

Radio to make you feel better



■ Our girl Lyndsey tuning into the patients.

How often do you find yourself sitting in front of the television watching programmes you're not really interested in just because they're there?

Have you ever wondered whether there could be a way to spend the time better? A hobby perhaps, or a club?

Hospital Radio Basingstoke could have the answer. They are offering people the chance to train and host radio shows and it doesn't have to eat up a huge amount of time.

Hospital Radio Basingstoke was rebuilt in 2001 after a gutting fire, which left many wondering whether the station would live to see another day.

But three years on the station is doing better than ever and last year was rated in the top ten radio stations in the country.

I headed down to the studio to find out what the station is all about and host an hour show of my own.

I was looked after by Peter

Hawken, the studio engineer. He showed me where the music is kept and gave me a mini tour of the two studios.

The station is currently housed in a portable building but hopes to be moving into the main building soon, depending on finances and space.

The studio itself is like a mini shrine to radio throughout the ages with stacks of CDs, minidisks, and records everywhere you look.

I underwent some basic training to make sure I did not break anything or do something horrifically wrong.

Peter kept reassuring me that it was "easy" but I wasn't terribly convinced. aa ward round.

We visited the maternity ward, collecting requests from expectant and new mums and some of the nurses.

The next step was to think of some links, little bits I could say between the tunes to save me sitting in stunned silence.

Peter helped me write a few out and told me it was important to be conversational and chatty.

When the show started I was really nervous. I think I was probably racing through my words a bit because the show was running a little ahead of schedule after the

first few songs.

When I relaxed and let myself enjoy it, I really started to have fun. Peter helped me out by asking me about what I do at the paper.

Knowing there was someone there to save me if I made a blunder made the whole thing much easier and it's definitely something I'd think about doing again.

Dave Leonard, Chairman of Hospital Radio Basingstoke said: "We're trying to build the team for the weekends and Monday evening in particular.

"We need people on the technical side but also fund raisers, people who want to do ward rounds, item researchers, there are lots of different things we need people to do.

"The whole idea is about looking to the future and next year and shaping the station so that in 2005 we're in a stronger situation than we are now.

Anyone who thinks they would like a go at hosting a show or helping out in the background should visit their website, www.hrbsasingstoke.co.uk, or call 01256 313 521 for more information.