



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

As the country went into lockdown in its battle with coronavirus, many of our regular fundraising events, such as our Gala dinner and the London marathon had to be cancelled. However, fundraising continued despite these challenges, both in and outside the hospital.

Four patients, who arrived at the RHN unable to walk, decided to take on an amazing challenge to help raise vital funds for the hospital during the lockdown. Due to their determination and the dedicated assistance of RHN staff, they left their wheelchairs behind and walked the entire length of the RHN's main corridor, a distance of 100 metres. Together, they raised an impressive **£9,720.71**.

Bernadette, who came up with this fundraising initiative arrived at the RHN after being rushed to hospital with Guillain Barré Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder where the immune system attacks the body's nerves. On admission she was unable to move or speak and was hooked up to a tracheostomy ventilator. Having gone through a programme of rehabilitation to improve her speech, mobility and strength, Bernadette was keen to get involved in fundraising for the hospital.

"Thanks to the ongoing care and support that I am receiving, I'm now able to walk a few steps with an aid- the feeling has come back in my fingers and they are continuing to recover. I'm so grateful to everyone at RHN for improving my quality of life and helping me to gain back more independence. I would now like to give something back and help to raise some money for this fantastic hospital." - Bernadette

Having suffered a heart attack, on admission to the RHN David could only communicate by using an alphabet communications chart, along with the blinking of his eye to indicate 'yes' or 'no.'



"Now I am off the ventilator, talking, walking with a walker, showering myself, eating & drinking, and the future is much brighter. Thanks so much to everyone at the RHN for believing in me and pushing me. It is working!" - David

After having 3 operations relating to a brain tumour, Graham came to the RHN for rehabilitation. He has come on in leaps and bounds thanks to his occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language sessions.

Nicole, at the age of 20 came to the RHN after complications relating to a brain tumour. Even though this was not a competition, she whizzed down the corridor giving everyone else a run for their money.



We want to say a well deserved thank you to Bernadette, Graham, David and Nicole for being so inspirational. We also would like to thank everyone who supported them, giving them that extra bit of motivation to reach the end.



Even though our events fundraising was severely curtailed by the lockdown our postal and online campaigns, to established and new supporters, were able to continue. Throughout May and June we asked for your help to support our nurses with the additional funds we need to provide them with adequate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). We are hugely grateful to everyone who responded. Thanks to your generosity we raised over £65,000 to cover the cost of emergency PPE supplies, such as visors, single use aprons and gowns, masks and gloves.



Want to make a will during the COVID-19 pandemic?

By Isabel Barrett, RHN Legacy Manager

Births, marriages, divorce and death. These are the usual reasons people start contacting us for our registered charity number, so they can include the RHN in their newly made or updated will. Now we can officially add pandemics to the list. In the last week I have spoken to a number of supporters who have expressed anxiety and confusion about the physical restrictions in place, their safety and the legalities of making a will right now and whilst many people are still self-isolating. I hope the following information helps answer some of these questions and more.

A guide to making or updating a will during the Coronavirus outbreak

There are several online and over the phone solicitor and professional will writing services that can help you make or update a valid will from the comfort of your own home without the need to come out of isolation. It's worth ringing your solicitor to ask. Some are also able to arrange safe, socially distanced meetings and some are offering the service for free or at a discounted rate.

Getting your will witnessed

You might be wondering how your will can be witnessed whilst isolating. Well law in England and Wales states that a will must be signed with wet ink and witnessed in person. If you are in isolation the current advice is to have your witnesses both watch you sign your will through a closed window, to pass the will through your letterbox and watch them sign their details in the same way. They can then post the will back through your letterbox and it's all done. Remember, a person witnessing your will cannot be a beneficiary in your will and neither can their spouse.

Charity route will writing

There are a number of organisations out there who have partnered up with charities and with solicitor firms from all over the UK who are looking to do some good for charity. Put simply, the solicitor offers their will writing service for free or at a reduced rate to whoever the charity has referred

their way. There is no obligation to leave a gift to charity in your will but people who go down this route usually intend to anyway.

The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability is currently working in partnership with The National Free Wills Network. Contact me on 020 87804557 ibarrett@rhn.org.uk to request a list of participating solicitors in your local area.

The partnership provides our supporters with a free, solicitor written will. All partner solicitors are professionals and registered with the Law Society. Once you have the list, simply choose which solicitor you'd like to use and give them a call to start the ball rolling.

