

IIHA News

Summer 1998

Welcome back, Odessa!

Professor Nikolai Leonidovich Aryayev, the newly appointed head of Paediatrics at the Odessa University Hospital, is keen to work with IIHA as leading partner in a proposed new European Commission TACIS/LIEN project to extend the network of Cystic Fibrosis regional clinics and family support groups in Ukraine.

Professor Aryayev has taken over from the late Professor Reznik as Vice-President of the Odessa CF Trust. He will be working closely with Anna Kolesnick, chair of the parents' group.

Substantial aid

In 1995-97 the CF Trust received substantial medical aid as part of a LIEN project to help children with CF and their families. The project was managed by IIHA, who helped to set up the Odessa CF diagnostic and treatment centre. At the same time we helped to develop CF family support services.

More than 200 children were treated by doctors and physiotherapists from London's Royal Brompton Hospital, which is Europe's leading centre for the treatment of CF.

Improvement in health

"There was a significant improvement in their health," says Professor Aryayev, "They are living longer and are physically stronger. Not so many die in infancy."

However, Professor Aryayev goes on to say that the present economic situation is making it difficult for the centre to sustain this quality of care. "We need

your help again," he says.

He also suggests extending our work to include other serious illnesses with a high infant mortality. IIHA met Professor Aryayev in the middle of May to discuss future collaboration. See story page 3

ANNE'S BIG CHALLENGE

Raising funds for a charity that is helping children in a country once regarded as a threat to the rest of the world is a daunting task. But this is a challenge Anne Morrice has taken on because children are children wherever they live and the children of the former Soviet Union are among the worst off in the world because of poverty, pollution and a deteriorating environment.

Following many years of grass roots fund raising and a six year stint with an old people's charity in Winchester, Anne says she will enjoy this new challenge of improving IIHA's image as a caring organisation tackling as big a problem as any posed by the third world. Anne is looking for helpers in her fund raising efforts in the Winchester area.

If you would like to join Anne's team, write to her at IIHA, 26 St Thomas Street, Winchester, SO23 9HJ. Tel/Fax: 01962 865858 e-mail: iiha@dial.pipex.com A full description of what IIHA does can be found on the Internet web site: <http://www.charitynet.org/~IIHA>



Lots of love, Olesya!

This is Olesya Krasnova. She has CF and lives in Novosibirsk in Siberia. On 17th June she was 12 years old.

Her mother, Natalya, was invited by IIHA to visit Winchester earlier this year. She came with 2 doctors, Irina Zaidman and Natalya Romanenko. We gave her information on fund-raising and P. R., took her to the CF Centre in Bromley, Kent, and introduced her to parents and children with CF in this country where the standard of treatment is high. Olesya is fortunate because her father is a successful businessman and can afford to purchase drugs to treat CF from the West. Others are not so lucky.

We have Olesya's address if anyone would like to write to her.

LETTER FROM MOSCOW

Patricia Cockrell heeds FCO advice not to go to Vladikavkaz but finds plenty to do in Moscow and visits a rehabilitation centre for children who have suffered from cancer in Stalin's old crumbling dacha.

With Dr John Stephen I planned to make a return trip to Vladikavkaz in January 1998 to try to identify a manageable project for which IIHA could apply for a grant.

Three days before John arrived in Moscow the head of the UNHCR mission was kidnapped in Vladikavkaz. This was a shock to all who worked in the region as after the kidnappings in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, Vladikavkaz was considered one of the few safe areas in the region. With over 40 people, mostly Russian, but also British, French and German, still missing, the remaining NGOs have now pulled out.

Heeding the very strong advice from the FCO and the British Embassy, John and I with great regret decided to postpone our visit to Vladikavkaz and to concentrate on IIHA concerns in Moscow.

