For me, the centenary was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate everything that is good about Whipps Cross Hospital. It also gave us the chance to make the point that our history is nothing without a future.

In fact, our very special guest, the Duchess of York, talked about the future and the importance of redeveloping Whipps Cross at the reception we held in her honour on Tuesday 14 November.

Similarly, I was delighted that both Iain Duncan Smith and Jon Cryer, who attended our WeCare awards and staff party on Friday 17 November, emphasised their support for the redevelopment.

Personally, I most enjoyed seeing our staff, patients, volunteers and external friends coming together to celebrate Whipps Cross. It reminded me of how fortunate I am to be working in such a fantastic hospital with such great people.

Turning to the redevelopment itself, as some of you may know it’s taking longer to get the strategic business case for the hospital’s redevelopment approved by our national partners. That doesn’t mean to say we haven’t been working hard behind the scenes. Over the last few months we have been working closely with colleagues in NHS Improvement to strengthen aspects of our case, including ways to make the redevelopment more affordable.

At the same time, I have been working up the plan for developing the outline business case – the next phase of the programme – so we can move quickly to develop detailed proposals for the future of the hospital. We are also planning how we involve, engage and listen to our staff, patients, stakeholders and local community so the Whipps Cross of the future reflects what people need and want.

As celebrations for our centenary draw to a close, my challenge to us all is that we maintain momentum and energy for Whipps Cross to make sure that in 100 years’ time there is something even greater to celebrate.

Here’s to our future!

Alastair Finney, Redevelopment Director
Friday 17 November marked the 100th anniversary of the naming of Whipps Cross Hospital – and didn’t the Whipps Cross family celebrate in style! Bunting adorned our long corridor, restaurant and board room and staff members wore our centenary badges and lanyards. We shared some great stories from our volunteers, patients and staff members and even heard from former staff members in Australia who saw the party on Twitter!

Here’s a look back at that special week:

We kicked off with the senior leadership team delivering hampers from our partner Serco to our hard working staff.

On Tuesday we were honoured that the Duchess of York visited our Acorn ward to meet our staff and patients and to see Adam Marshall ring his end of treatment bell. Then it was on to the restaurant to have afternoon tea with our long serving staff and external partners and to unveil our special centenary plaque.

On Thursday, Councillor Clare Coghill, leader of Waltham Forest Council, paid us a visit to reveal the winner of the Bigger Picture competition, a local photography competition run by the Council in support of its ‘Love Whipps Cross’ campaign. These photos are on display in the hospital’s main corridor near junction 5.

On Friday, the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP and John Cryer MP officially opened our new, transformed ambulatory care unit. The unit was designed with our staff and will help flow throughout the hospital and avoid unnecessary admissions.

And then we packed as many staff as possible in to the restaurant for our first ever WeCare awards. The atmosphere was buzzing as our winners stepped up to collect their prizes.

Congratulations to:

WeCare Individual Award
Winner – Madeleine Hughes, deputy director of operations
Highly commended – Jose Jacinto, cardiac physiology department
Commended – Lee Chambers, HCA from our Forest Assessment Unit

WeCare team Award
Winner – The Syringa Ward team
Highly commended – The obstetric and gynaecology education faculty – Sujatha Thamban, Dilip Visanathan, Ismail Wong, Anwen Gorry and Frederic Willmot
Commended – The Estates team

Managing Director’s Special Award
Winner – Ghisl Stephenson and the children’s team

On Friday, the RT Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP and John Cryer MP officially opened our new, transformed ambulatory care unit. The unit was designed with our staff and will help flow throughout the hospital and avoid unnecessary admissions.

Thanks to our friends at Barts Charity, Eurotec, Elior and Serco for all their support in making the celebrations possible. Here’s to the next 100 years!
Reflections on our centenary

Anne Kenward
Therapies

I see the Centenary as a complete triumph. That Whipps Cross continues to improve and develop (and exists!) in spite of all the difficulties over the past 100 years, and maintain the support of the local community, is a real cause for celebration.

Whipps Cross staff have always been known for their friendly and welcoming approach and Therapists experience that every day as part of the MDT. I am very proud to be part of that team!

Sam Fitzpatrick
Project Search Intern working with our Serco Porters

For me, the centenary means Whipps Cross continuing as an established community hospital with helpful, caring, hardworking and friendly people. I hope it continues to be a great place in which to work.

Peggy Knight
Patient

I have been coming to Whipps Cross for 20 years; walking the same corridors and seeing the same faces. Thanks to that, I don’t feel like I’m coming here as a patient, it feels like visiting a family – people know who you are.

Even though there have been a lot of changes in the hospital over the years, one thing that hasn’t changed is the standard of care I’ve received and I thank the staff for treating me so well.

What do you hope from a future Whipps Cross?

Kieran Sweetman
Syringa ward SHO

On a practical level, we need more nurses and more therapists. If I’m thinking about the bigger picture though, then I think the recent redevelopment work of Syringa Ward should be used as a model for all future development work.

