



Your service, 
your call

Issue 7 Summer 2012

The newsletter for SECamb members

Olympic Torch Bearers

We are proud to announce that two members of staff have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to be torch bearers in the Olympic torch relay.

Hastings-based Paramedic Practitioner, Jeannette Yeowell and Clinical Team Leader, Paul Everest will be among the 8,000 people to carry the torch in a relay across the UK ahead of the 2012 Olympic Games in July and August.

The pair's success comes after their nominations were reviewed by one of 12 regional selection panels which looked for 2,012 individuals with inspirational stories of personal achievement or who have made a real contribution to their local community.

Jeannette was chosen for her heroism – in November 2009 she broke down the door to a burning house in St Leonard's on Sea to rescue a badly burned elderly woman.

Jeannette said: "I'm delighted to be part of the relay and to hold the torch in honour of all ambulance staff that do a fantastic job. And I would also like to thank everyone for their support."

A seasoned marathon runner, Jeannette competed in the first-ever UK women's marathon in the 1970s and has completed numerous marathons since then, including London, New York and Boston.

Paul was nominated for helping people with special needs and learning difficulties to take up judo, having spent 25 years in the sport.

He not only runs his own club but has been Team GB's judo coach for people with special needs and learning difficulties for the last 10 years.

He was instrumental in getting the British Judo Association to ensure affiliated clubs allowed people with special needs and learning disabilities to join their judo clubs.

Paul said the euphoria at being chosen for the relay was 'unbelievable' and added: "I feel very honoured to be taking part. I believe I have been selected to represent my club and everyone

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associated with it and the sport. And if this helps to raise awareness, then it has to be a good thing.”

Jeannette and Paul will be running with the torch through Bexhill on Tuesday, 17 July.

Clinical Operations Manager, Tim Fellows, said: “I’m very pleased for Jeannette and Paul, I’ll be there to cheer them on. This is great news for the ambulance service.”

Also picked to be a torch bearer is Community First Responder (CFR), Andrew Clark, from Horsham.

Andrew was nominated through his company, Lloyds TSB, for his commitment and dedication to the voluntary scheme since joining the Horsham and Southwater scheme in 2008. In 2011 Andrew attended 132 calls and spent nearly 700 hours either responding to emergencies or raising funds for the scheme.

Marc Harrold, the scheme’s team leader, said: “I am delighted that Andrew has been



recognised for his hard work and dedication to community responding and that he will be representing CFRs at this national event.”

You can cheer Andrew on in Weymouth on Friday, 13 July.

How is SECamb preparing for the Olympics?

We speak to Jon Amos, Contingency, Planning and Resilience Manager

How did you become involved in the Olympic Planning?

I joined the Trust Emergency Planning team in October 2009 from the Health Protection Agency. One of my first tasks was to look at the public event processes and as part of this I was asked to attend a national meeting about the Olympics. One meeting became ten meetings which soon became a full time project!

What has been the most challenging aspect of the planning so far?

The level of detail involved in the planning has been both fascinating and very challenging. Meetings with up to 20 organisations and 50 people involved have been common. Our next challenge is to

continue sharing this information with staff in the appropriate quantity and detail in the run up to the Games. It’s a balance of enabling staff to continue their jobs with the minimum amount of impact, whilst being aware of the intricacies of working alongside the Olympic Games.

Do you feel SECamb and the country as a whole are ready for this once in a lifetime event?

Planning is all running to time with a large amount of testing and exercising going on across the South East as well as nationally.

For any queries on how SECamb is preparing for the Olympics, please contact the Membership Office.

Spotlight on...

Volunteer Car Driver John Wainwright

SECamb and our patients benefit from the generosity of 130 volunteer drivers. This small army of volunteers picks patients up and drops them home enabling them to get to health appointments if they don't have their own transport. Volunteer car drivers are an integral and valued part of our patient transport service. We asked one of our volunteer drivers, John Wainwright, to write a short piece to describe what he does.



