

Celebrating 50 years of Gosset neonatal care



FAMILY AND FORMER colleagues of pioneering children’s doctor Isaac Henry “Harry” Gosset gathered at NGH on Friday (11 December) to mark 50 years of specialist care for premature babies.

They were joined by parents and babies who had first-hand experience of the care provided at the 50-year-old Gosset Ward at an event to celebrate the life of Dr Gosset, Northampton’s first consultant paediatrician.

Chief Executive Dr Sonia Swart, said: “Dr Gosset’s pioneering work in neonatal medicine and the successful establishment of premature baby care in Northampton is an important and ongoing legacy. From the outset he was determined to provide the very highest quality and most progressive care to the children of Northamptonshire. And this is an ethos which we continue to share today.

“Fifty years after its opening, the Gosset Unit proudly bears his name and continues to uphold the ideals from which he devoted his practice.”

Dr Andrew N. Williams, consultant community paediatrician and curator of the hospital archive said: “Dr Gosset was a pioneer in neonatal care and set up one of this first premature baby units in the United Kingdom. His invention, the icterometer, undoubtedly prevented severe disability in many



(Above) Members of the Gosset family were invited to see the newly refurbished ward, and to unveil a display commemorating the work of Dr Harry Gosset.

children. It is only right that we have this commemoration for Dr Gosset coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Gosset Neonatal Unit, posthumously renamed in his memory.”

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We were also privileged to be joined by Phyllis Henbest (centre, above) who became the sister and later the matron in charge of the first Gosset ward. Miss Henbest worked on the unit for 23 years and played a major role in the development of neonatal care at NGH.

DR HARRY GOSSET (right) was appointed in 1947 as the hospital's first consultant paediatrician, having previously worked overseas, and as a Surrey GP, and had also been a wing commander in the RAF. He was described by his colleagues as a gentle, kind and highly intelligent man, who worked tirelessly, to the detriment of his own health.

He was heavily involved in the planning of the neonatal unit in the early 1960s. Sadly Dr Gosset died aged 58 three weeks before its opening in the spring of 1965, and the ward was named after him in recognition of his work. The unit was relocated in 1989 from above the gynae ward and theatre to its present position between the two children's wards.