Getting patients involved in the design, making sure that there are spaces away from their beds to go and making it look less clinical are all things that will, in the end, aid a patient’s recovery.

Elias Phiri
Sexual Health Facilitator

I would hope that we can keep improving Whipps Cross for the future in a way that it maintains its central role in the borough and I hope we build stronger partnerships with our partner organisations and others to benefit of our patients, especially through early diagnosis of HIV.

Alan Gurney
Executive Managing Director, Whipps Cross

The centenary was a great opportunity to reflect on the past but also to look forward to the future with ambition and optimism, to both recognise our staff’s achievements and to thank them for their hard work.

I was delighted to welcome so many special guests that clearly support Whipps Cross enormously.
What Whipps Cross Means to me:
Safiya Mohamud

Safiya from our Maternity Unit on the miracle of bringing newborns into the world and why she’s excited about our pledge to transform our service thanks to Barts Charity funding.

How long have you worked here?
I joined Whipps Cross in October 2008 – 9 years.

What attracted you to the job?
The idea of helping people and delivering babies greatly appealed to me. I think childbirth is a wonderful process that I could not help but want to be a part of.

What does your job involve?
My job involves helping women during their pregnancy, throughout labour and the early postnatal period. I am responsible for providing care of the highest standard. The best part of my job is undeniably delivering babies! I adore newborns!

What do you like most about your job?
I believe midwifery is an extremely rewarding job. The best part of my job is seeing the smile of new parents. I feel grateful to be part of something so miraculous – the childbirth experience.

What is your biggest challenge?
I have struggled a lot with policing and crime. Due to this, our service is attracting being audited by the London Lords Mayors’ Office for undergoing FGM. I am also ever so proud of the Lotus Clinic women and girls who have been unfortunate enough to undergo FGM. I was also proud to become a newly qualified Supervisor of Midwives this year.

What will a new maternity unit mean for patients and staff at Whipps Cross?
I am so happy that we’re redeveloping our maternity unit. Not only will new facilities provide our patients with more dignity but it’ll also help staff feel prouder about the unit when their giving expectant mums’ and dads’ tours.

What is your proudest achievement?
Setting up the female genital mutilation service, Lotus Clinic. To have a service all in one providing continuity of care is so hard as female genital mutilation is a sensitive subject that needs to be talked about.

What will make your unit different?
I am so excited about our pledge to transform our service thanks to Barts Charity funding. This level of advertisement has helped in spreading the word in our community and has resulted in more patients coming forward.

What is your biggest challenge?
Setting up the female genital mutilation service, Lotus Clinic. To have a service all in one providing continuity of care is so hard as female genital mutilation is a sensitive subject that needs to be talked about.

What one thing would make Barts Health a better place to work and be cared for?
I would like to see more new research using the wider population network, and we’re confident that it will give them a greater reach to ensure significantly improved care and outcomes for mothers across the UK."

Fiona Miller Smith, Chief Executive of Barts Charity, said:
“We’re delighted to have funded this hugely exciting new project at Whipps Cross.

“It is set to have a huge impact on the local population, supporting mothers and children of east London.

“It also builds on our previous £2m funding to establish the Barts Women’s Health Research network, and we’re confident that it will give them a greater reach to ensure significantly improved care and outcomes for mothers across the UK.”

Cristina Cribiu and husband, Daniel Meach, from Leyton, celebrated the arrival of their daughter Francesca on November 8 at the hospital’s Lilac Birth Centre. Cristina said:
“The investment is a great thing.

“Parts of the building do look run down and I can understand why some people’s first reaction might be to go elsewhere to have their baby.

“But the centre is clean and I had enough privacy, and the staff have been great throughout which I feel is what really matters; I am extremely grateful to them.”
In other news

Our maternity team has been shortlisted a Royal College of Midwifery award

There's been a buzz around our women's and neonatal teams following the announcement of £6.8 million funding from Barts Charity to transform services. That buzz is continuing with the news that our Ruby Team has been nominated for the RCM award for Team of the Year! We’ll find out next year if they’ve won and you can see the full list of nominees on the RCM website.

Award win for our waste management team

Our waste management team, along with our colleagues at Eurotec Environmental, won the ‘Product Innovation Award’ at this year’s IHEEM awards ceremony for its clinical waste treatment plant at Whipps Cross.

We caught up with Neil Allen, waste and environment manager at the Trust, who said “We introduced the waste treatment plant so that we could render safe over 90% of our clinical waste on site, taking away 16,731 kms of road journeys; that's the distance between London to New Zealand, since processing began in December 2016. This has reduced our Trust’s carbon footprint by 375 tonnes to date and improves the local air quality to our staff, visitors and patients, by removing all them diesel fumes; and all this at no extra cost to the Trust - a “win, win” solution”.

The Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Estate Management (IHEEM) is an international professional engineering institute, a specialist Institute for the Healthcare Estates Sector.

We want to hear from you about what you think #FutureWhipps should look like. Email whipps.future@bartshealth.nhs.uk or visit bartshealth.nhs.uk/futurewhipps – Merry Christmas!