

# HAPPENINGS

## Queen Elizabeth's Foundation

PROMOTING EQUALITY FOR DISABLED PEOPLE



Registered Charity No. 251051

Spring 2008

## Adapting to Change

**Queen Elizabeth's Foundation Training College opened its doors in 1934 at a time when the welfare state barely existed.**

Public attitudes and legislation in regard to disability have changed over the years, allowing many disabled people to gain vocational training within the community at large. The challenges may have changed but demand to attend our residential Training College remains as high as ever.

In fact, to keep pace with the demand, the Foundation is planning a multi-million pound modernisation programme of the 35 acre site.

We asked Garry Billing, Principal, to tell us just how the College has, and is, adapting to the changing needs of its trainees.

### Q. Why is this modernisation programme necessary?

We were fortunate to have acquired these wonderful grounds but inevitably, the site and its buildings have developed in a somewhat ad hoc fashion over the past 70 plus years and many of our facilities are now becoming tired, impractical and, in some cases, not fit for purpose.



Garry Billing, Principal, Training College

In particular, our hostel type accommodation, featuring shared toilet and bathing facilities, needs replacing with homely, en-suite rooms and our training delivered from flexible space which is more cost effective in terms of staff productivity and energy efficiency.

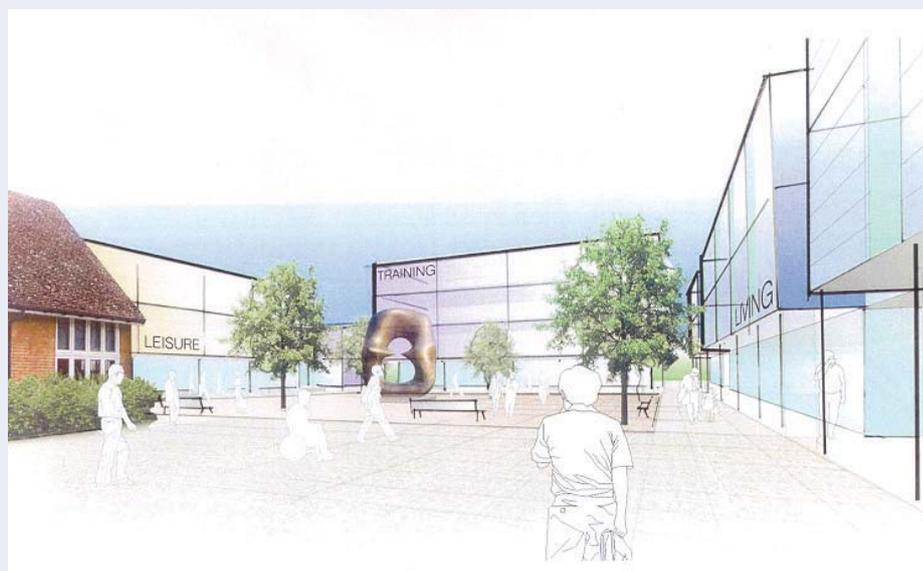
**Q. Here you are talking practicalities of bricks and mortar, but have the actual needs of the trainees changed over the years?**

Yes, whilst the building programme is a straightforward funding issue, the demands of the trainees themselves have been far more difficult to assess.

During the years 1935-1949, severely disabled men from across Britain were trained for employment here.

The register shows that the most common disabilities were amputations and war injuries as well as the effects of diseases such as polio and tuberculosis.

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*Campus style living - one of the designs currently under consideration.*

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## Hamilton House Opens its Doors



The kitchen has been individually designed to cater for the differing needs of our clients.

Hamilton House, named after our late Chairman, the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell DL in recognition of his many years of support to the Foundation, has opened its doors to a bright new future.

Focused on providing clients at the Development Centre with the experience of living within a 'group environment', Hamilton House consists of six bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, a communal kitchen and lounge, and a balcony to enjoy those days of sunny weather.

This option is proving extremely popular with our clients - many seeing this as their preferred choice of accommodation when moving into the wider community.

The sociable atmosphere allows them to share domestic chores and no doubt argue as to who is in charge of the remote control on the large screen television - in other words, it's just like living in any other family home.

## Wayne Wins Gold Medal

Wayne Evans, a member of our Resource Centre, achieved a gold medal in the 2000m British Indoor Rowing Championships in Birmingham last November. A fantastic feat for anyone but for Wayne, something special.



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For Wayne is paralysed from the chest down following a road traffic accident in 2004.

Using a modified machine, electrodes stimulate the leg muscles to move with each stroke controlled by a computer switch on the pull bar.

"It was all about beating your own individual record times but it was a real bonus to compete

alongside able-bodied athletes," said Wayne.

Always keen on fitness, perhaps this was the hardest adjustment to make following his accident.

