

A THANK YOU FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

St Mark's Hospital is internationally recognised as the leading centre of excellence for treating all areas of gastrointestinal disease. We have a long history of education and research that runs alongside our clinical care and it is an inspirational place, saving

and improving many people's lives every year. The Foundation has a vital role to play in raising awareness of the Hospital and supporting the fundraising activities that enable a range of research projects. A huge thank you on behalf of all at St Mark's. Our annual newsletter highlights many of the initiatives of our past and present patients, staff, volunteers and corporate supporters. We aren't able to include all of them, but I hope you will enjoy seeing the range of activities and the inspirational people behind them. For over 184 years the Hospital has benefited from philanthropy and it is humbling for me to be part of the current chapter. If you would like to find out more about the impact our consultants, research fellows, nurses and other medical staff are making through their research, please get in touch.

*Jason Bacon, Chief Executive
St Mark's Hospital Foundation*



Jason speaking to St Mark's medical staff

OUR SURGICAL ROBOTICS JOURNEY

In our 2018 newsletter, we described our plans to bring robotic surgery to St Mark's Hospital. This is the latest chapter in a long history of surgical innovation at the Hospital. With the support of both loyal and new donors, we reached the first milestone of our £2 million campaign to purchase the most advanced surgical robotics platform on the market, and the Hospital took delivery of a Da Vinci Xi surgical robot in spring 2018. Read inside how our Surgical Robotics Research Programme is developing 12 months on.

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And much more!

SURGICAL ROBOTICS: 1 YEAR ON



WHY ROBOTICS FOR BOWEL DISEASE SURGERY?

We believe that the introduction of robotic surgery is an important milestone in reducing the risk of recurrent disease, and will provide patients with a good short and long-term quality of life. This is because it is a minimally invasive and a precise surgical technique that can help overcome several of the limitations of keyhole surgery.

With your support, St Mark's has entered the robotics era

The development of robotics for colorectal and anorectal surgery at St Mark's Hospital was introduced by Professor Omar Faiz, the Hospital's clinical director, and his predecessor, Professor Robin Phillips. It is an exciting step forward in the long history of surgical innovation and education at the Hospital.

Mr Danilo Miskovic, an established robotics surgeon, was recruited to St Mark's Hospital's consultant staff in 2017 to lead the development of our Surgical Robotics Research Programme.

In November 2017, we launched a £2 million fundraising campaign to purchase a Da Vinci Xi Surgical System and fund the development of our Programme.

In the space of a few months, enabled by the generosity of both loyal and new donors, St Mark's Hospital Foundation reached the first campaign milestone, and took delivery of the most advanced surgical robotics platform on the market in March 2018. We are immensely proud to be able to train our staff using this new facility, the only surgical robotics platform in the UK dedicated to bowel surgery.

To find out how you can support our Surgical Robotics Research Programme, please contact info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk

ACHIEVEMENTS IN OUR FIRST YEAR:

APRIL 2018–MARCH 2019

RESEARCH: We are collaborating with the European Academy of Robotic Colorectal Surgery and the European Society of Coloproctology on international educational projects. We are also participating in the newly-formed UK Robotic Registry to contribute to a large national dataset. These partnerships demonstrate a recognition of St Mark's as a specialist bowel centre to develop a high-volume robotics programme.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: We have achieved our internal training objectives early, and St Mark's will soon have 5 surgeons trained in robotic colorectal surgery. We are also training gynaecology, urology and maxillofacial surgeons within the London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust to ensure that the surgical robotics platform delivers maximum patient benefit. Intuitive Surgical is funding a robotic fellowship at St Mark's Hospital which will begin in 2019, training 6 surgeons in robotic colorectal surgery over the next 3 years.

CLINICAL: We set ourselves the goal to perform 80 robotic colorectal operations in our first year and we exceeded this target. One of the cases was particularly unique; it involved 2 surgeons operating robotically on the bowel and the liver during the same operation. This was collaboration at its best, between St Mark's surgeons and Professor Long Jiao from Hammersmith Hospital, London.



Full robotic set up including console, screen and robotic arms



Mr Danilo Miskovic in theatre

A PIONEER OF SURGICAL INNOVATIONS FOR 200 YEARS

St Mark's was founded in 1835 as the world's first specialist bowel disease hospital. Since 1835, it has been at the forefront of surgical innovations that have saved lives and improved the quality of life of patients with complex bowel diseases. These innovations include the ileo-anal pouch operation, which is now the gold standard treatment of choice for aggressive ulcerative colitis. This was developed by surgeons from St Mark's in the 1970s.

More recently, St Mark's surgeons have developed novel, minimally invasive techniques for patients with early stage bowel cancer: FLEX, TASER and Speedboat. These techniques remove cancerous tissue with greater precision, and preserve more healthy tissue.