Alternatively, the following organisations work in a similar way, though not always free, both offer all the assurances of registered professional solicitors and oodles of advice about how to reduce inheritance tax on your estate by donating to charity.

You are able to contact these directly to register your interest in sorting your will:

- The Goodwill Partnership
0844 669 6148
www.thegoodwillpartnership.co.uk
- Will Aid
020 3740 9172
www.willaid.org.uk

Please note that there is no obligation to include a gift in your will to any charity when using any of these services, though we would like you to of course.

Professional will writing services – non solicitor led

Solicitors are not the only people who can write a valid will. Indeed you are able to write your own will too but many people are more comfortable hiring a professional will writing service. They are often cheaper than solicitors and some have panels of solicitors to check over more complex wills when they are completed. Whether the service is free, discounted or full price, we only recommend will writing services that are accredited by either:

- The Society of Will Writers
www.willwriters.com
- The Institute of Professional Will Writers
www.ipwnwr.co.uk

Examples of such are: Farewill.co.uk 020 8050 2686 and Co-op Legal Services 0330 0295 123 www.wills.coop.co.uk. There are too many will writing services to mention here but these are particularly well established and recognisable companies.

For more advice about making wills, inheritance tax or about acting as an executor, please feel free to contact me here at any time:

**ibarrett@rhn.org.uk
020 8780 4557**

Support the RHN with Amazon Smile

If you like to shop on Amazon, you can now support the RHN by signing up to **Amazon Smile**. Just go to <http://smile.amazon.co.uk> and search for the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability in their list of supported charities. Once you've signed up, remember to access Amazon via the Smile page, and for every purchase you make a small donation will wing its way to the hospital.


Already love Amazon? How about using **AmazonSmile!** The same great Amazon you love but with .05% of the profits being automatically donated to us!

Pastoral Care During a Pandemic

An appeal for Chaplaincy services

When the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability went into lockdown at the beginning of March the restrictions meant that many of the services we provide for patients had to be temporarily halted. Patient outings were cancelled and art classes, gardening groups and swimming sessions all had to be put on hold. But by making use of modern technology, the RHN Chaplaincy Service carried on, offering pastoral care, religious services and emotional support to patients and staff throughout the crisis. We talked to Chaplaincy Assistant, Asi Munisi to find out how the team adapted and coped with their new way of working.



Can you remember when you first became aware of the coronavirus pandemic?

Yes, it seemed to only be in China, then there was a panic around Italy, and then I heard through my Sunday Joy show on Riverside Radio that we were three weeks behind Italy in terms of cases. That turned out to be right, for soon after, the hospital went on lockdown and I received a call from Pastor Geoff not to come in. As my son's 21st birthday approached the Prime Minister announced the national lockdown. I remember thinking, oh what a shame, my poor son, unable to celebrate such a milestone birthday the way he wanted to.

When the RHN went in to lockdown how did you feel?

It felt quite strange, as it posed quite a pastoral challenge, for how can we be alongside people, supporting them, when we're being restricted from being present with them.

Many staff were unable to come in to the hospital during the lockdown. What did you find most challenging about not being on site?

Much of my work is contact work, such as one to ones, bible study with patients, and supporting Pastor Geoff with the Church Services. It was quite challenging figuring out how to adapt to the situation and maintain personal connections. Thank God we are living in an age of technology, that allows us to connect virtually, but it's not the same and such personal, face to face contact cannot be replaced.

How did the Chaplaincy service adapt during the lockdown?

At first we streamed a shorter version of the Sunday Service from Pastor Geoff's study, then the whole country went on lockdown, so we came up with a system where Pastor Geoff would record his bits of the welcome, prayers and message. Another member of staff would then record a reading, and occasionally our good friend Emile from the fundraising team would help us in recording some prayers. I would record a selected chorus and hymn, putting it altogether and uploading to YouTube for our worshipping community to view at their leisure.

We also set up our bible studies on Zoom and were able to have one to one study groups via Zoom with the help of the hospital staff. Pastor Geoff maintained contact with relatives on the phone and continued to conduct funerals with limited numbers of attendees.

What did you miss most about the RHN while the lockdown was in effect?

It would have to be that face to face contact with people, that spirit of community and love that can only go so far on Zoom. Even down to seeing people in the corridors and saying hello, catching up with colleagues and patients whom I consider friends.

Was there anything that the RHN or wider community did that you found particularly inspirational or rewarding?

