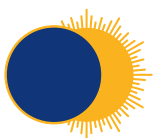


# RHN NEWS

SUMMER 2019



How volunteering  
makes a difference



Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

# Welcome

Welcome to another exciting edition of the RHN News, where you can learn about the latest and greatest of our achievements!

In this issue, we announce the official opening of Haberdashers House, our newest ward for young adults, and state-of-the-art therapy hub. We also celebrate the success of another RHN Festival and Founder's Day (pages 6 & 7) as well as our annual charity gala dinner (page 9).

We marked the centenary of the hospital's Royal Charter and wards across the hospital came together in celebration of International Nurses Day (page 4).

You can read Carol and Kay's heartwarming story of friendship on page 5 and learn more about what it means to be an RHN volunteer from Nayanee in our Volunteer Spotlight on page 10.

Happy reading!

**Paul Allen**

Chief Executive



Improvements to our environment .....	3
News .....	4
Carol and Kay's story .....	5
Founder's Day and the RHN Festival .....	6
Research team updates .....	8
Annual Gala Dinner .....	9
Volunteer spotlight .....	10
What's on .....	11

We're online! Follow us @RHNuk



Founded in 1854, the RHN is a well-respected, national charitable hospital and research centre, providing services for adults with brain injuries. Our Putney-based community provides specialist care, therapies and innovative technologies to meet the complex needs of people with profound disabilities. We pride ourselves on caring for our patients as individuals, offering hope, as well as practical and emotional support to them and their families.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please email [comms@rhn.org.uk](mailto:comms@rhn.org.uk)

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# Improvements to our environment

The Therapy Hub opened its doors to patients in June 2019

## Welcome to the Therapy Hub

Our new Hub (previously Drapers Gym) is now open. This new therapy space provides our patients with a modern environment for various rehabilitation therapies. The Quiet Gym, a peaceful space for quiet assessment and treatment, is also open.

Creating these new spaces while still providing care and rehab has been a very impressive logistical achievement and is a great milestone in our capital ward refurbishment programme. The hub looks fantastic – spacious, light and fit for modern healthcare needs.

## Haberdashers House is now open.

The refurbished unit has been transformed into a young persons' unit and is a mix of 11 permanent and respite beds for patients aged 18 – 25 who require complex care.

It's a home from home space that will provide these young people with a lively, nurturing and caring environment.



## Clinical news

### Electronic Patient Record (EPR) launch

The first phase of EPR successfully rolled out on four wards in April. Using ePrescribing by PatientSource, the wards prescribed and administered medications using an electronic medication chart improving the efficiency of the care we deliver.

On 1 July, the next stage began with electronic observations (eObs) on three wards, followed by the remaining wards at the end of the month. This next phase of EPR will make recording observations of patients and residents a much safer and more robust practice.

### IV therapy

Also in April we were pleased to finally launch another important clinical update, IV (intravenous) therapy to our wards.

Being able to offer IV therapy means we can treat more patients / residents here at the RHN and not have to move them to acute hospitals for certain types of treatment.





Are you a nurse and interested in working at the RHN? Take a look at our current vacancies [www.rhn.org.uk/join](http://www.rhn.org.uk/join)

## International Nurses Day

On Sunday 12 May, the RHN celebrated International Nurses Day, a day that is observed annually around the world on the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth to mark the contributions that nurses make to society.

As part of celebrations, wards were decorated with international flags and informative displays about the history of the day. There were also tea parties for nurses and their teams across the hospital.

Suzie Adam, Head of Nursing at RHN, said "It's really important to celebrate the international community of nurses, especially here at the RHN, where our nurses are representative of 43 countries from across the world."

We further celebrated on social media with some of our nurses sharing what they love about their jobs.

## Newly restored Royal Charter unveiled to celebrate centenary

On 20 June, the RHN celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being awarded a Royal Charter by King George V. The original charter was recently conserved, along with the amended charter awarded by Queen Elizabeth II in 1976.

A Royal Charter is issued by a monarch and gives the hospital special legal status and powers to decide how the hospital operates. It also allows us the right to use the word "royal" in our name and is considered a prestigious honour.

