



Celebrating 60 years of the NHS

On Saturday 5 July 2008, the National Health Service celebrates its 60th anniversary. *The Link* looks back at some of the highlights that have marked our hospitals over the past six decades.

Based on an Act of Parliament passed in 1946, the National Health Service (NHS) came into being on 5 July 1948. Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan – known as the father of the NHS – declared that the new service, offering free healthcare to all, would ‘lift the shadow from millions of homes’.

With the establishment of the NHS, the clinical services of St Bartholomew’s, The Royal London and The London Chest hospitals were nationalised. This was a vast change from the previous voluntary hospital system, in which patients were the recipients of subsidised charity and our centuries-old hospitals relied for money on everything from the whims of monarchs to

coins deposited in city-wide collection boxes, rich donors, and even horse-drawn floats roaming the streets appealing for funds.

However, the changes in funding and administration did not affect the spirit of service that had long-characterised our hospitals, which have continued to build on their history of pioneering clinical excellence.



1948, Ward round of Clifford Wilson, Professor of Medicine, Helene Raphael Ward, London Hospital



c1967, Renal dialysis in Hanbury Ward at The London

1948
Creation of the National Health Service and nationalisation of the Trust’s hospitals.

1948
The London Chest Hospital celebrated its 100th birthday.



1950, Clerical staff welcoming patients and dealing with their appointments

1950. A patient recovering in the Square at Barts; the process of recuperation – the first antibiotic, penicillin, had been developed to treat troops during the war.



1967
The Royal London developed as a dialysis centre and performed its first renal transplants.

1959
The Royal London received its first artificial kidney – a key advance in the development of its renal service.

1970

The London Chest Hospital pioneered the investigation and treatment of coronary artery disease and was one of the first hospitals in the country to use heart/lung by-pass machinery for open heart surgery.

1973

St Bartholomew’s Hospital celebrated its 750th anniversary.

1991

The Barts Day Surgery Unit opened – the first of its kind in Europe.

1993

The John Abernethy Theatre Suite opened at Barts – the most technically advanced outside the US.

1994

The Royal Hospitals NHS Trust was formed, bringing together The Royal London, St Bartholomew’s and The London Chest hospitals.

1999

London’s Air Ambulance, based at The Royal London, became operational – the first helicopter emergency medical service in Britain to carry a doctor on board.



1999, London’s Air Ambulance, based at The Royal London, became operational.

1998

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children (which joined the Trust in 1996) transferred its services to The Royal London Hospital.

1999

The Royal Hospitals NHS Trust was renamed Barts and The London NHS Trust.

2004

The dedicated Breast Care Centre opened in the refurbished West Wing at Barts – one of the advance works for our new hospitals redevelopment.

2005

The Royal London Hospital received and treated 208 patients injured in the 7 July bombings. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited the hospital the next day to meet and thank staff.



2005, Queen Elizabeth II thanks staff at The Royal London for their role in treating people injured in the 7 July 2005 London bomb attacks

2005

Launch of the UK’s first large-scale trial to find out if a patient’s own stem cells can be used to treat heart disease.

2006

The new £58 million Pathology and Pharmacy Building opened at The Royal London.



2006, Consultant Cardiologist Professor Martin Rothman and Dr Roger Boyle, the National Director for Heart Disease at the Department of Health at the launch of the Heart Attack Centre

2006

Launch of the award-winning emergency Heart Attack Centre at The London Chest Hospital.

2006

The Royal London Hospital celebrated the 250th anniversary of its opening on the Whitechapel site.

2007

Construction of our new hospitals at both The Royal London and Barts started.

2008

The Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre opened at Barts to fast-track new treatments for cancer patients.

Celebrating the NHS’s 60th birthday



A number of events are being held during the summer to celebrate the NHS’s 60th anniversary. The NHS Live and Social Care Awards event at Wembley Stadium on 1 July will showcase the very best in innovation and practice across the NHS, with awards to recognise the achievements of NHS and social care staff from across the country. This will be followed by a national service of celebration at Westminster Abbey on 2 July. Marking the anniversary at Barts and The London, the Trust’s archivists have created an exhibition display on the 60 years of the NHS, which will feature in this year’s Open Day at The Royal London Hospital on 10 September and other events through the year.