"I had a busy career but my relaxation was sport, particularly sailing and then suddenly, my world came crashing down around me as I was confined to sitting at home in a wheelchair."

It was the specialised gym equipment that first attracted Wayne to the Resource Centre.

"I teamed up with two other guys and we always had such a laugh when training. It felt good to be in an environment with other disabled people who understood just how I felt and I soon realised that there were many others worse off than me.

"The Centre acted as a crucial springboard at a time when I was struggling to get my life back on track," continued Wayne.

And his next target? "I'd like to try adapted rowing on water, now a recognised Olympic sport. I'm too late for Beijing but planning to make the World Championships in 2010." Good luck Wayne.



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*Engineering Design and Draughtsmanship*

Thankfully, peacetime and advances in medicine mean that these are not today's main challenges. While the College continues to train around 350 people every year, the number with a severe physical disability has declined over the last two or three decades. This is as a result of changing public attitudes and increased accessibility to educational and employment facilities, backed up by effective Health & Safety legislation reducing the number of accidents at work.

We still support a significant number of people with physical disabilities, however, trainees are increasingly likely to have a disability related to stress, anxiety, depressive illness, mental ill-health and learning difficulties.

### **Q. Has this impacted on your approach to training?**

Current trainees do present a greater degree of complexity. Most are trying to cope with a number of individual barriers to employment and this has a notable effect on how we support them in their quest. Gone are the days when the first priority was to provide medical support and personal care. The College has learnt to adapt.

Nowadays, our trainees are self-caring and their training is about much more than acquiring vocational skills. At least 50% of our effort now goes into helping people address the more personal barriers to work such as poor self-esteem, lack of confidence and anxiety attacks. 'Training' now includes classes in coping strategies related to diverse areas such as anger and stress management. Counselling is provided where it might prove effective in addressing deep-rooted anxiety and perhaps underlying problems.

### **Q. Has the College curriculum also changed over the years?**

Early records show that engineering, welding and cookery were popular courses but demand reduced following the end of World War 2. New courses sprang up in gardening, leatherwork, clerical work, radio repairs and book-binding. Technologies, markets and skills gaps are constantly changing and the College has an impressive track record of identifying and adapting to new demands.

However, we will always strive to provide choice. Not everyone can function behind a desk or in front of a computer. Some people need to work with their hands, others need to work outdoors. So, today we continue to offer a varied and modern portfolio offering training in horticulture, construction, administration, accountancy, media, travel and information technology.



*Computer Aided Design*

### **Q. What is your vision for the College in the next five years?**

In residential terms, building a community that encourages people to address their individual personal development in a caring environment. The supportive culture of the College is its most enduring feature and as the needs and expectations of our trainees change, so must our facilities.

My vision is to update the accommodation, modernise teaching technologies and techniques and develop a supportive 'campus' environment across the entire site – in other words, provide our trainees with what every student attending university in the UK has come to expect.

## For One Night Only

Friends both old and new joined us last September for a fun night out at the Mantra Restaurant in central London to celebrate the 'India Now' season in true Bollywood style.



*Corinna, Lady Hamilton, joins in the fun.*

Following the finest Indian cuisine, the entertainment commenced with a group of Bollywood dancers before the cry went up - Elvis is in the building! Not only did Elvis perform both rock and ballad classics but guests were invited to sing a duet with the King himself.

And, when Elvis finally left the building, the disco came to life with guests dancing into the early hours.



## The Classics Continue to Attract the Crowds

The perfect combination of Guinness and oysters continues to please our friends in the City.



Celebrating its 42nd birthday last November, the simplistic approach to the G&O luncheon is perhaps the reason for its success. Book early to avoid disappointment!



Another stalwart of our events calendar, the Ladies Autumn Lunch, celebrated its 17th successive year last October. 300 ladies came to the Queen's Stand, Epsom Racecourse to hear David Shilling recount his memories of being the man who



*L-R: Sue Jacobs, Chairman of the Ladies Autumn Lunch committee; David Shilling; Maggie Thornton, Blair Foundation, sponsors of the event.*

re-invented hats in the late 20th Century. Very much at home at a racecourse, Shilling told of how he created the sensational hats and outfits made famous by his mother, Gertrude, attending Royal Ascot for over 30 years.



*David Shilling and Corinna, Lady Hamilton, stop by the Development Centre stand to chat with one of the clients.*

## Forthcoming EVENTS

Friday, 4 April  
Bridge Tea at 2pm  
Leatherhead Court

Sunday, 13 April  
Flora London Marathon

Wednesday, 23 April  
Ladies Spring Lunch  
Queen's Stand, Epsom Racecourse

Friday, 25 April  
Bridge Tea at 2pm  
Old Barn Hall, Bookham

Thursday, 15 May  
Gala Dinner  
Surrey County Hall, Kingston

Thursday, 9 October  
Ladies Autumn Lunch  
Queens Stand, Epsom Racecourse

For further information,  
please contact Pat Lelliott at  
the Foundation on 01372 841213.