We went to see the cystic fibrosis

doctors at the Republican Children's Hospital, who I know quite well. The doctors seemed more confident, the unit more secure, and for me, having worked for some years with IIHA on encouraging an association of parents, it was thrilling to meet Irina, the secretary of the Moscow CF group and to hear her talking of networking, supporting parents in other cities, even fundraising. Nina, the unit secretary, who is now chairman of the Moscow CF parents' group, told us that what is needed now is space at the hospital for an office and for meetings. There is a good relationship between the doctors and the parents' group - together they are working on education and training and trying to improve awareness of needs.

CF ward

There were 14 patients on the ward including a small baby whose single mother works for the Russian army in Sevastopol. We were asked to find help for this woman who is clearly in a poor emotional state and is refusing to go home. Even without the child her social position is precarious since the Russian army is not welcome in the Ukraine and she has not been paid for months. She was devastated by the diagnosis and is more or less destitute.

We had been asked by IIHA to look into the situation at the Blagocentre. The doctor in charge, Nikolai Fomin, showed us round and confirmed that there are severe problems as regards fund-

ing: \$2,000,000 have been spent so far on transforming a ruined building into a palatial small hospital; there are still no drains or kitchen facilities and there is no knowing how the builders are to be paid for this month's work. Moreover there seemed to be no clear idea as to the purpose of this project and when we talked to potential clients, e.g. the CF doctors, they could see nothing to be gained from collaboration with the Blagocentre.

Stalin's dacha

John and I also went to Stalin's dacha at Lipki which is now a sanatorium for children who have had treatment for cancer. This is run by a small staff led by Grigory Tseitlin who is also chairman of the Magic Key, a charity which supports these children and their families (see last issue). We were later to meet Marina Bialik, the driving force of this charity. It seemed to us that CF families and Magic Key families had things in common: stress, public attitudes, problems with medication and human rights, e.g. despite protestations, a CF boy was drafted into the army where he died. We put Marina in touch with Irina, who agreed that it would be good to work together. We hope that IIHA will be able to explore the possibility of a grant for an association of parents of seriously and/or chronically sick children.

STOP PRESS

IIHA is now working with the Magic Key in a drive to increase public awareness of the problems of children with cancer and their families.



- Self-help initiatives by parents are rare in all the newly independent states, except where IIHA works

Ukraine parents and professionals get together to promote home care

The Odessa CF Trust is once again working with us under Professor Nikolai Leonidovich Aryayev, and planning a programme of support for families with chronically ill children

Parent participation - a new departure for Ukraine

A partnership between the parents of chronically ill children and the professionals at the Odessa State Medical University Hospital is one of the features of the IIHA/Odessa CF Trust new partnership programme for which funding is being sought from the European Commission.

Professor Nikolai Leonidovich Aryayev, has taken over from the late Professor Boris Reznik as head of paediatrics. He is creating a training centre to educate parents of children with chronic illnesses in home care, including physiotherapy, diet and record keeping (growth and weight charts). He is also planning pre- and post-graduate courses in psychotherapy and psychosomatic medicine.

This is in keeping with IIHA's policy of taking healthcare out from the hospital into the community, and involving parents in the treatment of their chronically ill-children.

Meeting of IIHA and Professor Aryayev's team in Odessa: (l to r) Dr Jannetta Krainaya, Dr Nadejda Stamova, Professor Nikolai Aryayev, Roy Ridgway and Simon House.

IIHA is establishing a reputation for introducing community-based healthcare into Russia and Ukraine.

Impressed

"I am impressed with the work IIHA has done," writes Jacqueline Tordoir, project manager of the European Volunteer Centre which works with the European Commission in selecting and monitoring projects for the Tacis/LIEN Programme. "I am especially impressed because I have seen with my own eyes that self-help initiatives by parents of whatever kind are not at all common in the Newly Independent States."

Professor Aryayev is Vice Rector of Odessa State Medical University specialising in international work. a result of his contact with the West especially partnerships with Dutch

and Greek public health establishments, he is wide open to IIHA's socio-medical approach, especially to the concept of family support services and hospital outreach work.

