

RE-MARK'S



THE SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER OF
ST MARK'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION 2021

A future free from the
fear of bowel disease



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Rising Research Star:
Dr Mohammad
Aamir Saifuddin

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In this latest edition of Re:Mark's, I am delighted to share with you a selection of fundraising stories from the St Mark's community which I hope will inspire you. Personally, and for members of my team, it has been a privilege to take part in inaugural and established events in support of the Foundation. I was delighted to be among the runners taking part in this year's virtual Royal Parks Half Marathon 'alongside' many clinical colleagues, patients and supporters. As we all observed, there was nothing virtual about running 13 miles! In a first for the Foundation, we worked with The Griffin Institute on a joint fundraising enterprise; the London Bridges Walk. On June 27th over 100 participants walked along the Thames and across some of London's most iconic bridges. The event was a great success and has raised over £24k. It also provided a wonderful opportunity for people to have social interactions and long relaxed conversations as they walked together.

In terms of research and education, the Foundation continues to support a wide range of projects including those that develop insight and innovation in how IBD and cancer risk is stratified. Our education programme has continued this year with more emphasis on widely available online webinars and webcasts including our flagship Frontiers conference which attracted medical professionals from across the globe.

I want to thank you again for your support during this time of crisis and, I hope that this uplifting edition of Re:Mark's provides an enjoyable reading experience at what is still a difficult time for many of us.

JASON BACON

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LATEST NEWS, AWARDS AND ACCOLADES FROM ST MARK'S HOSPITAL



We are delighted to announce that the Wolfson Unit for Endoscopy has been awarded World Centre of Excellence status for the third time! It is one of only two UK organisations that have received this accolade and we are incredibly proud of our colleagues within the department for their commitment to excellence in patient care.

The St Mark's Polyposis Registry had their application for the Rare Disease Collaborative Network for hereditary gastrointestinal polyposis syndromes approved by NHS England, recognising the unique status of the Registry as the only specialist centre in the UK.

St Mark's Hospital is the first in the UK to roll-out home-testing kits for bowel cancer that targets 56 year-olds. It was chosen after becoming the first hospital to clear its backlog of more than 24,000 screening invitations that built up during the pandemic when many services were suspended.



Congrats to Surgical Registrar Miss Kate Williams and Medical Registrar Dr Ahmed Shalabi who both won Trainee of the Year as voted for by their St Mark's peers for going above and beyond in supporting their colleagues and patients.

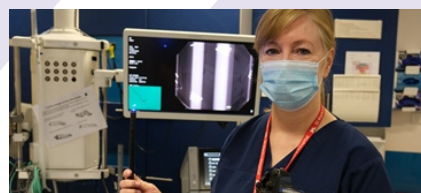


Congratulations are in order for Consultant Colorectal Surgeon Mr Phil Tozer who was awarded trainer of the year 2021 by The Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland.

The St Mark's Lynch Syndrome and Complex Cancer Clinic has been awarded a certificate of high commendation by the British Society of Gastroenterology! Congrats to everyone in the department with special recognition to Dr Kevin Monahan, Lead Nurse Vicky Cuthill, Dr Andrew Latchford, Nurse Practitioner Menna Hawkins and Professor Sue Clark.



Not only was St Mark's Consultant Nurse Maggie Vance the first woman in the UK to qualify as an accredited bowel cancer screener, she has now become the first nurse to sit on the Endoscopy Committee of the British Society of Gastroenterologists.



COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

This year's **Royal Parks Half Marathon** went ahead in April as a virtual offering, although there was certainly nothing virtual about running 13 miles! St Mark's patients, Chris and Amanda, and Foundation Chief Executive, Jason, were joined by Surgeons, Gastroenterologists, Endoscopists and a team from the Intestinal Rehabilitation Unit. To date, this lovely bunch has raised a staggering £12.7k and they are continuing to train ahead of the mass-participation event in October. If you would like to support our clinical teams, simply search for 'Team Gabe runs' on JustGiving.

