

PRESS RELEASE

Issued: 31st January 2007



The Mysterious Mr Guy's New Mini Museum

Guy's and St Thomas' Charity has invested £50,000 in a permanent Mini Museum for Guy's Hospital, London celebrating the institution's colourful and innovative past with exhibits, photos and paintings.

Situated in one of the hospital's three public atria the exhibition is free and open to patients, visitors and staff. The museum boasts its own blunderbuss gun, a milkmaid's yoke, a newly commissioned moving image lenticular Thomas Guy, original benefactor of the hospital, and a ring, cane and chalice belonging to him.

Artefacts are zoned in three themes: *The Mysterious Mr Guy*, *Mr Guy's Southwark* and *Mr Guy's Hospital*.

The Mysterious Mr Guy is Thomas Guy, bookseller, printer and publisher, who funded the original building in 1721. Land was leased for 999 years, but Guy died in 1724 before construction was completed. A bequest of one third of his estate ensured that the hospital opened and continues to serve patients today.

Concerned about 'the incurably ill and hopelessly insane' Guy, who turned down the post of Sheriff of the City of London and position of Lord Mayor, was nonetheless praised for his Hospital for Incurables. Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe* wrote in the early eighteenth century that the new hospital was: "the charitable gift and single endowment of one person, and, perhaps, the greatest of its kind...that ever was founded in this nation by one person, whether private or publick, not excepting the kings themselves."

Mr Guy's Southwark explores the area's gritty past. The origin of the local neighbourhood name, 'Snowsfields', is revealed - tanned hides bleached in urine hung in rows that stretched like fields of snow - and visitors are reminded by unearthed tankards that Guy's is partly built on the site of The Tabard Inn, where Chaucer's pilgrims began their journey in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Southwark was 'The Ward Without', it housed the foul and illicit trades that the City wouldn't accommodate. Guy's was a 'lock' hospital, complete with its preserved blunderbuss, porter's truncheons and substantial lock to prevent patients with transmitted diseases like syphilis and tuberculosis returning to the community.

more.../

The portraits and equipment in *Mr Guy's Hospital* illustrate the many eminent physicians and personalities hosted by the hospital over the years. Obstetrician John Braxton Hicks gave his name to the pre-labour contractions he classified in 1872 and pathologist Thomas Hodgkin discovered Hodgkin's Disease as well as bringing the stethoscope from Paris to the UK.

More sensationally, physician William Gull, a student at Guy's from 1837 who treated the Prince of Wales for typhoid in 1871 was a prime suspect for Jack the Ripper. Romantic poet John Keats was a medical student at Guy's from 1814 and qualified as an apothecary in 1817 and the exhibition showcases original wax moulages of disease by Joseph Towne, Britain's best wax modeller.

Eminent women are represented by Sarah Swift, Matron from 1900 until she became Matron-In-Chief for the British Red Cross Society in the Great War and Emily McManus, Matron from 1927 who brought her experience of World War I to bear throughout the photographed underground surgery and casualties of World War II. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Salassi's daughter Princess Tsahai, photographed in action, studied nursing at Guy's in 1938 following the Italian invasion of her country. The hospital's history of dedicated nursing is represented by late nineteenth century veiled bonnets and more modern, starched caps.

The hospital is also notable for a number of other more recent firsts:

- First hospital in the UK to use a robot to conduct a kidney transplant using the Da Vinci Robot in 2005 (funded with a grant of £1,000,000 from the Charity)
- First hospital to employ a fashion designer, Paul Costello, to design new uniforms in 2005

Karen Sarkissian, Director of Art and Heritage at the Charity said: "Gathering all of the objects and stories has been a fascinating experience and it is rewarding to see them all come together in this dynamic display."

Elaine McLaren and partner Alan Bird of Axiom Design Partnership Ltd researched artefacts, designed and installed the exhibition. Elaine said: "It's been so interesting to pull together the many different strands of Guy's stories. The exhibition is not intended as a definitive history, but designed in such a way that people can dip in as they wish, and hopefully get a real feel for Guy and the times he lived in, as well as the great achievements of the hospital. We'd like to thank all the people who have helped in our research."

Mini Museum/3

The Guy's Mini Museum brings together artefacts from 300 years of south London life, celebrating community involvement with the hospital throughout the ages with pieces on loan from the Gordon Museum, East Grinstead Museum and the archive stored, displayed and conserved by Guy's and St Thomas' Charity's art and heritage programme.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. For more images or to arrange a visit to the Guy's Mini Museum please contact Laura Mason, Communications Assistant, Guy's and St Thomas' Charity, on Tel: 020 7188 9083, email: laura.mason@gsttcharity.org.uk, or out of hours on Tel: 07722 119175.
2. Guy's and St Thomas' Charity is the largest NHS – related charity in the UK. It provides funding to support health services in Lambeth and Southwark and to benefit the wider NHS. The art and heritage programme aims to make health service environments more welcoming and provide the best possible atmosphere for recovery and rehabilitation. For more information contact Laura Mason (as above) or visit the website: www.gsttcharity.org.uk
3. Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust provides ¾ million patient contacts in acute and specialist hospital services every year. As one of the biggest NHS Trusts in the UK, it employs over 8,500 staff. The Trust also works in partnership with the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing and Biomedical Sciences of King's College London and other Higher Education Institutes to deliver high quality education and research. Website: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk
4. Axiom Design Partnership Ltd. researched, curated and designed the exhibition. They installed secure, 'anti-bandit' display cases at the hospital and spent 15 months interviewing long-term staff about changes over the years, sourcing historical artefacts and images, and designing showcases and graphics. Axiom can be contacted at axiom@madasafish.com or Tel: 01372 463910