On a visit to Odessa in May, Simon House and Roy Ridgway were most impressed with Professor Aryayev's enthusiasm for a number of new initiatives such as the IIHA proposal to establish a Ukraine network of family support centres.

"We were most impressed with the spirit and vision of Professor Aryayev," said Simon House. "Nikolai promised to integrate an existing fund-raising network with the CF Network. His support for our ideas bodes well for IIHA's new generation of projects, including our reproductive healthcare programme."



Getting Visas isn't all fun!

Mention 'getting a visa' to any traveller, and they will groan sympathetically. It doesn't seem to matter which country you want to go to, there's always a huge paperchase to be gone through before you can get that document and set off.

We'd tried at the Edinburgh Consulate, but they had moved, and the application was not forwarded. This left us with a fortnight, so we sent them to the Consulate in London, as we knew their address. They sent them back, saying that our invitation from Moscow was not from a registered company. This left us with three working days! It looked like the trip would have to be postponed. We contacted Russia, and told our partner this, but through a superhuman effort (imagine Moscow bureaucracy!) and some serious string-pulling,

they managed to register themselves with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs within 24 hours: no mean feat in any country, let alone Russia! The race was back on, and notwithstanding the prohibitive costs of immediate visa processing (children's health was at stake here!), Thursday morning found Andrew Edmondson in the queue outside the Consulate, half an hour before it opened. Unfortunately, on that morning, this turned out to be about two hours too late, and three hours later, the gates shut for the day, leaving him on the wrong side.

There followed frenetic phone calls to Stella, who called the Embassy, and then said, Go back at two o'clock and try again.' It was time to try out the 'mercy mission' tag, and see if the doorman could stand up to

that. Success! The paperwork was passed over to two consular officials, Ludmilla Babarika and Ivan Ulanov, who kindly agreed to process the applications that day, in spite of the lateness. Good news at last!

But more was to come. An hour and a half later, Andrew was back at the Consulate, and in a queue once again. Ludmilla called him out of the line, and handed him the visas. Relief at actually having the visas turned to shock when she also told him that, following a conversation with the Consul General, Alexander Prosvirkin, she had arranged for the processing charge to be waived, saving IHA a more than substantial sum of money. Proof indeed, that just when things can't get any worse, they can suddenly

WILL SOME KIND PERSON HELP FATIMA TO COME TO ENGLAND?

We were warned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office against going to Vladikavkaz in the North Caucasus because of the kidnapping of the head of the UNHCR mission (See page 2). This was quite a blow to Fatima Dzutseva, who was expecting us in May.

The purpose of our mission was to identify a manageable project and to try to help in training charity workers to help themselves. Since we could not go to Vladikavkaz we suggested that Fatima might like to come to the UK for some training and to make contact with some possible benefactors.

We have since heard from Fatima who writes: The situation here is desperate. There's an epidemic of TB and the people who are most affected are the poorest. As you

know, we have registered a charity and there is a lot of good will and enthusiasm among our friends, but we are sadly inexperienced in this field. We badly need training in fund raising so that we can persuade well-to-do people to help the underprivileged, the poverty-stricken, the disabled. We need your experience, advice and whatever help you can give.

We would like to launch two small-scale projects. The first is to help elderly people with scanty means in the Prigorodny region. The idea is to organise a centre where they could come and talk about their problems and could have a meal and see a doctor or get some advice on keeping healthy.

The other project would aim to help poor children and children of refugees in the TB risk group. We'd like to open a clinic in a poor district which would be able to provide some preventive health care for these children. Can you help.

IHA has no funds to help Fatima. We need very little - about £500 to get her over here. Once here we have friends who will look after her. All we need is for ten people to donate £50 each.

