



# 2020 OUR YEAR



Royal Hospital for  
Neuro-disability



# Welcome to the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN)

Founded in 1854 by Andrew Reed, we are one of the oldest, independent charity hospitals in the UK. Today we continue as a charity hospital and research centre, caring for adults with complex brain injuries and neurological conditions.

These life-changing disabilities can be the result of a stroke, an accident, a heart or asthma attack or a condition like locked-in syndrome. We provide our patients and residents with rehabilitation, specialised long-term care and innovative technologies – all of which work together to provide a full circle of care.

In addition to being an established specialist in neuro-disability, we are also a charity. Our charitable income enables us to offer extra services and therapies which further enhance the lives of our patients and residents. These extras include:

- assistive technologies and devices that allow patients to communicate in person and online
- a bespoke wheelchair service that ensures every patient/resident has the right mobility solution for them
- our Leisure and Families Service would normally run weekly interest groups and organise trips/holidays, which sadly has not been possible this year due to COVID-19.

As we believe in looking at a person as a whole, choice and communication are integral to everything we do and the decisions we make. Though levels of ability are different from person to person, we work to provide the best possible quality of life for everyone entrusted to our care.

## A word from our Chairman and Chief Executive



Des Benjamin  
Chairman



Paul Allen  
CEO

**There is no doubt that 2020 was one of the most difficult in RHN history.**

At the start of the year, we celebrated the **official opening of Drapers ward and the creation of our Therapy Hub** following extensive refurbishment and successful completion of a £3.2M investment with an opening ceremony. We could not have foreseen then that it would be the last physical event to take place at the RHN this year.

COVID-19 has had an immense impact worldwide, and that is no different here at the RHN. We acted quickly and put stringent measures into place to protect our patients and residents. We made the difficult decision to suspend all visiting in March, before government advice, and saw the RHN divided into 'zones', with staff remaining in their allotted areas to reduce the risk of transmitting infection around the hospital. All staff who could capably work from home have been doing so, and many wards went into 'lockdown' during the crisis whenever a COVID-19 infection was discovered.

These measures worked very well over the past few months and were implemented again when the UK faced a second lockdown in January 2021. We continue to review our measures regularly, following the latest official guidance and are optimistic that the further rollout of the vaccine will hopefully change things significantly.

As of the of writing, sadly and despite our best efforts, 17 patients and two members of staff passed away as a result of coronavirus infection. Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with their families.

We would like to emphasise how proud we are of our staff. We have all had to face new challenges and adapt to new ways of working, whether that has meant caring for suspected or positive coronavirus patients, working different roles or supporting

one another through the more difficult times. We give our profound and grateful thanks to our staff who have gone above and beyond to manage the crisis, we could not have dealt with this immensely challenging year as well as we have without their support.

At the time of writing, we are pleased to say that 80% of our staff and 145 patients have been vaccinated against COVID-19, representing light at the end of the tunnel.

We give our heartfelt thanks also to the RHN local and wider community for their ongoing support during these difficult times. We have received everything from donations of food, PPE, flowers and scrubs. Their support has been incredibly uplifting, and we cannot thank you enough.

Our archivist, **Chris Olver**, has collected the stories of our staff and captured their experiences in audio recordings and photographs, which we hope to share in the future, and will keep in our archives to inspire future generations of the RHN community.

During the summer, the RHN also embarked on an ambitious programme of improvements since receiving findings from the CQC's inspection earlier on in the year. We are confident and working towards our Recommends Improvement rating so that at our next inspection we will achieve either a 'good' or even an 'outstanding' rating.

From September, we welcomed **Della Warren to the position of Director of Nursing** on an initially interim basis, an appointment which has now been made permanent. We are incredibly thankful to **Dr Emily McWhirter** for her three years' service in the role and for all her incredible work guiding the RHN through the first part of the COVID-19 pandemic. We wish Emily the very best in her future pursuits.

Refurbishments on our **Evitt and Cathcart wards were also completed this year**, combining them to create

the new Andrew Reed ward. Leonora ward (formerly Andrew Reed) has also opened recently, expanding our provision for specialist ventilation care.

Our research teams have made huge strides in adapting delivery of courses and open lectures to digital platforms. The first of which was hosted by **Amy Pundole**, Clinical Lead Speech and Language Therapist, who attracted an audience of over 230 people to her open lecture on 'an assessment of emergence from PDOC', which explored updates on Amy's ongoing PhD project.

