeated use of steroids either in inhaler or tablet form, or with previous episodes requiring hospital admission
- Chronic Heart Disease including those who have had a heart attack, suffer from angina or heart failure
- Patients with Kidney Disease
- Patients with Liver Disease including chronic hepatitis
- Diabetics
- Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment including those receiving chemotherapy, large doses of steroid tablets, and those with HIV infection.

For those who fall into the above categories but do not wish to have the flu vaccination **please** contact us so that your records can be amended. Carers will also be considered to protect those most at risk should their care receiver fall ill. A carer is considered to be someone who provides help and support to another person who could not manage without their help; this could be due to age, physical or mental illness or disability.

New Arrivals

We are pleased to report two new arrivals to the Practice team. Our previous GP Registrar, Dr Hala Gammoh had a baby boy, Jakob Jonathan Leonard Stephens on July 27th. Fiona Lindsay, our Health Visitor also had a baby boy, Shaun, on Monday September 17th. Congratulations go to them both and their families.

Andrea Kidd, Health Visitor will be leaving the Practice shortly to take up a Smoking Cessation Advisor role in the South Central Locality of Edinburgh. As Fiona Lindsay is on maternity leave there will be some new faces in the Health Visiting Department. Namely Emma Young, Nursery Nurse, Alison Irvine, a Staff Nurse who will be carrying out the Immunisations and Val Watters, Health Visitor.

'A Quarter of a Century at Baronscourt'

Dr George recently celebrated his 30th anniversary of qualifying as a Doctor; here are a few words from him about the last 25 years as a GP in Edinburgh:

I walked into the surgery at Baronscourt Terrace on 6th September 1982. I was wet behind the ears, though broadly experienced, and the most junior of the junior partners. General Practices were different in those days. No one expected anything except that the Doctor would be there when needed. There were no targets and the bureaucracy was almost non-existent. Three doctors, three part time receptionists, a District Nurse and a Health Visitor. Even with these minimal numbers this was an average size of practice. There were larger surgeries, with more doctors, but there were also a lot of smaller ones. Single-handed Practitioners were commonplace, their wives (for the doctors were mainly men) doubling as Receptionists and Practice Managers.

A weekend 'on call' consisted of 60 hours driving around Edinburgh visiting the homes of those who had phoned for a Doctor, and continued into Monday as a normal working day. My memories of those days are coloured by the fact that I was in a continual state of exhaustion!

The changes have come as a steady trickle rather than as earth shattering events. The largest, the move from one side of Morrison's car park (then the Royal High playing fields) to the other, was the least painful and accomplished on a single day entirely on schedule. Other changes have taken more time to adjust to. Whilst relinquishing nights on call came as a great relief for many, at first, this has since been replaced by fuller days of form filling and 'points' chasing. The great majority of our work is now dealing with chronic illness, illnesses that require careful monitoring with blood tests and other laboratory help. Laboratories tests are expensive, as much in the time spent by the technicians as the cost of equipment, and the cost of doing these outside normal working hours is prohibitive. There are very few routine examinations which need done before 8 in the morning or after 6pm. Truly urgent problems are now well catered for by the new 'Out of Hours' service.

Supermarkets that stay open at night need to sell goods to pay for themselves. Health is not a commodity, but it is increasingly being marketed as such. Unfortunately you cannot buy good health. It is already happening as doctors retire, that supermarket chains buy their practices. Should this go on you will increasingly see the adverts scaring people into new diseases, creating a demand for investigations and for medicines, which the traditional GP would consider inappropriate. It is a matter of great sadness to me, someone who has worked in and supported the NHS for 30 years, that the government should so swallow this industrial and market view of health care.

In the next five years at Baronscourt as I head towards retirement I do not want to see this surgery population grow significantly as I feel the Practice is large enough. I hope to see a situation where patients are able to accept increasing responsibility for their own care. Where the role of the GP is to help and guide rather than enforce the 'one size fits all' philosophy of government and industry. I strongly believe that a GP should be a confidant and advocate for the individual.

(Dr F O George)

Christmas & New Year Opening Times

The surgery will be open as follows over the Christmas and New Year period.

Monday 24th December – Open 8am-2pm

Tuesday 25th December – Closed

Wednesday 26th December – Closed

Thursday 27th December – Open as usual

Friday 28^h December – Open as usual

Monday 31st December – Open 8am-2pm

Tuesday 1st January – Closed

Wednesday 2nd January – Closed

Thursday 3rd January – Open as usual

Friday 4th January – Open as usual

It may be useful to keep a small supply of paracetamol and other over the counter remedies at home over the festive period. This may help you cope with common ailments such as simple coughs, colds and sore throats. In the event of a medical emergency please phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24

Remember to allow extra time for ordering repeat prescriptions.