Write to Roy Ridgway, IHA, 26 St Thomas Street, Winchester, SO23 9HJ.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

IHA

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Edward James MA BD CEng
CMath
Patricia Cockrell
Michael Ridgway
Ben House
Managing Director: Roy Ridgway

MISSION STATEMENT

IHA regards the promotion of healthy lifestyles as a vitally important social goal; and, with this in mind, the main objective of our work is the total care of the mother and child, beginning with the safeguarding of maternal health and early human development.

IIHA's CF project inspires Indians

The desperate plight of CF children in India was emphasized in a report by Dr Chris Rolles on a visit to India sponsored by the Cystic Fibrosis Association. In Delhi he met up with Dr Sushil Kabra, a consultant and respiratory paediatrician who had read about IIHA's Moscow CF project in the Royal Society of Medicine Journal. He thought this an excellent idea, and so proposed a medical exchange with the CF Department of Southampton General Hospital, the main partner in our Russian CF Project. Dr Rolles' visit was the first step towards arranging this.

New problems
India is a terribly poor

The Greeks didn't have a word for it

We all think that CF is a genetic disease that only Caucasians can suffer from. So how can Indians have it too?

Dr Rolles explains: 'Using strict definitions, natives of the Indian sub-Continent are Caucasians, which renders them susceptible to the disease. However, there have also been many west-east population movements into India: the best known of these was, of course, the 300,000-strong invading army of Alexander the Great.'

It appears that the colonising forces of the Macedonian king were so effective that even to this day, there are people in North India who appear to be Greek.

The anthropologists have the last word. They are now saying that the division of race into three groups is a myth. You can find people suffering from CF in the so-called negroid or mongoloid races.

country, much poorer than Russia or Ukraine, but there is a very strong emphasis on the family in healthcare services, and Chris discovered that this leads to a whole new series of problems in the treatment of a disease such as CF.

Sell everything

He told us, 'When a child in India is diagnosed as having a serious disease, then the whole family will sell everything it can to pay for the cure. The problem with CF is that this situation is incurable, and the more one puts into treating a child, the more the cost of treatment rises. And faced with this situation, some Indian

parents, who earn as little as the equivalent of 30p a day, may choose to take their child home to die without further treatment.'

We can help

In spite of this situation, Dr Rolles is confident that help can be provided: 'First of all we want to provide a dedicated and trained CF nurse and a register of CF patients; we can look at doing more after this stage has been completed. The trouble is that this will create problems of its own, as more diagnoses lead to more patients which then lead to an increased burden on an over-stretched health service.'

MOSCOW IN MARCH Andrew's visit in the snow.

If there's one time when it's no fun being in Moscow, it's late March. The thaw will probably be setting in, so it'll be cold, wet, icy (the snow melts during the day, then freezes at night).

Arriving at Sheremetyevo Airport is always depressing. It's a horrible late '60s building with brown tubes on the ceiling and lightweight imitation brass fittings. To compound this, joining the long queue filing past the humourless officials of Passport Control is just about the worst kind of welcome to a foreign country.

When I arrived there as IIHA interpreter to the surgical team of the Wessex Cardiothoracic Centre, Southampton, the ubiquitous Bulgarian bus was waiting to take us to the Cosmos Hotel, and as we set off in a noxious cloud of diesel fumes, we were told that only that day President Yeltsin had decided to fire his whole cabinet. As a result, the representative from the Ministry of Social Protection would no longer be able to meet us as we had planned, because she no longer had a minister to represent.

We checked in to the basement of the hotel (the ramp to the main entrance was closed for technical reasons), then set off to meet Vera Petrovna and the other members of the Society for Children with Cardio-Vascular Diseases. This being Russia, we had to have supper with our hosts, whose generosity and taste for toasts caught some of

our uninitiated doctors by surprise. A late night trip to Red Square ensued, which was another eye-opener: those who have not visited this place cannot imagine the majesty conferred by the Kremlin, St Basil's, the State History Museum and GUM, four completely different yet very Russian buildings whose effect is only slightly tempered by the distinctly non-Russian features of Liz Hurley, who smiles out of the Estee Lauder advert in the windows of the State Department Store.