No two days are ever the same, so I've picked one that will hopefully be of interest and give an insight into a 'typical' day. I had an 8am pick up to do at Lawrence Ward, Medway, which takes about 40 minutes to reach, but worked

out slightly less as it was half term: the traffic reduction was a big blessing! Mr D was dressed and ready to go. We had an interesting conversation as we drove along the A2, headed for King's College Hospital. He had travelled the world during his life and is still working despite his medical difficulties. The time passed pleasantly around the South Circular and we arrived around 9.30am at Outpatients, ready for Mr D's first appoint at 9.45am. Parking is much easier at King's College than in the 'old' days – dedicated parking, and new drop off zones make it easier to deliver. My patient had a mobile phone, so I could pop into the quieter Dulwich site, get a paper and catch up on the week-end sports while enjoying a cup of tea and a bun at the volunteers' kiosk, awaiting my patient's call to collect him.

Waiting for patients is not most drivers' favourite part of the job. Some read books, some are puzzles people, and others do what I do.

I waited until 11.45am when the call came through that Mr D was ready. We set off back to Medway, and traffic was even lighter so I was able to get back to Medway hospital's restaurant, after ensuring my

patient was safely back, where my SECamb ID badge got me 10% off my macaroni cheese and green beans!

My next call was to Chatham to collect Mrs M. As a lot of people in transport or delivery occupations will know, the number of houses that do not have a house number, or have numbers in places you can't see from the road, is amazing. Mrs M's was obscured, but I found it – though not before getting a light soaking from a passing shower! I had driven Mrs M before, when she was accompanied by her husband, so I asked after him, but was sad to learn he had recently passed away. It was a short journey to Rainham and we arrived as another heavy shower fell as if out of nowhere.

After dropping Mrs M home, a quick turn-around took me back uptown when I got a call on my mobile. A patient transport vehicle had got a puncture in Sheppey and a patient needed to get back home after a physiotherapy appointment.

It was a good half hour to Sheppey General where I easily located my patient as she was the only person sitting in the hospital foyer. She lived on the north side of the island and once safely delivered home, I parked up for a much needed cuppa. I always carry tea and coffee-making supplies for any eventuality, especially being stuck in traffic jams. I also carry a supply of biscuits in case any patient should encounter blood sugar problems en route.

On my journey home, there was time to appreciate the view of the Thames Estuary, now swathed in late afternoon sunshine. Southend was clearly visible opposite Whitstable, and because it was a very clear day, Reculver too. I could only appreciate the view for a short while – traffic builds up swiftly, and a longer than necessary day could ensue!

To find out more about becoming a volunteer car driver, please phone 01273 897 741 or email car.service@secamb.nhs.uk



Preventing trips, slips and falls

SECAmb crews regularly respond to people who have fallen or tripped, often in their own home.

Did you know?

- One in three people over the age of 65, and one in two of those over 80, will fall each year.
- Falls and fractures in the over-65s account for four million hospital bed days each year in England.

There are simple things you can do to reduce the risk of falling. For older people, falls resulting in hip or pelvic fractures are one of the most common and debilitating injuries. The psychological impact, and reduced independence, can be as distressing as the physical injury sustained.

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While it's impossible to prevent falls all together, there are a number of things we can do to try and reduce the likelihood of falling ourselves, or to protect our loved ones.

Simple steps

Create trip free spaces – it's easy to do a quick check of your house, or the house of older relatives and friends, to identify any trip hazards. These might include the edge of a rug, wonky floorboards, trailing wires, steps into and out of the house or between levels inside, and the corners and legs of tables and chairs. Move any trip hazards you can: simply identifying them will help you be aware of possible dangers.

Consider handrails – many people have handrails fitted to staircases, front or back door steps, and by the toilet, shower and bath.

Don't forget your feet – avoid walking around the house in socks or soft-bottomed slippers, do simple exercises to keep your ankles strong, and make sure shoes fit well.



Regular eye tests – failing or changing eyesight can make falls more likely. Have regular check-ups and be sure to wear any glasses or lenses you are prescribed.

Also consider: keeping things in places you can easily reach, non-slip mats for the bath and shower, and asking for help with jobs you find physically difficult.

NHS Choices has lots more advice on preventing falls, slips and trips and many community trusts and local councils run falls prevention services with specialists who may be able to do an audit of your home to identify hazards and suggest remedies. Visit www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Falls or contact your GP or Council for more advice and support.

Myth busting

Our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALs) team receives hundreds of enquiries each month. There are some enquiries that crop up regularly, so we thought it would be useful to look at some of these and provide answers to the most commonly asked questions.

