



Welcome from Paul, our CEO

Welcome to the latest RHN Community newsletter, with stories for everyone involved with the RHN, whether you're visiting, work here, live here or support us.

We had a fantastic summer, with lots of activities taking place. We held the first ever RHN Festival! Founder's Day also took place (read more below!) and we hosted our second Fellows Lunch for vice-presidents and former Trustees to update them about our current plans and catch up over lunch.

As you may know, we are currently renovating our catering facilities. This is a very exciting development for the RHN, as not only will it modernise our environment, but everyone at the RHN will benefit from a wider selection of quality food, in a much improved, larger and more comfortable setting.

We are currently awaiting the results of our CQC inspection which took place at the end of March. While they were here, the inspectors said they had observed compassion, commitment and caring from all staff, as well as strong leadership, so we are hoping for a positive outcome.

Personally, I was hugely impressed with how everyone came together to warmly welcome the CQC inspectors and show examples of the amazing and inspirational work happening at the RHN.

As well as all of this, there is so much more going on. Inside, you'll read about the work of our close knit Domestic Services team and hear what life is like as a volunteer at the RHN.



You'll also hear from Moses, who completed a placement here as a student nurse, and read a letter from Audrey Firth, who worked at the RHN during World War 2 – her tasks included looking out for bombs from our roof!

There are more events taking place over the next few months, including an evening of music, our Christmas Fair, annual Carol Service and much more, so please do take a look at page 8 to see how you can get involved. We'd love to see you.

Founder's day and the RHN Festival

We had another fantastic Founder's Day celebration in June, and it was wonderful to see all of our patients gathered to watch the Soul Jacks perform on the day. Classical duo Orpheus and Rimintas also played in the De Lancey Lowe room. The sun wasn't quite out, but at least the rain held off this year!

We were joined by the Mayor of Wandsworth, Councillor Jim Maddan who gave a great speech about the work we do here, and his memories of the RHN as a young man living in the area.

There were also art and sports sessions – with butterfly-making, curling, and hair and beauty treatments.

Our patients and residents relished the opportunity to share the experience with their loved ones and others across the hospital. They really enjoyed the music

and the opportunity to join in with or watch the dancing.

We also put on a new internal event this year; the RHN Festival. This was a fun and motivational week of activities taking place during the week of Founder's Day. There were educational sessions, including a talk about Florence Nightingale and her links with the RHN, as well as talks from patients, volunteers and staff. There were health and wellbeing activities including drop-in events such as mindfulness and yoga. We also had fun get togethers – a quiz, a bake off, rounders, a mini sports day, and a DJ set by patient Richard Bennett (aka DJ Hot Sox!)

It was a fabulous week of activities for staff, patients, residents and visitors to the RHN, and we hope to make the festival a regular event in future.





Dates for your diary

Evening of Music 23 September

For one special evening we are delighted to be joined by the 40-piece Willow Orchestra for an evening of music excellence. Get swept away by the beautiful music while enjoying some delicious food and wine. Please do get in touch if you would like more information and to be notified when tickets go on sale.



Royal Parks Half Marathon 8 October

We're really looking forward to being part of the Royal Parks Half Marathon this year celebrating the event's tenth birthday. Join us for a feel-good day out, cheering on our RHN runners as they take on this stunning half marathon. Or if you were lucky enough to secure yourself a place in the ballot, then we'd be thrilled if you joined the team and raised more for the RHN at the same time!



Christmas Fair 29 November

Pop in to the RHN and stock up on your Christmas gifts and stocking fillers at our Christmas Fair. You'll be sure to find gifts for the whole family, and enjoy an array of festive treats and carol singers while you shop!



Carol Concert 7 December

Start your festive season with a special evening of traditional carols, heart-warming readings, musical performances, mince pies and mulled wine at our annual carol concert. It will truly put you in the festive spirit! Taking place next door to the RHN at the Holy Trinity Church, with tickets on sale from October.



Good news from the wards

We know so many positive things happen on our wards, so we asked the ward administrators to give us examples of positive feedback from visitors or example of them coming together to benefit our patients, residents and families.

Glyn

- We have two new tea and coffee stations on Glyn ward for families, visitors and residents
- We have new artwork on the ward, including some that our residents have made themselves
- We celebrated Wimbledon with strawberries and cream.

Andrew Reed

"We ordered extra shelving for some patients, and TV stands so they could use their DVD players for talking books sessions. A relative was going to purchase them but I told them that we would do this."

Cliden

From Carol Orakwue...

"I would like to thank the multi disciplinary team on Cliden, for acknowledging and thanking me recently with flowers. It was a complete shock as this has never been done before. We come and just do our work day by day, not realising that people care and recognise what you do. I was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers and a voucher and a lovely handmade card which made it even more personal and special. I really appreciate this lovely thought."