A final night cap in the hotel gave me the chance not only to meet some of the locals, but also to realise, much to my surprise, that the doctors were some of the most good-natured people I had ever met, an impression which was confirmed over the course of our visit.

The doctors spent most of the time in the Moniki Institute, observing heart operations on children in the morning and enjoying the hospitality of Professor Selivanenko and his team at lunch. In spite of this busy schedule we were able to fit in visits to the Bolshoi Theatre and Tretyakov Gallery and altogether it was a most memorable visit.

Andrew Edmondson

See page 8 for a description of the medical exchange.

DIARY

ON THE MOVE

I remember when our refurbished photocopier was delivered. It must have weighed a ton. Two men heaved it up two flights of narrow, two-in-one gradient stairs to our office at the top of the building. It was like climbing the north face of the Eiger! Well, not quite - but you know what I mean. The poor chaps were both, of course, dripping with perspiration and I was full of admiration for them.

It is difficult enough carrying myself up the stairs, and everyone, young and old, used to take a few minutes to recover their breath after making the ascent and collapsing into a chair. However, the first thing they normally said, if they hadn't visited our office before, was "What a superb view!"

The window looked out over the rooftops towards St Catherine's Hill and you could see the cathedral with its restored Western front stonework.

Ground level

Now we have moved to the ground floor. We miss the view, of course, but there are other advantages. For instance, at the back there's a little walled garden with a tree which we are told by gardener Anne is an almond. We haven't seen it blossom yet, but are looking forward to that. In the meantime, we are hoping someone will offer us some garden furniture so that we can sit out in the summer - if summer ever comes! - and sip our plonk with our sandwich lunch.

Four muscular men spent all day on a Saturday in June moving the office downstairs. It was easier, of course, bringing the furniture down than taking it up. At the end of the day the place was a terrible mess with papers strewn everywhere and wires trailing all over the floor. But the next day Anne and Stella set to and in no time at all they'd fixed the main computer and put files and books on shelves, pictures on the wall and so on and the office looked tidier than it ever was on the top floor. Now all we need is for some kind benefactor to help us pay one or two of our hard-working voluntary staff a reasonable wage!

IIHA IN CARDIFF

A poster presentation on IIHA's work in Russia and Ukraine has been accepted by the International Health Promotion Conference in Cardiff in September.

The conference, which is organised jointly by the World Health Organisation and Health Promotion Wales, has as one of its main themes new approaches to health for a new millennium.

New situations, new problems

As the conferences organisers say, new situations pose new problems and present new opportunities. New health promotion approaches are required to match them.

In our presentation we will stress that a project such as ours depends on our clarity of vision - in our case, the need for total health as a community-based programme - and to the extent to which the vision is shared by all those who are involved in the care of children with a chronic illness. A strategy for child health must distinguish what the health service can achieve in both providing health care and promoting health and then setting clearly what other departments, such as departments of social security, the environment, public health, education and industry, other agencies can achieve in the promotion of child health care in its fullest sense. That's part of the presentation. The rest deals with how our strategy is working out in practice.



Health
Promotion
Wales



Our Russian colleague, Dr Ludmila Kudaeva, who has been a keen IIHA supporter since its foundation in 1992, is also giving a presentation on the importance of a healthy spine for a high quality life. She will be providing evidence that yoga therapy is an effective way of achieving this.