Why can't I choose which hospital you take me to?

Our crews will take their patient to the nearest hospital that provides the care the patient needs. You can imagine the difficulty in doing anything else: if we are transporting a patient whose condition worsens and we've just driven past a perfectly good Accident and Emergency department to take the patient to another hospital that they prefer, no-one is going to be happy with the outcome. One exception to this rule is if the patient is suffering from a particular condition, for example a stroke. Then, the nearest place that offers the best specialist care may not be the nearest hospital and our crews will take the patient to the place offering specialist care. Another, rare, exception is if a patient is already being treated for an existing condition at a particular hospital and their condition has become worse. However, even in this case, if their condition is felt to be life-threatening then the patient will be taken to the nearest A&E.

Why can't I come onto your ambulance in my wheelchair?

In the back of an ambulance, space is at a premium, and that space is carefully designed to provide our crews with all the equipment they need to provide the best possible care for patients in a huge range of circumstances. In order to take a patient onto the ambulance in their wheelchair, there would need to be an anchor-point for the chair to ensure the patient was transported safely, and there simply isn't room. Instead, where a patient can be moved from their wheelchair, they will be transported to hospital and provided with a hospital wheelchair on arrival. For the few patients who cannot be moved from their



wheelchair at all, we have to call for a special transport ambulance with anchor points, which slows down the transfer to hospital and so we only do this when we cannot move the patient in any other way.

What are the rules about when an ambulance can be driven faster than the speed limit, on the hard shoulder or through red lights?

There are lots of rules and regulations about when an ambulance can be driven in ways that would otherwise break the law. Our ambulance crews receive weeks of specialist driving training, and the use of blue lights is restricted to when an ambulance is heading to or from a life-threatening emergency.

While using blue lights, ambulances are exempt from some motoring regulations, including: stopping at red lights, driving on the motorway hard shoulder (even against the direction of traffic), and sticking to the speed limit. However, they must still obey one way signs, level crossing lights, and 'stop' and 'give way' signs.

We know that it can be difficult for other drivers to choose how to respond when an emergency vehicle is approaching and they want to move out of the way. The basic rule is that drivers should not break the law in order to help the ambulance get past. A video has been produced specially to help. Please visit www.bluelightaware.org.uk to watch the video (unfortunately this is only available online).



Annual Members Survey 2010-11

Thanks to those of you who completed the annual membership survey that we sent out in the previous edition of *Your Call*. We received nearly 200 responses, all of which have helped us understand more about what you want from your membership of SECamb. The results will be reviewed by your governors on our Membership Development Committee and will help inform the opportunities we develop to work with our members going forward.

Overall, the vast majority of members (95%) who responded felt that their membership was providing them with opportunities to get involved with SECamb at least partially as they would like. In many cases this was simply receiving this newsletter, but nearly 15% of people said they'd been to a consultation event, focus group, or our Annual General Meeting. A small number of respondents said they would like more opportunities to get involved, suggesting that more local meeting venues should be used, and that it would be good to have access to their governors.

Update your options: we invite you to events, send you documents, and communicate with you based on the options you ticked when you became a member. If you would like to receive invitations to participate and have not yet received any or would like to receive more, please contact the Membership Office.

86% of respondents found *Your Call*

interesting, and there were a number of suggestions about ways it could be improved, including having more about local issues, more from your governors, and more practical articles about how the ambulance service works. Members liked the real-life stories and interviews with staff members and patients, and would like to see these continue.

Many members said they didn't know the name of their governor(s), so it is worth pointing out that the governors' names and contact details are now included in each issue of *Your Call*. In addition, we will be including updates from governors in your area in every other issue of the newsletter, allowing them to tell you what they have been working on and highlight any local issues.

Your service, your call: we are always keen to receive your feedback. Please contact the Membership Office with any comments and suggestions to improve your membership. Please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison service (PALs) with any queries about the ambulance service or comments on the care you have received: 01737 363866 (Kent and Surrey), 01273 897888 (Sussex) or via the Membership Office and we can pass them on.

Thanks again if you found the time to complete the survey. We'll be checking in with you annually to ensure membership is providing what you want.