With the cancellation of so many key events due to the pandemic, the hospital's fundraising income has taken a hit. Despite this, we have hosted **three brand new digital events** which have proven to be hugely successful and we launched the COVID emergency appeal which has supported the RHN's work throughout the crisis.

We are thankful to the RHN community's continued support and for participating in these events during these challenging times.

As you will read, we have more than risen to all sorts of challenges faced over the past year. We send our wholehearted thanks to our wonderful staff and everyone who has supported us during the pandemic – you are truly incredible.

We look forward to being able to welcome the RHN community back to the hospital as things gradually return to normal, when the crisis is over.

Paul and Des  
January 2021

# Our year in figures



198

people admitted to the RHN

210

people cared for at any one time



127 days average length of stay in BIS

## Beds occupied across the hospital

Brain Injury Service

Continuing Care



£42 million annual turnover in 2020



## Your support makes a difference

**Our current fundraising target is £3.4M and with our charitable status we are able to fundraise for the additional therapies and services, that help to enhance the quality of life of those in our care.**

Donations raised also go towards training our invaluable volunteers, fund research and help with specific capital refurbishment works.

Fundraised income from our generous supporters play a significant part in complementing our care package to patients. We would like to give a special mention to the City of London Corporation's Charity, City Bridge Trust, for supporting the hospital's disability sports programme.

### Donations also go towards:

- Adapted sports sessions (eg. tennis, bowling, boccia)\*
- Aquability pool sessions\*
- Compass computer room (adapted technologies)\*\*
- Gardening group
- Indoor group activities (eg. making music sessions, film/documentary screenings)\*\*
- Music therapy\*\*
- Nurse escort service
- Occupational therapy art\*\*
- Specially adapted wheelchairs and mobility equipment
- specific refurbishment projects, to upgrade
- older areas of the hospital to modern standards
- befitting the type of care we provide,
- our research department, ensuring our processes
- and overall care are evidence-based and focused
- on positive patient outcomes.

\*some activities were restricted or did not run due to coronavirus

\*\*ran with appropriate covid measures

# Our volunteer support

## Mike's story

Volunteers play a key role at the RHN and really make a difference to patients and their relatives. Mike is one of our wonderful volunteers who wanted to make a difference, after he retired from the oil and defence industries.

Mike started volunteering at the RHN in spring 2015. Over the past five years, Mike has escorted patients to the film club and weekly church services, helped patients to use assistive technology and read to them.

"I find working directly with patients very rewarding and I've got to know some of them very well. I regularly help one person take part in a quiz, a popular part of the Thursday church service," said Mike.

Mike has been trained to use assistive technology, like eye-gaze and biometrics software. This means he can provide hands-on support to patients to use the software in the hospital's computer room. He also helps to set up computer games, films or sending messages to patients' relatives and friends. Mike carefully adapts to each patient's preferred way to communicate, such as blinking to show yes/no responses. He sometimes sees subtle changes in a patient's communication that might otherwise be overlooked and lets the clinical staff know.

Mike also supports staff by interviewing patients for the hospital's annual patient survey and by being an external auditor for infection prevention and control, hospital grounds and food assessment.

The pandemic has changed the way Mike volunteers. For much of 2020 he supported the church service which was broadcast live on Zoom on Thursdays and Sundays to Chatsworth ward. Mike gave the Bible readings remotely. He says that it was more difficult to help patients answer quiz questions on Zoom but it was a necessary measure to protect patients from the virus.

After a COVID risk assessment in the autumn, Mike has been volunteering on site.

"I support the chaplain on Chatsworth ward on Thursdays and Sundays when he helps with church services for a small, socially distanced group of residents. I help patients to use the Computer Room one day a week, giving them a welcome break from their wards. The patients love the colourful scrubs I get to wear as part of infection control measures!"

Mike says that the pandemic has highlighted the value that volunteers bring to the hospital, and everyone is very pleased to see volunteers returning.

Patients like the personal attention and practical support, and families like to know that their loved ones are active and happy. Busy staff appreciate the role volunteers play in helping patients to pursue their interests and assisting with the smooth running of the ward.



### Want to become a volunteer?

If you are interested in more details and to apply to be a volunteer, please contact Emma Cartwright [ecartwright@rhn.org.uk](mailto:ecartwright@rhn.org.uk)

# Our fundraising 2020 champions



Thank you! Our COVID-19 emergency appeal has raised **£169,634.20**

Donations from our wonderful supporters have been even more important this year with the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds raised are vital to continue the additional therapies and services for our patients and residents that make the RHN such a special place.