If you'd like to find out more about the Royal Charter and the history of the RHN, please check the full news story on our website [www.rhn.org.uk/news](http://www.rhn.org.uk/news).



# Carol and Kay's story



**People at the hospital see Kay and Carol together so regularly that they're often mistaken for sisters.**

RHN volunteer Carol says: "I'm constantly being asked if we are related, or sisters, and I say, 'nearly, but no!'" Kay laughs and says "we do get on well though, don't we?"

Kay and Carol first met through the volunteering buddy programme at the hospital, where volunteers are matched with specific patients to provide one-to-one support.

For nearly 18 years, Carol has been visiting Kay every week. "We meet up after the music group each Tuesday. Kay has been going to the music group for that last four years and she loves it. We see each other at the group and then afterwards we spend the afternoon together, sometimes I paint her nails, other times we meet up with another one of the volunteers for tea. You like shopping too don't you?" says Carol, "oh yes" replies Kay, "especially with other people's money!"

Over the years Kay and Carol have become firm friends. They share a love of sailing and hiking, and Kay likes to reminisce about when she did offshore sailing and climbed in the Mourne Mountains. They also share a love of Scotland and Scottish traditional music.

Each year Carol organises a Burns Night celebration for patients and residents at the hospital including Scottish dancing and live bagpipers. Kay says: "The men wear kilts and

there is lots of dancing", Carol adds "we just generally have a bit of fun and lots of my friends know Kay now."

Carol sends Kay postcards when she goes on holidays, and Kay is filling an album with them and ones she gets from other people around the hospital. While Kay doesn't travel much these days, she loves to learn languages and when she meets nurses or therapists from different countries she asks them to teach her new words. She has learnt words in Mandarin, Spanish and French, and sometimes chats in French with one of the nurses on her ward. Carol says, 'I'm always learning new things from Kay, she has taught me some of the new words she has learnt in lots of different languages".

As a former occupational psychologist, Kay loves to learn and is interested in meeting new people, but when she first came to the RHN she wasn't sure about joining in some of the activities. Carol encouraged her to try painting, which she now really enjoys, and her paintings are on display around the hospital. She's also a keen gardener and has a selection of plants on her windowsill that Carol helps to water when she visits.

Most recently Kay joined the mixed sports group and now every Monday she takes part, playing a range of adapted sports including bowls and tennis.

Kay is quick to tell people about her friend: "She's so nice and very friendly, and I look forward to our visits every week." Volunteers like Carol mean patients and residents get one-to-one social interaction which can be hard for nurses and therapy staff to with heavy workloads to provide.

Sometimes, like Kay and Carol have, people find more than support, but real and lasting friendship.

If you'd like to find out more about volunteering at the RHN, please visit [www.rhn.org.uk/support-us/volunteering/](http://www.rhn.org.uk/support-us/volunteering/)



# Founder's Day and the RHN Festival

Above: The 'Putney Chiefs' entertain staff  
Below: A dancer from The Chelsea Ballet Company



## Founder's Day

On Wednesday 19 June we held our annual Founder's Day celebrations.

Each year, the whole hospital community (including patients' families) comes together for an afternoon of fun.

Guests arrived to the melodic serenade of the RHN choir before celebrations were officially opened by our Chaplain Geoff Coyne. This was followed by a warm welcome from our Chair, Des Benjamin. The Mayor of Wandsworth, Cllr Jane Cooper, also spoke at the event about the valued work of the RHN and the importance of community.

Staff, patients and guests were the able to enjoy lots of activities like professional ballet performances from our friends at the Chelsea Ballet Company and live music performances. We were also joined by a few local business who ran stalls and provided festival-goers with free ice cream for the rest of the afternoon.

There was a wonderful atmosphere across the hospital as we celebrated the RHN's history together.



Staff enjoyed a friendly game of rounders in the sunshine

## The RHN Festival

Taking place on the same week as our Founder's Day celebrations was the RHN Festival.

The festival takes place on site and is our fun-filled alternative to the traditional staff conference. It has quickly become a highly anticipated event in the RHN calendar.