Stop Press - SECamb secures NHS 111 contract for region

As we go to press (12 June) we have been informed that we've been awarded the contract to handle non-emergency medical calls across the entire South East Coast



region. SECamb will work in partnership with Harmoni, one of the largest independent providers of urgent services in England, to provide an NHS 111 service across Kent, Surrey and Sussex when it is rolled out nationally next year.

The 111 phone service will complement our 999 service and will simplify access for patients across a range of healthcare services such as dentistry, out-of-hours doctor services, or emergency care if their condition requires an ambulance. NHS 111 will be free to call and operational 24/7, 365 days of the year. Unlike standard out-of-hours services, where you are required to wait for a GP or nurse to call back, an assessment will be made at the first point of contact.

[Look out for more about the 111 service in the next newsletter.](#)

Get involved

Join our Advisory Group

SECamb is revitalising the way we work with all our stakeholders, including our Foundation Trust members. To develop this work, we have involved lots of our FT members, staff and other stakeholders in helping recommend how we can best ensure stakeholders' views are taken into account. We want to do this as simply and effectively as possible.

We will be setting up an 'Inclusion Hub Advisory Group' of people bringing a range of views and perspectives from across the South East Coast area. SECamb staff will brief the Group on plans and service changes and seek the Group's advice on whether wider community engagement is necessary or simply gather the views of the Advisory Group to inform our plans. This Group will also be able to feed information on issues of importance to members into the Trust.

We are seeking nominations from people who would be able to spend four to eight days per year helping us ensure your views are taken

into account whenever we plan changes to our services. If you might be interested, please **contact the Membership Office** to let us know and we'll send you more details as soon as possible.

Becoming a governor

Our Council of Governors started working together in March 2011 and a number of governor positions will be coming up for election in March 2013. Existing governors will be able to stand for re-election if they wish, however, all our members will have the opportunity to nominate themselves and also stand for election.

Later this year, we will be offering support to any members who are interested in finding out more about the role of a governor. If you might be interested, or you want to know more, please contact the Membership Office.

[We're holding an election in Brighton and Hove at present, and all members in that area should have had the opportunity to stand for election and have received ballot papers to vote. Please do use your vote! The deadline to return your ballot paper is 21 June.](#)

Our whereabouts this Summer

SECamb will be out and about all over the South East Coast area this Summer. Governors will be joining SECamb staff and volunteers. Come and find us at any of the following events*:

Eastbourne 999 Day	Fri 6-Sun 8 July
National Ijtema, Tilford	Sat 7 July
Egham Royal Show	Sat 24-Sun 25 August
East Sussex Seniors' Association Event	Eastbourne 30th August
Annual General Meeting	28th September

*Correct at the time of going to press.

Your Governors

Brian Rockell	East Sussex
Terry Steeples	East Sussex
Ken Davies	Kent
Margaret Bridges	Kent
Maggie Fenton	Kent
Robin Kenworthy	Kent
Colin Hall	Medway
Ian Smith	Surrey
Marjory Broughton	Surrey
Paul Jordan	Surrey
Terry Daubney	Surrey
Alison Arnold	West Sussex
Ted Coleman	West Sussex
Elections in progress	Brighton and Hove

Governors can be contacted via the Membership Office – any post or emails for governors will be forwarded directly to them. In addition, public governors have their own constituency email addresses:

Brighton and Hove - bhgov@secamb.nhs.uk

East Sussex - eastsusgov@secamb.nhs.uk

Kent - kentgov@secamb.nhs.uk

Medway - medgov@secamb.nhs.uk

Surrey (and NE Hampshire) - surrgov@secamb.nhs.uk

West Sussex - westsusgov@secamb.nhs.uk

Public Board and Council meeting dates

Members are very welcome to come to our public Board and Council meetings. You can ask questions of our Board and Council. Please let the Membership Office know if you plan to attend so we have an idea of numbers.

30 July 2012 – Gatwick Worth Holiday Inn	28 September 2012 Annual General Meeting	28 November 2012	29 January 2013	28 March 2013
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For timings and venues, please contact the Membership Office no more than two weeks before the meeting date.

Please get in touch with the Membership Office if:

- You want more information about anything
- You have a story you want to share with us
- You have ideas for this newsletter
- Your contact details change
- You want membership forms or other literature to distribute

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SMS/text: 07770 728250