The pandemic has meant fundraising events have had to completely change, resulting in some of our most popular events being cancelled, including our annual **Gala Dinner** and the **London Marathon**. Instead, we have seen exceptional fundraising champions go above and beyond to raise money for us in creative ways such as digital events and solo challenges.

Thanks to our incredible community we have been able to support most of our activities and we are planning for 2021, which is set to be full of exciting fundraising events. We look forward to welcoming you in the New Year.

## It's the little things you do to support the RHN that make the biggest difference

Thank you to all our supporters for their continued donations and messages of kindness.

- ♥ There are many ways which you can support the RHN, including **birthday fundraisers through Facebook**, which we always appreciate and welcome.
- ♥ **Shop with Amazon through Amazon Smile** and they will donate a percentage when you select our charity, visit [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) to sign up.
- ♥ Similarly, you can support us through **PayPal** and **Give As You Live**, or speak with your employers for **Pay As You Earn**.

**These are all easy and simple ways you can help support our charity and help to make huge difference for our patients and residents!**

## Here are just a few of our champions from 2020...



### Triathlon success

Congratulations to Richard who completed a triathlon in September, **raising an amazing £5,682** for the RHN. Richard has a friend at the RHN and wanted to raise money to support them and our other patients.



### Virtual marathon

Paul planned to take part in the London Marathon and the Prudential Ride London-Surrey this year to raise vital funds, but due to the pandemic, these were cancelled. Instead, Paul took part in the Virtual London Marathon in just over five hours and **raised just shy of £3k**. Paul mapped out his route and ran the equivalent of the 26.2 miles of the London Marathon and took to running in October with the support of his family to cheer him on. Paul said, "I'm proud to have raised money for the RHN, I have seen the excellent care provided by a wonderful group of kind and compassionate people."



### 24 hour Pianothon

As the first lockdown began across the country, regular RHN supporter Jo Reeves was busy organising the RHN's first online fundraising event, the Pianothon, with daughter Bethy.

Jo came up with the idea of a live 24-hour pianothon and got in touch with our fundraising team shortly before COVID-19 came put her all plans went into hibernation.

The fundraising team suggested making the event digital, and with the help of Jo's daughter Bethy, the pair were able to successfully organise our first online event. Split over two days in April, the 24-hour event featured over 40 volunteers live streaming on Facebook for 30 minutes to one-hour slots. **The team raised an incredible £7,651 for the RHN.**

Bethy said, "This was an experience we know we'll never forget, and I'd like to say a huge thank you to anyone who tuned in to the pianothon performances, to all the 44 pianists who played so wonderfully, to anyone who kindly donated, and to Aimee from the RHN and my amazingly inspiring mum whose idea it was in the first place to run this pianothon".

# the 2.6 challenge



## The 2.6 (running) challenge

RHN head of service, **Katie Richards**, (quite literally) went the extra mile by running 2.6 miles every day for 26 days – that’s almost three marathons! **Katie raised over £900** for the RHN through the Two Point Six challenge, from organisers of the London Marathon.



## The 2.6 (music) challenge

Also taking on the Two Point Six challenge was Senior Music Therapist, Bernice Chu, who took to Facebook Live to perform 26 songs in 26 minutes! **Her superb performance raised £686.**



Left to right: Bernadette, David, Graham and Nicole

# RHN Patients’ Corridor Challenge

On Wednesday 17 June, four patients (Bernadette, David, Graham and Nicole) at the RHN took on the challenge of walking down the hospital’s 100m long corridor in the hope of raising vital funds for the charity.

**Bernadette**, RHN patient and creator of the corridor challenge, said, “Thanks to the ongoing care and support that I am receiving, I’ve made huge progress and can now walk a few steps with an aid. I’m so grateful to everyone at RHN for improving my quality of life and helping me to gain back more independence. I wanted to do this challenge to give something back and help to raise some money for this fantastic hospital.”

“I was astonished at the amount we had raised from the walk before we had even stepped in the corridor, it was very motivating for us all. For the final part, I even abandoned my aid to walk completely by myself and it was such a prize to see fellow patients cheering us on.”

Bernadette was discharged on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, leaving a legacy with the corridor challenge and raising the funds for us to continue the care for others.

Reflecting on leaving, Bernadette said, “I want this hospital to be recognised as a place of excellence, for all the good things that it does for the patients. Even if you are not able to be rehabilitated to the level that I was, there is still a lot of rehab going on in this place, wonderful things to support patients.”