I was amazed at how quickly our IT department made the necessary adaptations to enable us to connect from home, providing tablets to the ward so we could connect via Zoom and of course the amazing staff on the wards who had to learn how to connect with us in these new ways.

How did the Chaplaincy service support patients, their families and our staff during the lockdown?

Pastor Geoff maintained contact with relatives on the phone, going above and beyond by also providing a podcast three times a week on the Psalms, and even helping some patient relatives with their shopping.

I checked in with relatives whom I had contact details for, and held individual support sessions with patients via Zoom. We managed to get into a rhythm with our Zoom bible study, where patients from different wards could see each other and interact during our time together online. With so many other activities suspended this was greatly valued. We also produced a weekly Sunday thought for the day on YouTube. But nothing beats being onsite and present with my friends, and now that restrictions have eased a little I'm overjoyed to be back at the hospital.

Serious brain injury and illness can be devastating, and it can be difficult to come to terms with the effects of life changing injury on daily life. The RHN Chaplaincy service provides much needed emotional and spiritual support for patients and their families, as well as the chance to connect and find friendship with people in similar circumstances, regardless of religious belief.

To make sure this crucial support remains available we raise £68,000 every year to cover staff and material costs. You can help support this vital and much loved service by donating to our Chaplaincy appeal today. To find out how to do so, please turn to the back page for more details.

“We knew the hospital would pull through.”

Keeping the RHN supplied through lockdown, with Purchasing Manager, Paul Heather.



During the course of the lockdown we all heard about the difficulties many hospitals faced in sourcing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). At the RHN, the responsibility for sourcing all our equipment falls to our Purchasing Team, headed by Purchasing Manager, Paul Heather. Paul was on holiday in the USA when news of the pandemic broke, and had to race back to London to avoid being stranded overseas. We asked him for his account of life at the RHN during the pandemic.

I was on a 40th birthday tour around the USA when the outbreak began, and was worrying about getting home and back to work. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic on the 11th March, when I was in New Orleans. I managed to get to Miami and was lucky enough to catch the last flight to London just before lockdown began. Fortunately, my colleagues on the Purchasing Team, Michael Baker and Fumbi Mabo were outstanding in my absence and kept the ship afloat supplies wise.

It turned out to be an unprecedented time for our department. Our work is key to keeping everyone at the RHN safe and well while they're on site, and like everyone else I was worried and concerned for the patients and frontline staff, so our immediate priority was doubling our existing stock, because of the increased usage of PPE at the RHN and in healthcare settings generally. But with help from staff, various pop up charities and fantastic representatives with our current suppliers, it made us feel a little more confident we could manage without any major problems. Right from the start I was 100% confident that the hospital would pull through and that everyone could and would step up, which they have and continue to do!

Eight months on, I feel we have performed admirably, but also know we are not out of the woods yet and many more months

of hard work are ahead of us. Everyone knows about the challenges of sourcing PPE, but even getting in basic product lines has become extremely difficult in the current climate. At least at a reasonable price! We have over 150 product lines that we purchase on a regular basis for our stock, and over 91 cost centres for departments and wards. Making sure that requisitions, orders and delivery times are met has been extremely challenging. It's been frustrating, hot work, but also very rewarding. We have had to adapt in most things we do, but needing to be onsite has limited the level of adaptation needed. It's just been harder and faster work. The major difference is getting deliveries in from suppliers and then in turn delivering those products to the end user. Delivering goods without any contact at all, because we couldn't go on to the wards, was a strange way to work to begin with, but we got used to it.

The one thing I missed most working at the RHN during the lockdown was company. Having no one around for eight hours a day, five days a week for months on end can get a bit lonely. Our corridor was virtually empty, because other teams like Finance, IT and HR were all working remotely. Thankfully staff are slowly coming back on site and the area restrictions have been lifted, allowing us more freedom to move around the hospital. Zoom meetings are fine, but sitting down with someone and having a chat face to face about your respective work just seems easier and a lot more pleasant. I hope and expect the camaraderie shown by RHN staff during the lockdown will continue to get stronger as the rest of the workforce slowly returns, because the ability of the RHN staff to work as a team has been a huge advantage, and certain people have gone out the way for us in Purchasing. In particular I'd like to thank Emily McWhirter, Director of Nursing and Katie Richards, Head of Brain Injury Services, for their unwavering and continuing support and help during the Covid-19 pandemic with not just PPE but other important product lines.