## Brain Injury Centre Featured on National Television

The excellence and expertise of the Brain Injury Centre was promoted on national television in a Channel 5 documentary, entitled 'The Real Sleeping Beauty'.

Shown on a Monday evening at a peak viewing time of 9pm, the programme looked at the impact on the brain after emerging from a coma.



*L-R Shahna and her mother are met by Centre staff Lynne Hensor and Barbara Weston.*

15 minutes of the one hour programme was devoted to Shahna, an ex-client of the Centre, and her own personal road to recovery.

Aged 18, Shahna was travelling back from the Glastonbury festival when she was involved in a car accident which left her in a coma for 23 days and hospital staff holding out very little hope for her survival.



*Promoting the Foundation, this image was viewed by over 1m people.*

The cameras followed Shahna as last September she returned to Banstead. She was met by staff and took a tour of the Centre which inevitably brought back memories, both good and bad.

During the programme, Eileen Jackman, Principal of the Centre, was interviewed to provide a



*L-R Lynne takes Shahna on a tour of the Centre bringing back many memories.*

professional opinion on generic implications of a brain injury. Shahna's life will never be the same again and her dream of becoming a journalist has been shattered by the accident.

But ten years on, she is independent, has a boyfriend, attends college and is hoping to qualify for university.

In Shahna's own words: "I am proud of what I have achieved but I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for the Brain Injury Centre."

## Tractor Sale Leads to Bumper Crop

McCormick has auctioned the last tractor to come off its Doncaster production line - but with a very special reserve. Thanks to kindly agreeing to donate all proceeds received over the cost price of the tractor, we received £10,700 which enabled us to provide a new training kitchen for clients at our Development Centre.

Martin Browne, Brand and Communications Manager at McCormick, toured our Development Centre to witness that the money would be going to a very good cause.

"As production moved overseas, we wanted to celebrate over 60 years of happy times at the plant. We first heard about the Foundation from a colleague whose wife, Jennie Lamb, has been a long time supporter and it has been a tremendous bonus for us to have been able to use this historic occasion to support the work of this wonderful charity."



*L-R: Jeremy and Jennie Lamb receive the cheque for £10,700 on behalf of Queen Elizabeth's Foundation from Martin Browne of McCormick, accompanied by the proud new owners of the historic tractor, Caroline and Stephen Haylock.*

# HAPPENINGS

## Mobility Centre Moving On

Having established an enviable reputation of being a centre of excellence for the provision of a wide range of specialised training programmes, the Mobility Centre has introduced a number of new courses.

With the changing demographics of the population, older people are wanting to drive for longer, but safely. A new one-day course is focused on how medical conditions can impact on road safety and is proving extremely popular with Road Safety Departments from across the UK.



Our three-day intensive course on training driving instructors to teach disabled people has been running in the UK since 1984 and our reputation has spread far and wide. Last September, we took the course to Ireland and this year will see us taking the programme to Hungary.

Other projects have included two new workshops, 'a practical approach to disability' and 'wheelchair training for professionals' and the designing of a bespoke course for young deaf adults.

## InfoZone - A Hub of Activity

The new InfoZone at the Development Centre is proving a great success.



The computer course has always been very popular with clients but access to the classroom inevitably has to be restricted to supervised times. This does not allow for general networking during evenings and weekends.

Previously a lounge area rarely used, this space was totally redecorated to provide a bright and airy environment similar to that of a cybercafe.

PCs, equipped with a wide variety of software and connected to a printer and scanner, are mounted on fully-adjustable work stations in order to accommodate various sizes of wheelchair.

The InfoZone provides an invaluable source of information on housing opportunities, personal finance and vocational training to all the clients who also use Infozone to email friends, for social networking and to download their favourite music. Whatever time of day, this room is always buzzing.

## Senior Civil Servants Volunteer Services

As part of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) 5000 project, senior civil servants are volunteering their services at our Resource Centre.

Aimed at forging links and gaining a greater understanding of the communities it serves, the DWP has committed to providing 5000 days of staff time to voluntary organisations by July 2008.

Simon Furse, the Finance Director of the Pension Service, visited our

Resource Centre in January and, in the spirit of the project, was only too happy to 'get his hands dirty' helping with transport, covering reception and joining in with the Discovery Group and woodworking class.

"I found the day both enjoyable and informative. It was really heart warming to talk to your members and it was clear that, for some, it has literally made their lives worth living, giving

them confidence and new interests to pursue," commented Simon, pictured below.