The four corridor challengers successfully took on the walk one after another, with the support of the RHN’s physiotherapy team, who followed closely behind walkers with a wheelchair as a safety precaution. **The four patients raised over £8,200 for the RHN.**

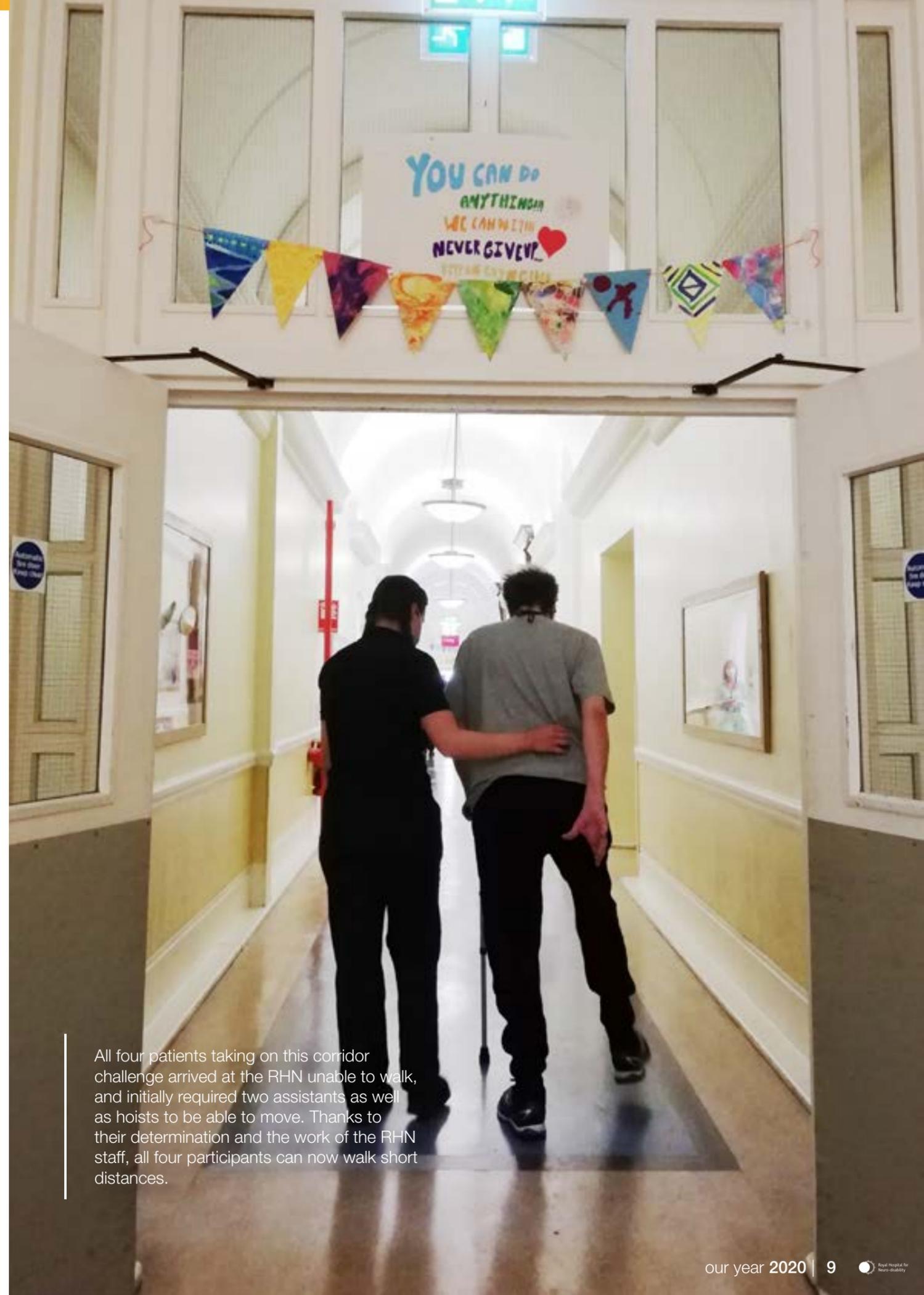
## Day at the movies - the musical

Inspired by the success of the Pianothon, another digital fundraising event was held in June, the Day at the Movies – The Musical.

Over 20 supporters of the RHN came together to live stream musical performances of songs from their favourite movies or musicals. The event raised an amazing £2,224.