'Feb-row-ary' Challenge

James was diagnosed with familial adenomatous polyposis in 2015, and in gratitude to his medical team, he undertook a novel fundraising challenge 'Feb-row-ary' during lockdown. James set himself the ambitious target of rowing 378km, representing the number of polyps that were removed from his dissected bowel after an operation at St Mark's. Thank you James for your gallant physical and

fundraising effort, raising £2k for the Foundation and the Polyposis Registry.

May's 'Mind, Body and Soulathlon'

Proving that age is just a number, spritely octogenarian May decided to celebrate her 82nd birthday by fundraising for three hospitals close to her heart: St Mark's, Northwick Park, and Southend University Hospital. May successfully completed her challenge of walking 40 laps of Southend Pier over a week in June, raising over £3k.

Virtual London Marathon 2020

Phil ran the Virtual London Marathon in memory of his beloved mum Mary and chose to fundraise for St Mark's in gratitude for the care she received. Thank you to Phil and everyone who donated, with special recognition to the punters in The Shawl, The Sportsman and Willesden and District Social Club who helped Phil raise £2k.

Royal Parks Half Marathon



James



May



If you would like to take part in the Virtual London Marathon 2021, get in contact with the team today to secure a spot!

Email info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk for more info.

Set aside 2 minutes to listen to **Mike Redway's original song 'Unite & Heal'**, inspired by the words of President Biden. With 50% of any royalties being donated to St Mark's, head over to YouTube, Amazon Music or Spotify to listen now. Thank you to Mike and his wife Marjorie for their long-standing support of St Mark's in memory of their beloved daughter Caroline, who was under the care of St Mark's.

Massive thanks to St Mark's patient Steve, and everyone at Acorn Lawn Tennis Club for raising an incredible £2.5k for St Mark's Hospital and St Luke's Hospice at their charity tennis tournament. St Mark's Senior Macmillan Colorectal CNS Manju shares a special message of thanks with Steve and everyone who attended; "We are so grateful that you chose your sport club as a platform to raise the profile of St Marks Hospital and I feel humbled to hear that we were able to support you and your family



Oliver

through your cancer treatment journey."

Oliver underwent stoma surgery at St Mark's during the height of the pandemic, and wanted to do something to give back to the hospital that cared for him during this difficult time. He decided to start his own fundraising campaign selling t-shirts, with the proceeds being donated to St Mark's and Crohn's and Colitis UK. After his fantastic fundraising drive, Oliver presented a cheque to his clinical team, Consultant Surgeon Mr Janindra Warusavitarne, Paediatric Gastroenterology Clinical Nurse Specialist Kay Crook and Consultant Paediatrician Dr Warren Hyer.



Chris Browne, on behalf of the Red Lion Group, presented a £1,000 cheque to our CEO Jason Bacon. This extremely generous donation will help fund key pouch-related research undertaken at St Mark's. Upon receipt of the cheque, Jason commented: "Medical research is expensive and we rely greatly on donations such as this to continue our world-class projects."



Phil



Steve

SOCIAL MEDIA SUPERSTARS!

In a first for the Foundation we hosted a Facebook live event in partnership with emPOWERed and Dansac & Hollister in December 2020. Featuring a jam-packed agenda including talks from St Mark's Specialist Nurse Johncy Baby, and St Mark's IBD Specialist Dietician Gabriela Poufou, this event was a great success and has racked up over 1k views. The event is still available to watch via our Facebook event page.

The emPOWERed clothing range has also been a roaring success, with the brand attracting orders

from across the globe. We also welcomed our first regional emPOWERed ambassador Sam, who has been busy selling wristbands in Dorset.

IBD patient and DJ, Saj, hosted a charity fundraiser via Instagram live, spinning a selection of party tunes and club classics over the course of an hour raising £400. Yoga instructor Vicky hosted an Instagram yoga session 'befriending your bowel' and featured complex cancer patient Natalie who chose the Foundation as the recipient charity for all proceeds raised.

FOLLOW US!