Another 'No' from the Lottery

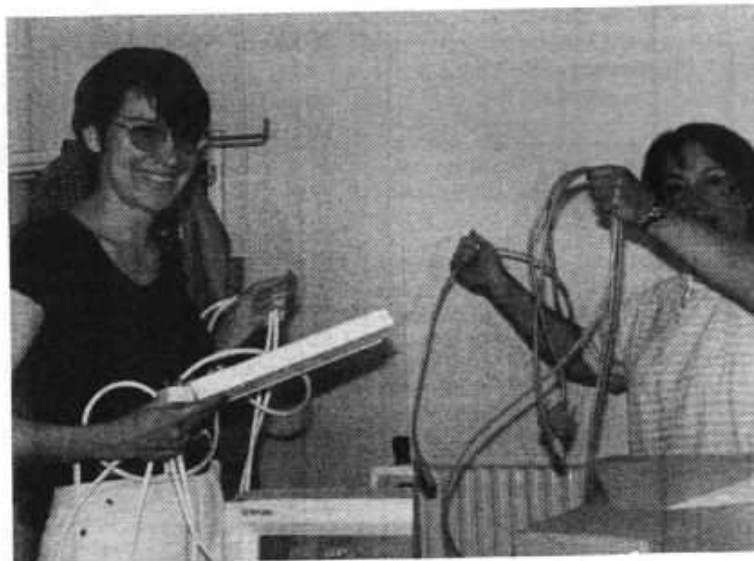
Once again we have been turned down by the National Lottery. After the failure of last year's application for a grant, we attended a briefing in Oxford to find out where we had gone wrong.

Then after consulting our partners in Ukraine three of us spent a week working out the details of our new application. But once again we received a letter of regret with no explanation why we had not been selected for a grant.

We agree it must have been difficult for them to make choices out of the 621 applications they received.

The applications asked for £137 million and the Lottery Board had £25 million to allocate. We sympathise - but there surely is some better way than getting small charities such as ours to spend their meagre funds on attending briefings followed by many hours consulting partners and preparing the application. And then to be told at the end of it all you'd wasted your time and your precious funds that could have gone to help our cause. Surely a sum of money could be put aside to at least cover the expenses of the most deserving charities.

Maybe the bosses could reduce their salaries by a couple of million pounds to show they care!



Stella and Anne unravel the wires connected to our computers. They spent most of a Saturday in June tidying the offices and installing our computers. Stella Couper-Johnson is our Russian expert. She comes from Uzbekistan where she was a co-ordinator for youth and democracy projects and was deputy director of the Tashkent Public Education Centre. She works part-time for IIHA. Anne Morrice is IIHA's head of fund raising.

See page 1: Anne's Big Challenge.

Surprised by joy

Young-at heart, vigorous Dr Jean Galbraith, ex-Chairman of trustees, is now an OAP, believe it or not! She invited friends who wanted to send her birthday presents to do so by contributing to IIHA. So far we have received 18 "many happy returns" amounting to £340. A big thank you to you, Jean, and all your kind friends!

We get pleasant surprises of this kind from time to time. Friends Meetings around the country send us small amounts regularly for which we received extremely grateful. The Oakland Trust, a Quaker charity, very kindly sent us a £1000 cheque recently. It is all very helpful. Please go on supporting us. There are others who give their time very generously. For instance, Stella who comes from Uzbekistan, comes into the office every morning to help us by contacting our Russian colleagues by fax, e-mail or phone. There is also the Winchester Russian group who are a great help in hosting our friends from Russia and Ukraine when they visit us.

And then of course there are the professionals - doctors, physiotherapists, dieticians, particularly those from Southampton General Hospital, Wessex Cardiothoracic Centre and the Royal Brompton Hospital; counsellors such as Patricia Cockrell, of Friends House, Moscow, and Simon House, who is in daily contact with us and is managing our Health of Future Generations Project.

We are also supported by Charity Know How, an initiative of the Foreign Office and a number of British charities including the Joseph Rowntree Trust; and the Know How Healthcare Small Partnerships Scheme. We have also received substantial help from the EC Tacis/LIEN Programme and have applied to them for another grant for our work in Ukraine.