You can still catch all of the performances online at

[www.facebook.com/RHNevents](http://www.facebook.com/RHNevents)



All four patients taking on this corridor challenge arrived at the RHN unable to walk, and initially required two assistants as well as hoists to be able to move. Thanks to their determination and the work of the RHN staff, all four participants can now walk short distances.

# Stories from lockdown

## ‘Local heroes’ sew to support the RHN during COVID-19

When the RHN was in need during the pandemic, the local community offered their help in a big way. Bright, colourful sets of scrubs were donated from volunteers across London to help our non-uniformed staff protect themselves at work.



Scrubs are loose fitting cotton or polycotton garments, traditionally worn in operating theatres that can be washed at 60°C after every shift, and so are good for infection control.

We reached out to Putney Rotary Club, the Women’s Institute and Richmond Council for Voluntary Service for help, and they started to spread the word. At the same time, an A&E nurse from Boston Hospital in Lincolnshire, started a Facebook page calling for people to make scrubs during lockdown.

The RHN reopened its laundry service, managed by donor development manager Trudi Brown, and catering assistant, Christine Crane, who was redeployed after we had to close our staff restaurant to concentrate on providing food for patients. We began handing out to staff every day and taking them back at the end of the day to be laundered.

The Love of Scrubs group also donated, managed by theatrical and film costume maker Sarah Dearing after her paid work disappeared overnight.

More donations came from two members of staff that made 15 sets of scrubs from recycled materials like duvet covers. Holy Trinity Church Wandsworth, who are our next-door neighbours, had been sewing for us after being contacted by RHN admissions co-ordinator, Susie Wilford. Meanwhile at St Mary’s church in Putney, Rosie Taylor started her own production line after she found out how desperately hospitals needed extra supplies of scrubs because of the experiences of her daughter, a doctor on a respiratory ward.

By June this incredible network of people had made 200 sets of scrubs for us, from fabric they had bought, recycled or had had donated to them. Some of the scrubs donated even ended up on the Victoria and Albert museum’s blog about the pandemic.

## Patients keep in touch with loved ones during the pandemic

To help keep our patients, families and staff safe, the RHN stopped visits to the hospital just before the first national lockdown in March 2020.



We launched the ‘Staying Connected’ appeal, asking for people to donate old technology to help facilitate video calls between patients and their families during this difficult time.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the RHN received six brand new Amazon Fire tablets, 35 iPads and eight smartphones, enabling patients to call their family members regularly.

A family member who used the initiative said, “Who would have thought when I kissed my mum goodbye that I would not see her again for many, many months due to a pandemic. Thankfully, Michael (Charge Nurse, Chatsworth ward) offered to keep up connected with mum on Zoom.

“Being able to see mum regularly and chatting with her as a family really helped ease our worries. We as a family are immensely thankful to be able to continue with our Zoom chats and we are thankful to everyone who donated their unwanted technology to enable this to happen. It made a huge difference in our lives.”

## Donations to keep the RHN going during the pandemic

The pandemic has been a challenging time for healthcare, with PPE in short supply and staff working extra shifts. The RHN received overwhelming positive support from the local community during the pandemic with donations of food, PPE and other treats for our staff and residents.

The RHN implemented many restrictions prior to the national lockdown in March. One of these restrictions saw the RHN split into different zones, with staff committed to a particular zone for the duration of their shift. While this was necessary to maintain strict infection control, it meant that ward staff were unable to leave to take breaks or grab something to eat.

The local community banded together, and we received and distributed free meals across the RHN. **Meals for the NHS** were a huge provider of these meals during the first lockdown period. Meals for the NHS provided the RHN with over 2,000 free meals from restaurants and caterers in the London area.

The group Family Meals also reached out to support the RHN. **Christopher Evans-Gordon** opened the doors of his restaurant in Fulham (the Little Blue Door Company) to a group of volunteers and formed the charity Family Meal, who started making meals for NHS workers and vulnerable local residents. Chris provided us with 100 meals a day for the final month before our cafeteria was re-opened.

In addition to the meals, **Dons Local Action Group (DLAG)**, a network of volunteers formed in response to the COVID-19 crisis, set up stalls outside supermarkets to collect food. DLAG kindly donated food packages to the RHN including a large amount of Easter eggs as well as cupcakes gifted to DLAG by Wimbledon-based cake shop, **Cakeology**.

Importantly, to keep staff safe, the RHN along with other frontline workers across the country, needed PPE. Statement chandelier company, **Cameron Design House (CDH)**, made huge PPE donations to the RHN during the first lockdown thanks to **Paul Heather**, purchasing manager at the RHN, reaching out. CDH, who normally manufacture handmade statement chandeliers, generously made and donated over 1,000 face shields to the RHN.