@Stmarkshospitalfoundation



@bowelsofstmarks



@BowelsOfStMarks



PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

As part of our Patient Perspectives feature on our socials, we invited our followers to contact us with their St Mark's Story. Special thanks to Andrea H, Andrea R, Anne-Marie, Jesusa and Ken for helping raise awareness of, and tackling stigma associated with complex bowel diseases. Collectively, the posts have racked up a very impressive 675 likes across our socials! If you would like to share your St Mark's Story, contact the team: info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk



emPOWERed.

An evening of emPOWERment

15th of December
7pm

Watch live on St. Mark's
Hospital Foundation FB page





LONDON BRIDGES WALK

On Sunday 27th June we were delighted to have been joined by over 100 participants walking in aid of St Mark's Hospital Foundation and The Griffin Institute in our first ever joint fundraising enterprise. Thank you to everyone who took part including senior St Mark's Consultants Professor Siwan Thomas-Gibson and Professor Omar Faiz, in addition to Foundation Trustees Moni Mannings and Catharine Boardman. A special shout is also in order for St Mark's patients Bethia, Sharad and Natalie who also took part.

NATALIE'S ST MARK'S STORY

"In February 2019, at the age of 36, I was diagnosed with locally

advanced, inoperable cancer in my pelvic cavity. I started off with an aggressive course of chemo and at the same time 29 days of pelvic radiation followed by more chemo. I responded well to this treatment but sadly, my cancer started to grow back and I was referred to St Mark's Complex Cancer Clinic.



I was told I would need an operation called a Pelvic Exenteration which meant the removal of my reproductive and sexual organs, rectum, anus, 4 spinal nerves, my left piriformis, left pelvic sidewall, they also needed to cut cancer from my left

ureter and then reimplant the ureter back into my bladder. There's so much to process with a surgery like this. I lost my chance of having a child, I have a permanent colostomy and I am menopausal in my 30s. I had to relearn to walk and it has seriously impacted my quality of life.

I was so worried about what life would be like after this surgery and it's not always easy, BUT I'm here, against the odds. I am alive and SO happy to be here! Every day I am here is a gift and I give thanks every single day for St Marks and the amazing people who work there.

Mr Ian Jenkins and his team are my absolute heroes.

Thank you for the gift of more life"



Participants in the London Bridges Walk

TISSUE ENGINEERING

For more than a decade, scientists and clinicians at St Mark's and The Griffin Institute have worked collaboratively, researching how to grow bowel from a patient's own cells. Success in this field would be transformative, offering the hope of an alternative to parenteral nutrition for thousands of patients that have lost large amounts of bowel due to disease or trauma. The team has advanced to the stage of knowing how to create a structure, known as a scaffold, using pig bowel.

This process involves decellularisation (stripping the scaffold of its existing cells to leave behind a scaffold of the original tissue). They have also identified which source of patient stem cells to seed onto the scaffold after decellularisation.

We are grateful to have received a legacy from a St Mark's patient which will support the next stages of this work, bringing together fat-derived stem cells and scaffold using a bioreactor to 'grow the



Decellularised bowel tissue to be used in bowel reconstruction

organ outside the body'. It will be important to ensure the scaffold is kept alive with a blood supply, and to grow the cells to an adequate enough length for functionality and clinical relevance when implanted into patients in the future.

LEAVING BEHIND A FUTURE



We are extremely grateful to the individuals that choose to leave something behind for future generations of bowel disease patients by leaving a gift in their will to the Foundation.

Legacies either benefit specific areas of research or, are entrusted to us to decide where they would make the most difference. In this instance, it is a privilege to be given the discretion to apply legacies based on the most urgent needs, and this flexibility has helped us raise even more funds for research into complex bowel diseases.

Recent projects that have benefitted from gifts in wills

1 IMPROVING THE MOLECULAR UNDERSTANDING OF CANCER DEVELOPMENT IN PATIENTS

Currently, there is a lack of understanding about how cancer develops in certain groups of patients known to be more likely to develop the disease, meaning that their future risk is more difficult to predict. Consequently, patients' monitoring and surveillance is difficult to match with their perceived cancer risk.