Top row: Elvis Soares, Gil Manalo, Amaju Ometie, Sylwia Kolasa, Ewelina Skrzek, Gil Reid, Jolanta Jarmaliene, Marion Daley, Fatima Moura, Stella Fernades **Bottom row:** Mertis Jones, Therese Silvere, Rasa Stankuviene, Olha Brown, Lillie Thye, Anisha Basnet

Meet the Domestic Services team

With over 50 members of staff, our Domestic Services team are one of the biggest teams in the hospital. We met up with the Domestic Services Manager, Fatima Moura, to talk about her team and what working at the RHN means to them.

What are your team's main responsibilities?

We have two main areas: maintaining the cleanliness of the hospital, and delivering patient meals. Excellent levels of hygiene are fundamental in any hospital – we make sure we have high standards of infection control, and reduce risks of cross-contamination.

Ward technicians also deliver three meals a day to every patient and resident who are able to eat. We work closely with hospital dieticians, catering and ward staff to make sure we serve high-quality food, presented in a way that makes it easy to eat.

The team also delivers post to the wards and provides holiday cover to the uniform control team, who clean and care for our staff uniforms.

What are the main challenges of keeping the RHN clean?

The age of the building does present some challenges that a newer hospital might not face, such as ornate mouldings and decorative bannisters. We have strict rotas in place to ensure that all surfaces are kept clean and no part of the hospital is missed.

We're lucky to have an Infection Control team who provide excellent support, advice and training on minimising the risks of infection.

We use the national healthcare cleaning specifications as our minimum standard for hospital cleanliness. All patient areas are cleaned every day, and I encourage my team to put the patient at the centre of everything they do. Everyone has the right to live in a pleasant environment that's clean and safe.

What do you and your team enjoy most about working here?

I've been working here for 25 years – I started as a part-time domestic while I was a student and I never left! There's a family feeling to the RHN and I think that's why a lot of long-serving members of staff like me have stayed for so long. You meet new people every day and get to know many patients, residents, friends and families. The team are immensely proud to contribute to the wellbeing of the people we care for, and it makes their day when a patient, resident or family member thanks them for their work.

Our refurbishment plans...

The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability was founded in 1854 and has been on the same site for over 150 years. The main building is Grade II listed and maintaining the cleanliness of all patient areas takes a really committed team. Our programme of refurbishments must take into account infection control and hygiene. Our next steps will be to refurbish Drapers ward, including new flooring, specially-designed skirting boards, and bedside washing facilities, all of which will ensure the best standard of cleanliness throughout the ward.

This work is being funded by donations – so if you would like to support the new design of Drapers ward, please turn to the back page for more details on how to donate to our appeal.



A little piece of RHN wartime history

We received this lovely letter from a lady who worked at the hospital during World War II...

"Thank you for your letter telling me about the work of the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability. At the age of 96 (I was born on 24 December 1920) I must be one of the few people living who nursed at the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables as it was then, during the late 1930s and early 1940s. I started there to gain some basic nursing experience before going to one of the major teaching hospitals.

When war was declared in 1939, I stayed on and served there through the blitz. I certainly got basic nursing training in bedpans, blanket baths and bed making, and being patient with some old and very difficult people.

The hospital never received a direct hit, but bombs and landmines fell very close, and windows were regularly shattered. We were on duty 24/7 and also did shifts of fire watching on the roof – where armed with a stirrup pump, bucket of water and a heap of sand we were ready to deal with incendiary bombs.

I left there to join the RAF medical section for a very different kind of nursing, young men with burns, and all too often injuries sustained in plane crashes. I worked firstly at a big RAF hospital, and then at various station sick quarters where many accidents and illnesses were treated, but the main work was being rushed out to crashed planes and getting the crews out. It was very different, but the lectures and practical experience gained with you helped considerably.

My husband who was an RAF pilot died in 1979 and I am on my own, on a limited income, so I'm afraid I cannot afford to add your charity to the ones I already support, but I just thought you might be interested to hear from someone who remembers the old Royal. I'd love to see it as it is now, but travelling to London on my own is a bit too much for me. In spite of the air raids and rather primitive facilities I did have some good times, and made good friends.

Yours sincerely,

Audrey Firth (nee Porter)

Audrey (left) in the grounds with patient Miss Tune in 1940



Nurturing student nurses

Moses Quaye from Ashford, Kent, came to the RHN on a placement as a student nurse for nine weeks. He tells us about his experience here.

He says, "The hospital has great infrastructure and services. At the beginning of my placement, I was nervous due to the kind of patients at the RHN and the fact that it was my first placement. But with staff support and encouragement I gathered the confidence and skills needed for my practice as a student nurse. In fact, I worked with a very competent group of professionals who are knowledgeable and experienced and who deliver on promises. Thanks very much to everyone on Andrew Reed ward for giving me such a good memory to reflect on in my career.