We were delighted to receive donations of homemade PPE from the local community too. **Michael Cawley** helped to keep key workers safe by using his 3D printer to create face shields. Staff also loved the rainbow face shields donated to us by **Nick Clark**.

A huge thank you to everyone in the local community who have supported the RHN, through food, treats and PPE.



# Opening up the archives

## Uncovering the RHN archives in 2020

**The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability received a grant of £69,700 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for a two-year heritage project to create a sustainable public engagement programme for the RHN's new disability history archive.**



The heritage project started in December 2019 and over this year, our Archivist Chris Olver and a group of volunteers, have repackaged and catalogued our archives, uncovering stories about the hospital's past.

The funding has allowed much of the archive to be stored and easily accessed through our online catalogue. A large selection of the RHN's archive collection has been digitalised, which provides visitors with instant access to some of our most treasured documents, publications and photographs. Chris has also given several online lectures about the history of the hospital, recently discussing the life and times of our founder, Rev. Andrew Reed.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Chris has also begun a special COVID-19 archive to document current events and how the hospital and staff adapted and coped with the unprecedented health crisis. This collection includes ongoing remote history interviews with staff and the wider RHN community about the crisis. The RHN COVID-19 archive will be an important research resource for future historians of the pandemic thanks to the unique role the hospital plays in the UK medical environment.

Chris Olver said "It has been a difficult but progressive year for the RHN Service. The National Lottery Heritage funding grant has been fantastic in providing us with the resources and personnel to better care for and understand our history. The pandemic has meant we have had to adapt the project, but I am optimistic and excited about the changes we made, with more items to be digitised and accessible on our website. Also there has been more volunteer placements cataloguing our collections remotely and we have an outdoor heritage exhibition in the grounds of the hospital planned for the summer of 2021."

## Restoring Victorian stained-glass windows at the RHN

**Supported by the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT), the RHN announced a fundraising campaign in 2018 to restore the Victorian stained-glass windows onsite. Having successfully raised over £100k, the stained-glass windows project was completed in August 2020.**

HOLT, London's independent heritage charity, pledged £10,000 to the fundraiser and has worked closely with the RHN. Through Heritage of London Trust, the RHN was linked with Chapel Studio, one of the leading stained-glass studios in Europe, who produced the window designs based on the single surviving photograph. The photograph, dating from around 1900, suggests that the original stained-glass reflected the four seasons.

The Heritage of London Trust also included the RHN's stained glass project in a digital virtual-reality film for the BBC's Civilisations Festival, a partnership between museums, galleries, libraries and archives and the BBC which coincided with the broadcast of BBC Arts' Civilisations series in spring 2018.

The RHN's chaplain, Geoff Coyne, said, "Restoring the windows, and letting the light shine back in, has made a beautiful space for patients to use and provide a focal point for visitors who come to the hospital to learn more about our history."

Heritage of London Trust Director Dr Nicola Stacey said, "We are thrilled that the original beauty of these windows has returned to the Assembly Room. This is such a special space – surviving virtually untouched from one of the finest Victorian missions in London – and still serving the same purpose 150 years later".

The original windows were destroyed in World War Two air raids and for the past few years, have been boarded up. Now fixed, they restore the Assembly Room which is used today by patients for socialising, concerts, and chaplaincy services, just as it was when it was first built.



# Research at the RHN

## We developed new studies:

The team on Jack Emerson ward led by Professor Philippe Jolliet is undertaking a descriptive study of tracheotomised ventilator-dependent patients in a specialised long-term care unit. The second project, building on the first, will explore 'Quality of life in ventilator-dependent patients in a specialised long-term care unit as perceived by patients, families and caregivers'.

## Our Dental team published their completed studies:

Prasad R, Daly B, Manley MCG. (2019) Effect of daily manual toothbrushing with 0.2% chlorhexidine gel on pneumonia-associated pathogens in adults living with profound neuro-disability. Access Microbiology. Oct 21;1(10)

Manley MCG, Doshi M. (2020) The importance of oral health and the value of dental care in the process of rehabilitation for people with complex neuro-disability. Disability and Rehabilitation. Sep 15:1-2.

## The ongoing PhD students supported by the RHN are progressing well.

Amy Pundole, Clinical Lead Speech and Language Therapist, gave a successful online open lecture in June and has had her first paper published:

Pundole A, Varley R, Beeke S (2020) 'Assessing emergence from prolonged disorder of consciousness: Current opinion and practice in the UK' Neuropsychological Rehabilitation. May 13: 1-25.