Spread over four days, there were opportunities for staff to meet our trustees, take part in workshops, information and wellbeing sessions, a wheelchair pit stop challenge, a bake-off, a friendly staff game of rounders and even a heritage-based treasure hunt!

Our staff band, the 'Putney Chiefs', led by our Chief Executive Paul Allen, performed live for the first time, and the evening ended with a BBQ and party.

The festival brings staff from all over the hospital together to learn more about different areas of the hospital, spend time with colleagues in other teams, share ideas and socialise in a more relaxed and enjoyable context.

We'd like to thank everyone at the RHN and local community who contributed to another successful festival – we can't wait for next year!



The Mayor of Wandsworth participated in celebrations



This year's winning entry in the RHN Bake Off

# News from the research team

Our members of staff continue to extend their knowledge and learning - we currently have three undertaking PhDs.

- **Amy Pundole** is studying part-time at UCL and the first recipient of the RHN Fellowship fund, that was set up to help therapists undertake research relevant to patients/residents at the hospital. The aim of her study is to improve the diagnosis of emergence from a Disorder of Consciousness (DoC) and to develop the skills to carry out a research project based at the RHN.
- **Della Warren** is a Registered Nurse, Queens Nurse, Specialist Community Public Health Nurse and Health Visitor. In amongst all this, Della has just completed her first year (part-time) at the University of Surrey researching the impact of reflection in nursing on patients and residents. Reflection is now mandatory for all nurses in the UK as a requirement of their professional registration, so this work is particularly important now.
- **Helen Paterson** is studying part-time at Manchester Metropolitan University, developing a training intervention for nurses around the use of communication aids. It's a mixed-method study exploring the views of patients who use communication aids and nurses/healthcare assistants about the current training they receive in using them.

## Recent article published by RHN staff\*

Continuing Care Admissions and Discharge Coordinator, Susie Wilford and Advanced Specialist Speech & Language Therapist, Alice Howard have had their study 'How do we build a picture of a patient in Prolonged Disorder of Consciousness?' published.

This timely study looks at what tools RHN clinicians choose to assess patients' awareness and the factors that influence their choice. As there is no one perfect tool, clinicians tend to choose a combination of assessments rather than relying on one, and the diversity of patients' conditions highlighted the need for a battery of tools.

\*If you would like to read the paper, please contact the communications team on [comms@rhn.org.uk](mailto:comms@rhn.org.uk)

For a complete list of publications visit [www.rhn.org.uk/professionals/research](http://www.rhn.org.uk/professionals/research)

### Congratulations to...

**Dr Kudret Yelden**, Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, who has been awarded her PhD. Kudret's PhD investigated 'the effect of circadian rhythm and sleep optimisation on brain functions of patients with a persistent disorder of consciousness'.





# Annual Gala Dinner raises over £74,000 for the RHN

On Wednesday 8 May, we were joined by over 200 RHN supporters at our annual charity Gala, this year hosted at The Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall.

The evening is one of the most anticipated events in our calendar and was again made possible thanks to the support and sponsorship of Healthcare and Locum Recruitment Ltd.

Our guests were greeted by our Chairman, Des Benjamin, and President, Leonora Countess of Lichfield, before being amazed by talented magicians during a champagne reception.

Guests were seated to a special rendition of Haydn's 'Emperor' Quartet, Op. 76, No. 3, which was performed by 'The Strand Quartet', a group of pupils from Putney High School.

The evening proceeded with a formal welcome by Des before a speech about the wonderful work of the RHN from our Medical Director, Michael Marrinan.

A delicious three course meal was then served to guests, accompanied by wine which had been generously donated by Cillar de Silos.

After dinner, guests proceeded to an auction conducted by professional auctioneer Addison Gelpey. A clay pigeon shooting experience, a one night stay in a luxury hotel in Paris and a

Berry Bros. & Rudd Four-Course Lunch and Fine Wines experience were amongst the most popular prizes available for guests to bid on.

Towards the end of the evening, guests heard more about the invaluable work and research we carry out. RHN Vice President Ruth Maxwell, gave a moving pledge speech about her son's brain injury and his time at the RHN.

