



# Royal redevelopment complete at last

*Peter Fisher* gives an inside view of the newly refurbished RLHH with a photographic tour by *Ramesh Pydiah*



above: The outside has been cleaned and subtly changed by adding a ramp for wheelchair access (partially obscured by the parked cars)

right: The light and airy waiting area, with an old favourite – the rocking horse – recently restored by the League of Friends

below: The spacious new entry hall – the beautiful mosaic has been preserved

bottom right: Clean, bright colour on the walls, wooden flooring and lots of light – what a change!



After nearly three long years, the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital's (RLHH) redevelopment is finally complete. After seemingly endless doubts, delays and frustrations, by a happy (but purely serendipitous) coincidence, the historic Great Ormond Street building reopened to patients at the beginning of Homeopathy Awareness Week, on 14 June. In fact some events had taken place in the new basement conference suite before the reopening to patients. Fittingly, the first was the celebration of 250th anniversary of Hahnemann's birth on 9 April. It is a good omen that the



occasion, organised by the British Homeopathic Association, was oversubscribed. Another important event followed only a couple of weeks later: the launch of the UK's first course in integrated medicine "Integrating Complementary Medicine in Everyday Practice". However, the redevelopment has suffered more than its fair share of delays. Some of these were due to the complexity of the work: the original building was constructed in three stages, completed in 1859, 1890 and 1910, and some of the floor levels don't match up! Other hold-ups were caused by unexpected



*above: Dr Jenny Boyle with a family in her consulting-room  
far left: Clinical Director Peter Fisher in a consultation  
left: Dr Jennifer Lenhart with a patient*

discovery of asbestos and the need to completely replace the mansard roof of the Queen Square wing, not to mention the shortage of building labour in London. But other delays were due to the NHS changing its mind: it was originally intended that the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital would share the building with us, but when the redevelopment was already well underway, this changed. Our neighbour, the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children will now occupy part of the building.

But it has been worth the wait: the result exceeds all expectations. From the outside the building looks a bit cleaner and smarter, but not dramatically different. The changes hit you immediately you walk into the spacious

entry hall, which opens onto an entirely new stairwell with twin lifts, glazed all the way up. The new lifts will come as a great relief to anyone who remembers the old ones (which belonged in a museum, not a hospital!). Each area is visually identified by colourful images of homeopathic medicines, including Aconite, Pulsatilla and the red starfish, *Asterias rubens*. The 20 consulting rooms are generously proportioned, light and airy, with natural wood flooring. Indeed natural materials are used throughout the clinical areas. There are dedicated areas for the musculoskeletal and children's services, and several therapy and group rooms.

Most of the ground floor is open, indeed inviting, to the public. The historic features of the original building



left: The new pharmacy is in the old boardroom, one of the “discoveries” during the renovation work

below: Clean, bright spaces and lots of light with (centre) the new Information Centre

bottom: The new lifts – “a great relief to anyone who remembers the old ones” – with (centre) signage in which each area is visually identified by colourful images of homeopathic medicines

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have been retained and enhanced: the terrazzo floors, wood panelling and mosaic in the main entrance have all been restored. The Boardroom has been smartened up and becomes our new Information Centre. NeLCAM, the NHS's Complementary Medicine website ([www.nelh.nhs.uk](http://www.nelh.nhs.uk)) for which the RLHH recently won the contract, is based there. Next door will be a café with terrace which we hope will become a beacon for healthy food in the NHS. Just across the corridor is one of the finds of the redevelopment – the old boardroom with its splendid Victorian plastered ceiling, previously hidden by partitions which divided into several small offices for 95 years, is now immaculately restored. This becomes the pharmacy, complete with a large, attractive retail area, and

the ambition to become London's leading CAM pharmacy. This is the culmination of a long period of hard work, but there is no time to rest on our laurels. The redevelopment offers unparalleled opportunities to realise the ideals of healing, integration and information. The challenge now is to fulfil the dream; we need to rededicate ourselves to helping our patients. We must also remember that we will now be serving a much wider community than in the past through our greatly enhanced information and education services, and through integrating our services with others provided by our parent NHS trust, University College London Hospitals, and our illustrious neighbour, The Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, which occupies part of the building.