Alex Rose, Principal Clinical Psychologist, was commended by her annual review panel at Glasgow University for "the progress she has made in the most difficult of circumstances". Her study looking at the assessment of mood and psychological well-being in people with severe brain injury, received this year funding from the Frances and Augustus Newman foundation.

## Update on our five-year research strategy

**Our commitment to advance research and education at the RHN has been inevitably impacted by the pandemic. All of our onsite training events were unfortunately cancelled at the beginning of March, limiting our ability to disseminate our research make the desired impact we had hoped to make this year.**

Despite this, the RHN has made huge strides in making our events, training and lectures digitally accessible. We have successfully expanded this over the past few months and are now able to offer a range of online training, courses and open lectures. The first events have been very popular with our first online lecture attracting over 230 attendees. Online training has also seen international as well as national participation.

We are dedicated to slowly migrating our events, training and lectures to online platforms and continue to develop new events both internally and externally so we are able to share best practice and progress.

### Overview on strategy progress

- There is at least one project under each research theme.
- Research culture is being successfully nurtured with 4 PhD students and one post doc.
- Whilst resources have not been impacted by the pandemic yet, impact and dissemination have been. We have adapted to focus on online courses and lectures, but need to go a step further and maximise our online presence internally and externally.

During 2019/2020 we hosted:



2 conferences



7 training courses



5 open lectures.

## Featured research: Amy Pundole

Our first open lecture, 'an assessment of emergence from PDOC', was run by Amy Pundole, Clinical Lead Speech and Language Therapist at the RHN. The lecture was a free event and explored updates on Amy's ongoing PhD project.

Amy has worked with prolonged disorder of consciousness (PDOC) patients at the RHN for many years. Her experience has helped to identify clinical areas that require further research.

"As a speech and language therapist (SLT), I focus on assessing communication and trying to optimise each patient's communication abilities. Assessments to determine if a patient has emerged from PDOC are currently based on narrow criteria and require a patient with a significant brain injury to respond with 100% accuracy," explained Amy.

"The aim of my PhD is to look at how we can improve assessments for patients emerging from PDOC. This will provide information on their communication function and prognosis to help clinicians and family members to make complex decisions about ongoing treatment and therapy input."

Determining whether a patient has emerged from PDOC can be difficult. As part of the first stage of her PhD, Amy sent out an online survey to similar multi-disciplinary teams across the UK to find out what their experiences and practices were.

"It was really exciting to find that other teams have had similar experiences. The findings have also helped me plan the next stages of research."

Amy recently presented her studies on the RHN's first online webinar, which was widely attended by professionals across the globe.

"Presenting the webinar was really positive although using Zoom is strange. The only person I could see when talking was myself and not the audience! But it generated a range of questions and discussion and was able to reach a lot of people, so I look forward to repeating the experience to report on the findings from the next stages of my research."

**The webinar was hugely successful, seeing over 400 people register for the event and over 230 people tune in from across the globe, including as far as Australia, the USA and Qatar.**

"I'm glad we are able to share their knowledge and skills with others during this time. Based on the success of this lecture, we are planning on making online lectures a routine fixture of our educational offering," said Dr Sophie Duport, Associate Director of Research.



# Our fundraising 2020 champions



## Drapers ward and Therapy hub

In March, the RHN officially reopened Drapers ward (part of the Brain Injury Service) and state-of-the-art Therapy Hub following extensive renovations after a successful fundraising appeal.

Drapers was the first to undergo major renovations as part of wider plans to refresh every ward at the hospital. The new design provides more space and improved equipment for a bright, modern and more comfortable area for patients. It also makes moving and handling patients much easier for staff.

Rooms have been decorated to create a homelier environment and allow for medical equipment such as hoists to be hidden within cupboards. The new spaces also remove the need for obvious oxygen tanks, with piped oxygen fitted in the walls. Other improvements include new larger showering facilities and accessible televisions fitted to walls – removing the trip hazard of wires on the floor. The state-of-the-art Therapy Hub now provides top of the range equipment and a sensory room to further support the rehabilitation of patients.

The opening ceremony was attended by Leonora, Countess of Lichfield, who cut the ribbon. Other attendees included members of the local community, business representatives and other hospital stakeholders.