I'd also like to say thank you to our Wheelchair department, who sent us a care package of food during the lockdown, as part of a hospital wide scheme for different teams to show their appreciation for one another. It really is nice to know that the efforts that we have made didn't go unnoticed.



Finally, I'd also like to mention Cameron Design House, a London company who normally make bespoke lighting solutions, who by re-purposing their production line have been able to supply us with over 1000 plastic face guards free of charge! Getting support through the community like that really shows how much the RHN matters to people.



Paul and his team; Fumbi Mabo (Left) and Michael Baker (Right)

Let's all keep safe and keep up the good work everybody!



THE ASSEMBLY ROOM RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION

In April 2019, the RHN launched its appeal to restore the beautiful stained glass windows of the hospital's Assembly Room. The room, which is at the centre of the 1879 'Great Extension', with mirroring staircases to either side of it, was a once grand Victorian Hall with decorative arched windows, and classical columns. In the 1917 Christmas appeal 'Shelter Where Feeble Feet' the Assembly Room is pictured and is described in the following passage:

"[The Assembly Room] is used as an ordinary Day Room by nearly one hundred of the lady patients who are able to get downstairs. The Assembly Room is also used as a Chapel, and the Chaplain holds daily Services here. The Chaplain's desk is at one end of the room and his congregation, including patients, nurses, and others, often fills the room. Several Bishops, and other distinguished preachers have conducted Services in this room. When an entertainment is given to the patients a platform is erected at the end of the room, opposite to the Chaplain's desk."



The original windows, photographed at the end of the nineteenth century.

Many of the original architectural features of the room remain intact. The internal columns, doorways, inset alcoves, dado rail and mouldings are all indicative of the age in which the room was built, but sadly over the years the paintwork had become neglected and some of the decorative mouldings were beginning to peel away.

The area of most concern though, for everyone at the hospital, was the external doors and windows. The frames were original, made of wood, and after more than a century of use were in a poor condition. The windows, which had once been beautifully painted with flowers and plants depicting the four seasons, had sadly been lost in air raids during World War Two and had been replaced with plain glass. That too was beginning to show its age, and by the time the hospital launched its appeal to restore the windows, several had already been boarded up.

To return the room to its former glory we needed to raise £216,000, and thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters we were able to do so in a little over 10 months. By February 2020 we were ready to start work, but sadly the coronavirus pandemic intervened and all work had to be put on hold while the hospital was in lockdown. Luckily, by the time the government restrictions began to ease, the RHN had not seen a new case of coronavirus for almost 100 days, and we were able to allow work on the Assembly Room to begin. The decorative cornices,



By 2019 the whole room, including the windows, was in desperate need of repair.

originally made from delicate strips of stamped paper were repaired, and the entire room, including the impressive domed ceiling light were given a fresh coat of paint, replacing the dull mustard wall colour with a bright, sky blue. All the fixtures, including the classical columns were painted in white, to match the brand new window frames. These were installed last, over a period of three weeks, with the painted panels being inserted by the team from Chapel Studios, who re-created the original design just for the RHN. With the wood floor stripped and freshly polished, the room is now the light, colour filled space everyone had imagined.

For now patient activities are still somewhat limited, but at the time of going to press, the hope is to open the room as a space for family visits as soon as possible. A heritage display, designed by our archivist, Chris Oliver will detail the history of the room and its windows, as well as the wider hospital. Eventually, when visitors are allowed to return to the RHN, a formal opening of the restored Assembly Room will take place, but in the meantime we hope you enjoy the photos.

Chaplain's Corner



RHN Chaplain, Geoff Coyne

By the time you are reading this article winter will be here and we are racing towards the end of another year. And so I find myself reflecting on the year that is behind me.

What a year it has been – not only the normal difficulties of life but all the difficulties that have come with coronavirus. It has been a year with sadness because so many of us know people who have died because of the virus, it has been a year of challenges as we have all had to adapt in life but it has also been a year of accomplishments as we worked through some difficult times and come out the other side.

As I reflect on all of this, I recall the words of the Roman Emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius. He ruled at a time when the Roman Empire was at the peak of its power but was beginning to have problems and he had to guide his people through the turbulent times of a pandemic. In his personal journal which he kept to reflect on things and keep himself rooted he wrote many wise words including these

"Look well into thyself; there is a source of strength which will always spring up if thou wilt always look."

Our inner resilience of this last year is reflected in these words and as the new year unfolds may we continue to find that strength.



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 hospital and take a look.