Dr Mehmet Yalchin, an IBD clinical research fellow, is undertaking research which seeks to improve the molecular understanding of cancer development in patients with ulcerative colitis, and Crohn's/colitis. Understanding the biology of disease progression will be a step towards stratifying risk on an individual basis, and, better inform decisions on surveillance, medical and surgical management. This research also has the potential to provide insight into other inflammatory conditions. Research in this area aims to improve the future of IBD care for patients through better disease management by advancing understanding of cancer development.

2 ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

St Mark's Academic Institute organises and delivers a highly

regarded, annual programme of education, delivered in the format of courses, lectures, masterclasses and, increasingly because of the pandemic, webinars. The Institute's in-person educational offerings have been greatly enhanced by the ability to connect teaching rooms and lecture halls to operating theatres and endoscopy suites; course delegates and visitors have received another level of access to St Mark's medical professionals, helping us to disseminate the best practice developed at the hospital even more effectively to our peers. A substantial legacy and charitable trust support enabled our purchase of state-of-the-art technology and audio-visual equipment to link educational and clinical delivery spaces.

Important information on how to leave a gift in your will to St Mark's Hospital Foundation

Full Registered Charity Name:
St Mark's Hospital Foundation

Registered Charity Number:
1140930

Below is a suggested example of wording that could be used in your will:

I leave x amount/ x share(s) of my residuary estate for St Mark's Hospital Foundation, registered charity number 1140930 absolutely for its general charitable purposes and I declare that the receipt of the treasurer or other proper office for the time being shall be sufficient discharge to my executors.

SURGICAL ROBOTICS AT ST MARK'S

Whilst robotics is established for the surgical treatment of prostate cancer, before we launched our Programme, its potential as a technology for colorectal surgery had not been widely explored.

Before the pandemic, our robotics team had made significant progress:

1. Expanding the use of robotics from bowel cancer resections to other types of operation, specifically synchronous liver-bowel resections, pelvic exenterations and ileo-anal pouch surgery.
2. Engaging with and recruiting for major international robotic surgery trials.
3. Establishing their educational credentials by hosting external surgeons for one day case observations.

During the first Covid-19 surge (end of March 2020 to July 2020) our surgeons were not operating at St Mark's, but using independent sector hospitals, some with their own robotic technology.

Following the first surge, reduced Covid-19 hospitalisations provided some respite, and two St Mark's

surgeons were able to carry out robotic colorectal surgeries at the hospital between August and December 2020 inclusive. These were performed using St Mark's surgical robotics platform.

Knowing that our hospital trust would need to maintain its increased critical care capacity to respond effectively to potential future surges of Covid-19 required careful planning for the winter months. Successfully navigating the complex process of moving some of St Mark's specialist services to Central Middlesex Hospital (CMH) is enabling us to maintain clinical services for St Mark's colorectal and gastroenterology patients. St Mark's surgeons are now operating robotically at CMH, and we have also re-started one day case observations. We are proud that St Mark's remains the trainer-of-first-choice for many surgeons looking to gain

experience in robotic colorectal surgery.

St Mark's robotics team has successfully introduced a functioning robotic programme for bowel cancer at the hospital, developed an educational hub for colorectal surgery in the UK and Europe, and are contributing to the evidence of the effectiveness of robotic surgery in other colorectal diseases. After successfully launching and supporting the Programme, we look forward to seeing it become part of NHS clinical provision.



RISING RESEARCH STAR!

Innovations in precision medicine for the treatment and management of IBD.

IBD Clinical Research Fellow, Dr Mohammad Aamir Saifuddin shares some insights on his innovative research project which is being funded by charitable support from the Foundation.



“I have been passionate about gastroenterology and inflammatory bowel disease for several years. Aside from the complex and fascinating clinical aspects of treating this often debilitating set of illnesses, including Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis, the immunopathology continues to intrigue me. As I began to appreciate this during my early years as a

have been very fortunate to become a clinical research fellow joint with St Mark’s, a world-famous specialist bowel hospital, and Imperial College since September 2020.