My next placement will be at the Ealing Hospital – St Bernard's, where I will be placed at their forensic unit and I will take the skills I used at the RHN on my journey with me.

In one word, I'd sum the RHN up as 'marvellous'.

Disabled sport at the RHN – Finding the ability in disability

Taking part in sports can have huge benefits for people of all ages and abilities. It can help improve health, promote community spirit and build confidence. Many of the people who come to the RHN for care can't take part in external sports activities due to their level of disability, and so the Leisure and Family Services team work hard to make sure that people have the opportunity to take part in a variety of sports right here in the hospital.

Boccia is one of the most popular sports here and our team made up of patients – the RHN Rollers – are registered with Boccia England and compete in a local league. There is also a weekly mixed sports group, which involves a range of

sports activities tailored to meet the needs and abilities of our participating patients or residents. As well as this, there are sixteen individual aquability sessions in the hydrotherapy pool, where people can enjoy the benefits of pool-based activities.

All of the sports activities that our Leisure and Family Services team run are entirely dependent on voluntary income. This means that without our generous supporters we could not continue to offer these life-changing services.

One recent funder of sports at the RHN is the City Bridge Trust. In May 2017, The City of London Corporation charity,



the City Bridge Trust, awarded the RHN a grant of £119,000 over three years to support disability sports activities. This helps ensure that patients and residents can continue to enjoy the many benefits of taking part in sports for years to come.

We are sincerely grateful to the City Bridge Trust, for their generosity and to the Bruce Wake Trust, The Wimbledon Foundation and Sports England for their generous support of the sports activities at the RHN.



Going wild!



The Leisure and Family Services team put on a Saturday live event with a difference recently, when we were joined by a menagerie of animals brought along by **Wild Science**.

Our patients and residents enjoyed meeting a wide range of animals – reptiles, mammals, amphibians and arachnids – including guinea pigs, hedgehogs, a frog and even a tarantula!

The patients were delighted by the visit and were fascinated by the animals. The did bring a python but that couldn't be taken out of the box. Patient Ron (pictured) was brave enough to handle the tarantula – rather him than us!

Lots of people loved this frog who seemed to have a smile on its face.



Keeping residents cosy on Glyn ward

Family member Eileen, whose husband Ronald is on Glyn ward, is a keen knitter and has been knitting hats and blankets to donate to residents on the wards. She has knitted hats and a blanket for resident Kay (pictured) who's known for her trademark hats, so she's delighted with these.

Meet LAFS volunteer Mike Smith

We caught up with Leisure and Family Services volunteer Mike Smith to find out what motivated him to volunteer with us...

"I joined the RHN as a volunteer in March 2015, supporting Geoff Coyne with transporting patients to the Thursday morning church service and the LAFS team to afternoon film group. In June 2015, I extended my volunteering to include supporting patients in the computer room plus one to one patient support.

One of my favourite games in the computer room is 'guess that song'. Working one to one with a patient, we have good fun bumping up the score by working as a team. The patients usually answer about modern songs as they are considerably younger than me and I answer questions on 60s songs! Indeed, other patients and staff hear the fun we're having and sometimes join in.

Outside the RHN, I'm a member of the Ski Club of Great Britain and I'm never happier than being 3,000 metres up a mountain at minus 5°C!

My main career was as a procurement manager in offshore oil exploration and production, sometimes taking me to offshore oil rigs, then in a similar role for a private joint venture for a construction fleet serving the British Military. After retiring a couple of years ago I was looking for a second 'career' in the voluntary sector.

I enjoyed my first career and in retirement and wanted to continue to feel valued and the volunteering role at the RHN fulfils that ambition. I was very impressed with the opportunities for volunteers in terms of training, learning support and the great sense of community at the RHN.

I love engaging patients and residents in the leisure activities offered and bringing smiles to faces. I was also honoured to be asked to speak about my experience as 'a day in the life of a volunteer' at the recent RHN Festival. I'd certainly recommend volunteering at the RHN."



Interested in volunteering at the RHN? Contact volunteers@rhn.org.uk

Chaplain's Corner



This month sees the beginning of autumn and after the long, bright sunlit days of summer, we have earlier sunsets and longer shadows. As I gaze out onto the landscape, it seems to change, and for me it becomes a time of thoughtful reflection.

And gazing out, one of the most stunning signs of autumn is the turning of the leaves. The green of the summer leaf turn to the reds, oranges, yellows and golds of the autumn leaf. This, of course, precedes the trees very naturally shedding their leaves. Autumn used to be called 'the fall' in this country, as it is in America, right up until the 18th century – a shortening of the phrase 'fall of the leaf'.

