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Plenty to talk about in an eventful year

It seems no time at all – so eventful has the past year been – that we were looking forward to IHEEM's 2018 annual flagship event in Manchester. That time is, however, upon us again, and next month the healthcare estates and healthcare engineering community will again congregate – at Healthcare Estates 2019 – for what should be a stimulating and thought-provoking annual IHEEM conference, and an exhibition at which visitors can see, hear about, and discuss, innovative products and services designed to enhance the healthcare estate.

This year IHEEM will be hosting the International Federation of Hospital Engineering, which will be providing speakers for both the four main conference streams, and a special 'international' plenary session. Topics covered by overseas presenters will be wide-ranging – from the therapeutic benefits of gardens in healthcare facilities, to the lessons learned about hospital design and resilience by Japanese healthcare authorities following the earthquake which hit north-eastern Japan in March 2011. Complementing the international presentations in the conference, a Day Two afternoon session will see speakers from the Falkland Islands, Germany, the Netherlands, America, and

Ireland share their experiences and recount their own stories.

This issue of *HEJ* includes a full event preview (pages 79-130), including an introduction to the show highlights, speakers, topics, and the 2019 Awards Dinner, the full conference and exhibition theatre programme, and a sizeable exhibitor preview section.

Last month the healthcare estate was in the public spotlight, with Boris Johnson's announcement of a £1.8 bn cash injection for the NHS, partly to fund upgrading of buildings and equipment at 20 English hospital sites. Given this welcome news, and with the ramifications of some form of Brexit on UK healthcare still 'up in the air', Healthcare Estates 2019 should provide plenty for visitors to discuss and debate.

The *HEJ* team will be there throughout the event – both on the IHEEM main 'foyer' stand, J1, where the Institute's head office team will be available to discuss membership benefits and outline IHEEM's role – and on a separate Step Communications stand, B65. Please come and say 'hello', share your news, and if you can offer an interesting article, that would be extremely welcome.

Jonathan Baillie | Editor

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COVER STORY

Much happening at Eastwood Park as it celebrates its 50th year

In this, Eastwood Park's 50th year of delivering specialist engineering and estates and facilities management training, CEO, John Thatcher, is delighted to see apprentices returning for the centre's hospital engineering summer school once again.

Now in its fifth year, this 'unique programme' has become an annual fixture on the Eastwood Park calendar, allowing apprentices to gain an insight into the range of disciplines that fall under the healthcare engineering and estates 'umbrella' in Eastwood Park's simulated hospital environments. Creating this opportunity for development, and for training the next generation of engineers, is something that John Thatcher remains passionate about. He said: 'How do apprentices and inexperienced engineers best gain the confidence and knowledge to work on critical systems within hospitals?' Apart from their initial training, they need to learn alongside colleagues, and there has to be a hands-on, practical experience to fully understand and be able to replicate the skills they need to be able to repair, service,



or set up equipment and plant within a hospital. This is precisely what the summer school offers."

Looking ahead, Eastwood Park's new training centre is set to be completed later next year, followed by an extensive fit-out. This new facility will offer simulated environments – all under one roof – in which NHS engineering trainees can learn about the very specific requirements of their jobs, including everything from hospital plant maintenance, to managing medical

gases and medical equipment.

In the meantime, there have been several initiatives at Eastwood Park to enhance the 'customer experience' – a new games room, a new restaurant now offering table service, extended bar opening times, improved coffee facilities, and, soon to follow, a new gym.

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