My main work will focus on precision medicine in IBD, using multiomic, particularly inflammatory transcriptomic,

analyses to try to predict response to specific medications, which could contribute towards an invaluable step-change in treatment approach. Whilst organising this, I am involved in large national trials exploring the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on patients with IBD. I am currently writing a paper looking at the changes in physicians’ prescribing and treatment behaviour

across the UK during this uncertain time, when no-one was sure whether the immunosuppressive medications we use in IBD might put patients at high risk of serious SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Similarly, I am leading a multicentre study investigating T cell immune function in immunosuppressed IBD patients who have had one dose of the vaccine. This is exciting and crucial work that could have a huge bearing on national and international immunisation policy for IBD and non-IBD patients taking anti-immune drugs. It is exciting and a huge privilege to interact with patients and national and international experts in this field to try to answer these extremely salient questions.

It really feels like being ‘on the edge of science’ which brings its own thrill and provides a completely new perspective and angle for looking at medicine, aside from clinics and ward rounds. As a relatively early researcher, I’m looking forward to continuing this journey in to the unknown, with the ultimate aim of improving care for our patients.”



If you would like support Dr Saifuddin’s research, please email riyah.talati@nhs.net

ADDITIONAL WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT ST MARK'S



Make a
donation



Set up a **direct
debit** or **standing
order**



Nominate us to
be **Charity of the
Year**



Participate in a
challenge event



Employer support
via Payroll Giving or
Matched Giving Scheme

Work for Good

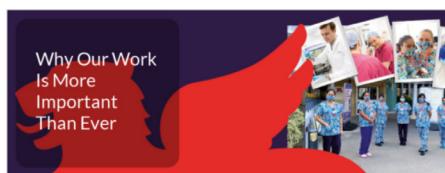
Are you a small business looking for a way to support our charity? Well, look no further, as this year we launched on the Work for Good platform, which has simplified the process for businesses to donate to the charity of their choice. If you are reading this as a small business owner who has been thinking about how to support the Foundation, head over to Work for Good and search for 'St Mark's Hospital Foundation'. We hope you will sign up today and use your company as a force for social good by donating to St Mark's.

Facebook fundraising

Thank you to our incredible Facebook fundraisers who have collectively raised £5,133 for St Mark's since 2019. A special shout out to Kate, who raised £1k for FAP research by undertaking a daring feat of shaving her hair once she reached her fundraising target!



Research, Education & Innovation at St Mark's Hospital



At any one time, we financially support as many as 30 Research Fellows undertaking projects across the areas of IBD, bowel cancer and other complex bowel diseases;

Give as you Live or AmazonSmile

Next time you shop online, shop via Give as You Live or AmazonSmile as each platform donates a percentage of the purchase to the Foundation at no extra cost to you.

Payroll Giving

As a pre-tax donation, Payroll Giving offers a tax free way to support St Mark's. For example, a £10 donation to us would only be a deduction of £8 from your gross pay.

rare bowel diseases. Over 50,000 patients are cared for at St Mark's and, as a tertiary referral centre, 60% of our patients are referred from other UK hospitals to receive specialist care. Our clinical teams are experts when it comes to anything related to gastrointestinal diseases; in 2020, St Mark's was recognised by Newsweek Magazine as one of the world's leading specialist hospitals for gastroenterology. St Mark's is also the only centre in the UK with a specialist Complex Cancer Clinic and a Polyposis Registry dating back to 1924.

"Our international reputation has been built upon providing the best diagnostics, highest level of care and most effective treatments. Our gastro medical and nursing teams should be rightly proud of the recognition that their work has gained." – Omar Faiz, Clinical Director, St Mark's



Whichever way you choose to donate, thank you for supporting our vision of a future free from the fear of bowel disease.



Scan to support St Mark's

St Mark's Hospital Foundation RCN 1140930
info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk

020 8235 4092