Gifts made through our web site are managed by Charity Aid Foundation (CAF). Donations can be made to us in different ways - e.g by charity card. In this way you simply pay your money into your account, and CAF reclaims tax from the taxman and adds it to your balance so that you even have more to give. Other ways are by gift aid, covenant or payroll giving. There's more detailed information on our web site:
<http://www.charitynet.org/~IIHA>

A big thank you to all the following who have recently sent donations:

D.K. Brewer	£500
K. Charity	£100
J. Galbraith birthday gifts	£340
Oakdale Trust	£1000
D & G. Parr	£100
E. Prickett	£200
Sarsen Press	£50
Dr Paul Sepping	£200
Dr W.J. Stephen	£80
Society of Friends Meetings	
Arundel	£50
Eastbourne	£66.30
Egham	£38
Lancaster	£50
Sutton	£100

Charles Lewis

We are very sorry to announce the death in April of our dear friend Charles Lewis after a long and courageous fight against cancer.

When IIHA started its life as the Renaissance Group (founded in Moscow in 1987) Charles was one of its most active members. He was a great help when a Moscow delegation, including a former deputy Minister of Health and also the head of the Moscow Government Health Committee, came to England in 1990.

I wrote about him at the time: "Charles took on some of the most irksome chores, delivering things, collecting things, ferrying people around, writing reports, and getting annoyed on all our behalfs when things didn't turn out according to plan. He kept hoping for the best while being constantly harried by Sod's Law. And still he could say, "If I can be of any help..." Later he helped to organise regular meetings of our group in Lena Kukowski's apartment in the Barbican. Then with the registration of IIHA as a charity he became our first treasurer.

But my memory of him goes back over 25 years when he came to live with us at Northwood Cottage where Dorothea and I led a community called the Sparsholt Centre, one of the first centres devoted to the human potential movement. A friend, Oliver Coburn, who was a member of the Berkhamstead Amateur Opera Group, introduced fellow-member Charles to us. Charles had trained as a singer at the Guildhall School of Music. I remember many evenings around the open log fire with Charles leading a sing-song among the young men and women who belonged to our community.

Not long before he died Charles phoned me from his hospital ward just for a friendly chat, as he put it.

He talked about the days when we pioneered some of the new psychotherapies such as Gestalt Therapy and Co-counselling at the Sparsholt Centre.

He told me how happy he had been living with us and reminded me about how we used to go on talking about life and death and why we were here way into the small hours - "tiring the sun with talking and sending him down the sky." He told me, not for the first time, how much Sparsholt had changed his life. I didn't realise as he was talking from his hospital ward - not allowing me to get a word in edgeways - that it was his way of saying thank you and good-bye. I very much regret that I wasn't able to respond by saying how grateful we were to him for all his support and the friendship he gave the whole family, particularly our son Tony, who had cystic fibrosis, and daughter Jane, through good times and bad. We shall all miss him terribly.

In May a "Celebration of the life of Charles Nicholas Lewis" was held at Holy Trinity Church, South Kensington. It was organised by his colleagues at the Imperial College of Science where he worked. It was a beautiful occasion full of music. One of Charles's favourite songs from Gilbert and Sullivan was sung in which the congregation joined in; and there was laughter when friends read some of Charles's favourite passages from Roald Dahl and P.G. Wodehouse.

When a member of the Renaissance Group, Julian Gross, arrived at the church, he asked "Is this where Charles Lewis's funeral is being held?" "No," said the man at the door. "There's no funeral here. This is a celebration!" Charles would have enjoyed that story.

R.R.



Missed opportunity

The other day I phoned Dr Tony Salmon about our Moscow cardiovascular project, when an unfamiliar but friendly voice answered with a jolly, "Hi!" "Is Tony there?" I asked. "Who's calling?" said the mellifluous voice, "Roy," I said. "Roy who?" "Roy Ridgway, of course - who else?" "This is the Prime Minister's office," I hastily put down the phone. Later it dawned on me that Tony Blair's phone number differs from Tony Salmon's by one digit - a 1 (which I must have struck) instead of a 3. What an opportunity I'd missed. I could've asked the PM to do something to help the children of the Ukraine.