The event raised an incredible £74,277 which will go towards renovating our Evitt and Cathcart wards.

A sincere 'thank you' to all our guests and to everyone who so generously donated. Further thanks go to our wonderful Gala Dinner Committee, led by Ruth Maxwell, for all of their hard work and support.



'The Strand Quartet' from Putney High School performed

# Volunteer spotlight

## Meet one of our long standing volunteers, Nayanee Perera

### When did you first become a volunteer at the RHN?

I started volunteering at the RHN in August 2011.

### What attracted you to the RHN?

I have been volunteering since my teens – helping out at schools, charity shops, soup runs for the homeless and working with the elderly, so volunteering has always been a big part of my life.

Back in 2011, I was looking for a volunteering opportunity where I could work as part of a team, as my previous roles had been more solitary, working on a 1-1 basis. I also work full-time, so ideally wanted something that I could do on weekends, but that was flexible. I live in the area close to the hospital, so looked into the RHN and it seemed to tick the boxes. I had also not worked with patients with brain injury before, so I thought it would be a good experience for me.

### What do you do as a volunteer?

I help out with the Saturday concerts which the hospital arranges for residents and their families. We help by picking up residents from the wards to the main hall, keeping them company during the concert and then taking them back at the end. The Saturday concerts are a great way for the residents and families to relax and socialise and I'm happy that we as volunteers are able to facilitate this activity.



### What do you particularly enjoy about volunteering at the RHN?

The people - the residents, their families, other volunteers, the staff. They are all wonderful! Over the years I have been here, I have gotten to know so many of the people associated with the hospital, and I really feel like I am part of the team, making a small contribution to helping the RHN achieve its goals. I always tell people that I get more out of the hospital than I give!

### What do you do for your 'day job' and in your spare time outside volunteering?

I work as an IT project manager for a small healthcare company. I also volunteer for Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, Remap and the Science Museum in London.

### Would you recommend volunteering at the RHN to others?

Absolutely! There are such a wide range of activities that volunteers can get involved with, I'm sure there's something for everyone – and the support we receive as volunteers is fantastic. Volunteering at the RHN is a very rewarding experience.



**NEW TEXT TO DONATE - show us some love**

It's now even easier to donate to the RHN. To donate, just text RHND followed by your preferred amount to 70085 • (Example, to donate £5 text RHND 5 to 70085)

# What's on

15 September

## Summer Stroll Wimbledon Common

Join us for this five mile sponsored walk starting at the RHN. The route will take you through the woodland area of Wimbledon Common and return to the hospital. There will also be a treasure hunt quiz along the way giving you the chance to win prizes.

22 September

## Open House London The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

As part of the annual Open House event, come and enjoy this special opportunity to gain free access to the beautiful Georgian building that makes up a large part of our hospital. You can take a guided tour or have a look at pieces from our archive dating back to 1854.

5 October

## Rough Runner - London South Morden Park

Take on the 5km or 10km obstacle course inspired by Total Wipeout, Takeshi's Castle and Gladiators! With no set fundraising targets, prepare to have fun, rock your Team RHN vest and raise as much as you can for the RHN! Sign up at [www.roughrunner.com/events/london-south/](http://www.roughrunner.com/events/london-south/)

If you would like more details on any of our events, email [events@rhn.org.uk](mailto:events@rhn.org.uk) or call 020 8780 4565

# Conferences

1 October

Mouth care matters for people with neuro-disability

9.30am - 4pm

4 October

Opening up the archives: disability and heritage (the opening of the RHN archive service)

9am - 4pm

# Specialist training courses


17-18 September

Managing complex tone: spasticity and casting

9.30am - 4pm

All courses and open lectures are held at the RHN unless stated otherwise. For further information visit [www.rhn.org.uk/events](http://www.rhn.org.uk/events)

To book a course or open lecture, call 020 8780 4500 ext 5140 or email [institute@rhn.org.uk](mailto:institute@rhn.org.uk)



Rehabilitation and long term care  
for people with profound disabilities  
caused by brain injury



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