Adeh Murray Sellar

Anne Prosser

Antony Olley

Avis June Smith

Barbara Garnham

Barbara Kelly

Catherine Ann Fitzgerald

Christopher Bedford

David Driver

David John Fincham

David John Gillett

Diana Merrick

Eileen Dorothy Barrett

Eileen McKay

France-Raoul Chateau

Ghulam Sarwar

Graham Boiling

Henry John Old

Hugh Munro

James Pirie

Kamaljit Toor

Lesley Jean Hyams

Lucy Jane Denniston

Margaret Deller

Maud Riley

Maureen Lesley O'Brien

Megan Paton

Megan Walters

Michael Lindsay

Neale Gordon-Wilson

Patricia Burston

Paul Loft

Peggy Stannard

Peter Gow

Peter John Davies

Peter Newton

Roger Smith

Rosemary Ann Shurrock

Sean Hamilton

Shirley Gill

Taranjit Kaur Chadha

Ted & Gladys Black

Trevor George Kingham

Ved & Helena Aggarwal

Winifred Warwick-Mayo

Lavender Funds are a way of celebrating the life of a loved one while helping others in need of our specialist care and support. After setting up a fund you will also have the opportunity to plant a special memorial lavender in our peaceful garden.

For more information please contact Isabel Barrett in Fundraising on 020 8780 4557 or ibarrett@rhn.org.uk

Dates for your diary

London Winter Walk



Sunday 24th January
2021

Walk a marathon or half a marathon and kick start your new year through Central London. There's full support, with rest stops, snacks and hot drinks as well as a hot finisher meal and winter walk scarf and finisher medal.

RHN Winter Walk

Saturday 6th February
2021

Take a Winter Walk with us on this 5 mile sponsored walk through the leafy woodlands of Wimbledon Common, with hot drinks and food. Registration for an individual is £10 with a fundraising target of £100. A family registration is £25 with a target of £250. We hope you will join us.



Please note that the above events will only go ahead should they adhere to the Government's guidelines.

If you would like further information on any of these events then please visit www.rhn.org.uk or contact the events team by email events@rhn.org.uk or call us on 020 8780 4560.

Follow us: twitter.com/rhnuuk facebook.com/rhnuuk instagram.com/rhnuuk

Staying Connected at the RHN



Back in March, with the hospital site closed to visitors, there was a very real possibility that many of our patients would not be able to see or speak to their loved ones and friends for many months. With volunteers also restricted from coming to the hospital, and patient activities restricted to only those that could take place on the wards, tackling patient loneliness became one of many challenges our staff had to meet during the lockdown.

With this in mind, on March 18, we launched our **Stay Connected** appeal. Wherever possible, we wanted to use technology to allow video messaging between patients and residents and their families and friends. We already had a number of iPads and Android tablets set up for this purpose, and in use by patients, but we were in desperate need of more.

Fortunately, our supporters were able to respond. By hunting in the backs of cupboards and desk drawers, they were able to supply us with over 40 extra devices, including 35 iPads and seven Android tablets. These have all been configured by our team of technologists so that they can be used by our patients and residents to stay in touch with family and friends outside the hospital.

We are pleased to say that visits have now re-started at the hospital. However, in line with government guidance, the numbers of visitors we can have on site on any one day is still restricted. For this reason we would still like to get as many patients as we can supplied with a tablet device. Despite the success of our initial appeal we still don't have enough devices to keep everyone



connected – and this is where you come in! If you have an old tablet, either iPad or Android device, which still functions but you don't mind donating it to the cause, we'd be incredibly grateful for it.

Please make sure you remove all personal data from your device and reset it to its factory settings before sending it, along with its power cable, to:
Stay Connected Appeal, Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, West Hill, Putney, London, SW15 3SW.

Please click [here](#) if you'd like to support
The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability's Chaplaincy appeal.

I'm sending my gift of:

£10 £20 £25 £ _____ my preferred amount today

giftaid it Don't forget to let us know whether or not you're a UK tax payer. We can reclaim the tax on your donation and any future donations, to make your donation **25% more, at no cost to you!**

Donate online: www.rhn.org.uk/online-donation / Or call: 020 8780 4568

You can also donate by post, sending your gift to: **Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, FREEPOST, London SW15 3SW.** Using a stamp will save RHN money. When sending a donation by post, we would appreciate it if you could include your address and email details so that we can continue to keep you updated on our work.

If this project is fully funded by the time we receive your donation, your gift will be used for the general benefit of patients at the RHN.



Thank you for your support!