The British Cardiac team in Moscow.
Front row (l to r) SCVD office
workers Veronica Pryadku and Julia
Basis.

Back row (l to r) Andrew Edmondson
Roy Ridgway staff nurse Susan Davie,
anaesthetist Dr Gareth Charlton,
(behind) surgeon Marcus Haw,
perfusionist Dr Stuart Sheppard
and leader of the team: paediatric
cardiac consultant Dr A.P. Salmon



IN SPITE OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, THERE'S MUCH WE CAN DO TO HELP RUSSIAN CHILDREN WITH HEART PROBLEMS

The partnership between Wessex Cardiothoracic Centre and the Moniki Institute Moscow, managed by IJHA, has completed its first phase, which has been mainly concerned with (a) identifying the main needs of the paediatric Cardiothoracic Unit of the Moniki Institute and (b) for the Southampton and Moscow teams to get to know about their respective ways of working and, at the same time, to establish open and friendly relationships that would lead to further co-operation.

On their recent visit to Moscow Dr Tony Salmon's team were surprised at the lack of available facilities in the

Moniki but were struck by the fact that there was a great deal of optimism and enthusiasm among the Russian surgical team. "They were warm and welcoming," says Dr Salmon, "and did not minimise their problems."

It was agreed that at present the two main needs are: (1) medical education of the staff with the introduction of more team working paediatric cardiac surgery; and (2) the education of the families, which is a very important issue and can help to empower patients to demand improved health care.

In spite of the shortage of physical resources, it was felt that doctors and nurses could improve on the quality of care individual patients receive. It is hoped that some of the younger members of the Moniki team can come

to Southampton for an extended period of training. But just as important is the support we can give the Society for Children with Cardiovascular Diseases. We are planning to bring them to the UK to see how families here work with the doctors and in this way more knowledgeable about heart problems in children and even take part in the decision-making of medical teams. There is very little teamwork in Moscow. In fact the SCVD's relationship with the Moniki Institute is more competitive than supportive. We intend to introduce SCVD to the Wessex Children's Heart Circle.

In conclusion we should say that none of this would have been possible but for the continued support of the Know How Healthcare Small Partnerships Scheme and its very able and hard-working manager, Christine Forrester.

Dasvidanya and Spacibo Bolshoye Andrew Nathanskil

We were sorry to say good-bye to Andrew last month. He's off on an epic voyage from St Petersburg to Portsmouth in a 30ft-topped boat of centuries old Russian design. The voyage celebrates Peter the Great's visit to England 300 years ago to learn about English shipbuilding skills.

Andrew, an old Wykehamist, read Russian at Brasenose, Oxford. He first joined IJHA in October, 1997, with the intention of getting some work experience while looking for a job in the City. He succeeded and acknowledges the debt he owes partly to us for landing a plum job with the American Chase Manhattan Bank, which has a branch in St Petersburg.

Unfortunately for us, but fortunately for some of our volunteers, joining IJHA seems to be a stepping stone to a business or professional career. We heard recently that Louise Reed, who also took a degree in Russian, and worked with us when we were working with the Moscow Government Health Centre, has been accepted as a Kings College medical student. She wrote to Roy and Dorothea to say thank you for their support and also to say that after being inspired by IJHA she hopes to become a paediatrician. Is there anybody else out there who would like to work with us for a limited period whilst looking for a more permanent job? But you may want to stay with us. It's interesting and worthwhile work

Bon Voyage!



Dr Mark Rosenthal

Satellite training for Kiev

40 children with cystic fibrosis, 15 of them from Lviv on the Polish border, were examined by Dr Mark Rosenthal (above), and his team from The Royal Brompton Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital on a visit to Kiev in April.

"A quite surprising characteristic of our visit," says Dr Rosenthal, "was that the doctors did not wish to be given drugs which they regarded as their problem. What they wanted was training, and this we can applaud."

Isobel Matheson, a nurse in the party is an expert at distant learning - ie via satellite - and this is being considered.