And so autumn seems to be a time of reflection and of 'falling away' and 'letting things go'. And in this there is a lesson. In this period of time that encourages reflection, let us take a look at ourselves and see if there is anything that's ready to be released or let go from our lives.

It may be an attitude or habit that is no longer helpful, a grudge we hold that is souring a relationship, an anxiety that we keep turning over in our mind that is weighing us down. These things can become a dead weight or unhelpful baggage that takes away our joy and peace. But as we let these things go, we make space for new good things to come in and pave the way for new beginnings.

Upcoming open lectures

Music Therapy and Neuroscience: Opportunities and Challenges: Featuring new insights from research addressing the needs of those with complex neuro-disabilities at the RHN

Thursday 14 September

Presented by Julian O'Kelly, Senior Researcher, East London NHS Foundation Trust / Queen Mary University of London

Bookings: <https://mtneuroscience.eventbrite.co.uk>

Ethics, Spirituality and Care: Exploring a difficult but potentially fruitful relationship

Thursday 12 October

Presented by The Right Reverend Dr. Christopher Herbert, Board Member, Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

Bookings: <https://ethics-spirituality.eventbrite.co.uk>

A Showcase of Interdisciplinary Practice in Brain Injury at the RHN

Thursday 16 November

Presented by the Interdisciplinary team, Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

Bookings: <https://idtpractice.eventbrite.co.uk>



Fundraising superstars

Survival of the Fittest

Fifteen members of our therapy team trained and fundraised incredibly hard to take part in the Men's Health Survival of the Fittest in July, raising money for the RHN. This was a gritty, urban obstacle race and a huge challenge – but was also lots of fun! Well done to Katie, Teresa, Amy, Nisha, Taryn, Samantha, Zoë, Serena, Sarah, Lydia, Dan, Liza, Alex and Nathalie.

RideLondon

Massive congratulations to our incredible team of cyclists who took on the ultimate 100-mile cycle at RideLondon in July. A special shout out goes to our very own Tochukwu Mkpuru from Wellesley ward, pictured, who flew around the 100 mile course on his bike.

We're so lucky to have had so many amazing staff taking part in events all through the summer, all going above and beyond to support the work of the RHN.



Lavender remembrance fund

Below are the names of past patients, volunteers and staff at the RHN, whose loved ones have chosen to set up a tribute fund and plant a lavender bush in their memory. The tribute lavender beds can be found in the RHN gardens. Please feel free to visit the RHN gardens and take a look.

A lasting tribute to those we love...

Adeh Murray Sellar	Graham Boiling	Peggy Stannard
Antony Olley	Henry John Old	Peter Gow
Avis June Smith	Hugo Munro	Peter John Davies
Barbara Garnham	James Pirie	Peter Newton
Barbara Kelly	Lesley Jean Hyams	Roger Smith
Catherine Ann Fitzgerald	Lucy Jane Denniston	Rosemary Ann Shurrock
Christopher Bedford	Megan Walters	Sean Hamilton
David John Fincham	Margaret Deller	Shirley Gill
David John Gillett	Maud Riley	Taranjit Kaur Chadha
Eileen Dorothy Barrett	Megan Paton	Trevor George Kingham
Eileen McKay	Michael Lindsay	Ved & Helena Aggarwal
France-Raoul Chateau	Patricia Burston	Winifred Warwick-Mayo
Ghulam Sarwar	Paul Loft	David Driver

More tribute options

There will soon be a wider range of options available to pay tribute to your loved ones including a tribute wall in the new restaurant at the RHN. You can also set up a remembrance page in memory of a loved one at www.rhn.org.uk/online-remembrance

For more information, contact Isabel Barrett, Legacy Manager on 020 8780 4557 or email ibarrett@rhn.org.uk

Working in collaboration with KLC

Five teams of students from the KLC School of Design in have been working, free of charge, on our ward and reception designs.

One of the KLC teams, 'Lancelot and Melrose', won the Architects for Health Student Design Award at the Design Awards 2017 for their work with us on this project.

They focused on our catering hub and the reception area, and their ideas for the catering hub will soon be coming to fruition at the hospital. We are currently renovating this area to make a communal space where the whole RHN community can come together to dine and relax.

The design the students created harnessed the natural surroundings and brought the heritage of the hospital to life. It also will allow patients to choose from a healthier restaurant menu, enabling them to start making choices for themselves.



Contribute to the next RHN Community newsletter

Do you want to be in the next newsletter? Contact Lynsey Rose, Internal Communications Manager, at lrose@rhn.org.uk to get your story included.

We can highlight an inspiring patient or family story, or the great work of our clinical staff. We can profile a team, share successes, or inform our community about upcoming events and activities.

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