**Paul Allen, Chief Executive of the RHN, said, “The Drapers ward and Therapy Hub refurbishment has been seen as a flagship project, which would set the bar high in terms of the standard of facility that we aspire to throughout the RHN.”**

The new Therapy Hub and quiet gym are spacious and provide a modern environment that meets the wide-ranging needs of our patients. Our new Drapers ward is contemporary, bright and designed with the needs of patients in mind, providing patients with the space needed to practice vital gains made through rehabilitation in their daily routines. Together these new facilities will allow patients to gain maximum benefit from the excellent rehabilitation offered by our specialist multi-disciplinary therapy and care teams.”

After the ceremony, guests toured the newly refurbished ward and brand new Therapy Hub, before enjoying light refreshments and networking in the hospital’s De Lancey Lowe room.



## New Matrons

Following some very well-deserved internal promotions, we now have five matrons providing seven-day clinical and site cover, along with designated responsibilities for the various services at the RHN.

Joining **Sorin Neacsu**, who is now matron for Devonshire and Drapers, are our four new matrons:

- **Macarena Montesinos Ruiz** is matron for Chatsworth and Glyn
- **Laura Chapman** is matron for Hunter, and the new Andrew Reed ward
- **Lizel Muyo** is matron for Goodman House and Coombs
- **Justin Finbow** is matron for JEC, the new Leonora ward, and Haberdashers House

**We are very proud to be promoting so many talented, experienced and capable staff as matrons. This is an excellent team who will take nursing at the RHN to a new level!**

## New and improved Andrew Reed ward

**Despite all the setbacks brought on by the pandemic, our ward refurbishment programme has progressed very well, and as planned, work has now finished on Cathcart and Evitt (two wards in the original part of our building).**

The completion of these wards was only delivered on time thanks to the builders, who worked in isolation throughout lockdown in order to complete the project.

This £4.1million project has combined these wards into one state-of-the-art care facility, with the newly merged ward now being renamed Andrew Reed, in honour of our founder.



## Leonora ward

**The ward that was previously named Andrew Reed, has now been renamed Leonora ward after our president – Leonora, Countess of Lichfield. Work has recently completed on this ward. Leonora ward is fitted with additional facilities such as piped medical gases and has allowed us to expand our ventilator service with a six vent beds.**

“As an extension of JEC, the Leonora ward allows us to support the growing number of patients with complex respiratory requirements. This includes patients receiving tracheostomy ventilation and non-invasive ventilator (NIV) support, as well as those requiring skilled and frequent interventions,” said Justin Finbow, Matron.



# Elaine's Christmas lights



Joanna (left) with her mum Elaine (right)

## Elaine's story

**In May 2020, Elaine suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm and stroke which left her with a life-changing brain injury. Miraculously Elaine survived and has been battling recovery ever since.**

Elaine was admitted to the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN) on 27 August 2020 to start a rehabilitation programme on the recently refurbished Drapers ward.

"We were very happy mum was given a place at the RHN as we had been told great things about the hospital and heard many success stories. We had been told about all the amazing activities and therapies that the hospital provides," said Joanna, Elaine's daughter.

"We were anxious about mum moving to the RHN as visiting was limited due to the pandemic, but we were reassured that contact would be maintained with mum via video call."

Since joining the RHN, Elaine has made huge progress.

"Mum takes part in quite an intensive therapy program. She participates in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language therapy. Mum's speech is largely affected as a result of her brain injury, however since coming to the RHN this has improved significantly. She has gone from not talking much at all to now having some conversations. Mum also participates in other activities such as a pamper group and music group which she thoroughly enjoys."

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Elaine's family have been unable to visit her often but have taken comfort in seeing the care she receives from staff.

"The staff have been incredible in allowing us to maintain contact with mum. We managed to visit once before the situation with COVID worsened, but we speak to mum every day on her phone via FaceTime which she now is happy to engage in. On occasions we have also managed to watch mum in some of her therapy sessions to see how she is progressing with the help of the many amazing therapists working with her."

## Elaine's Christmas lights display

"As mum will be spending this Christmas in the RHN, we decided to make an extravagant Christmas lights display to put a smile on people's faces and to raise funds for a great organisation."

**Joanna's light display in honour of her mum has so far raised £1,262.**

"We hope to have our amazing mum back with us soon but in the meantime we want to give something back to the RHN to thank them for everything they have done and are doing for our mum!"

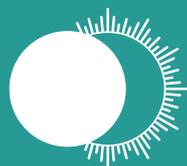


Elaine's Christmas lights



Elaine was able to FaceTime with her daughter to enjoy the Christmas lights set up in her name.

# A charity for adults with severe brain injury



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