The development of robotics for bowel disease surgery is a natural progression for a hospital that has pioneered surgical innovation for 200 years.

Robotic surgery will be a significant part of the future of surgery, and the future is now.

ST MARK'S ABROAD

Following years of war and turmoil, Iraq appears to be gradually returning to some semblance of normality. Dr Laith Al-Rubaiy, consultant gastroenterologist here at St Mark's, who graduated from the University of Basra as the first ranked medical graduate in the country, recently completed his fourth visit to the country. While there, he volunteered to see hundreds of patients in remote areas of Basra, visited a clinic built by British charity, the AMAR Foundation, and attended an international meeting at the Basra Medical School. Dr Al-Rubaiy says of his fellow medical colleagues "...despite all the difficulties and limited resources, they have managed to maintain their knowledge and pursue good quality research." He adds that, "There is still a huge amount of work to be done in this part of the Middle East, and Iraqis most certainly still need all the outside help they can get."



UNBLOCKING OUTPATIENTS

St Mark's faces an increasing need to monitor outpatients with IBD. A service evaluation showed a mismatch between need and access. Two-thirds of patients were in remission, but those with acute symptoms were having trouble accessing help when they needed it. A plan was devised to offer telephone follow-up appointments to those at low risk of complications. Improvement science manager, Susan Barber, alongside consultant gastroenterologist Dr Naila Arebi and her team, worked with patients and clinicians and began to implement telephone clinics for patients who agreed to use the service. Susan Bailey-Fee, an IBD patient was on the project team. "The main advantage," she says, "is that if you're long-term stable, it isn't really necessary to go into hospital and see a consultant – you're losing a day off work and incurring travel costs just to be told...come back in 6 months." Dr Arebi says the "transformed" IBD outpatient service is now much more responsive to patients' needs, and believes the model could be replicated for other long-term conditions. Ms Barber says it is still early days but, if kept up, the service could be made 'business-as-usual' within the next few years.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF ST MARK'S

Boasting over 180 years of expertise and achieving international recognition as a centre of excellence for the Wolfson Unit for Endoscopy research and training, St Mark's Hospital is unique in its expertise for both clinical and surgical care, as well as research and education into the treatment of complex bowel diseases.

If you follow us on our social media platforms, you might have seen that we have been exhibiting images, taken by St Mark's Hospital's Stephen Preston, of everyday life at the Hospital as part of our #ThisIsStMarks project. From research fellows writing their theses, to intricate live surgical procedures, bowel cancer screening kits and stoma nurses conducting their daily rounds, this project goes 'behind the scenes' and records the weekly lives of the experts who work in your national specialist bowel hospital.

You can find details of our social media channels on the back page of this newsletter. Follow us to see more fantastic images and the stories behind them!



THE ST MARK'S ACADEMIC INSTITUTE

St Mark's has embraced the education of others since the 1950s. Doctors come to St Mark's from all over the world to learn from our experts. The treatment of intestinal and colorectal diseases has become a specialty in its own right throughout the world, and St Mark's remains at the forefront, continuing to attract around 1,200 postgraduate visitors a year from around the UK and overseas. Many of these visitors return to their home country to establish a colorectal specialism. Since our flagship, annual 3-day congress, 'Frontiers', was established more than 15 years ago, we have educated and trained medical and other healthcare professionals from more than 40 countries, including Australia, South Korea, Sri Lanka and the United States of America. Our most recent congress presented a comparison of laparoscopic and robotic surgery techniques, using live video links to 2 surgical theatres simultaneously. The St Mark's Academic Institute has access to a wealth of highly qualified and experienced staff, and continues to provide a proactive attitude to colorectal education.

ALL THINGS RESEARCH



St Mark's Hospital and its Academic Institute supports and promotes a vibrant research ethos, with more than 20 research fellows undertaking either MDs or PhDs at any one time. Hirra Oppal, our research coordinator, supports our research fellows with anything from study set-up, facilitating

the ethical approval and budgetary processes, designing study plans and supporting funding applications to national governing bodies. Hirra also collates research metrics in order to constantly improve the reporting of research programmes at St Mark's, and she develops and manages relationships with other research institutions. "Every day brings a new challenge," she says. "My role has crafted me into a research 'jack of all trades'."

GENETICS RESEARCH: HOW A PATIENT HELPED OPEN UP NEW POSSIBILITIES

With an active and diverse research programme featuring a number of projects encompassing all aspects of intestinal and colorectal disorders, St Mark's attracts leading professionals, nationally and internationally. Isabel Martin, who has been awarded a Royal College of Surgeons of England



Research Fellowship, is just one of our specialist research fellows. Isabel works in the Polyposis Registry at St Mark's, and is undertaking a PhD on duodenal polyposis at St Mark's London. Her research

aims are to evaluate the role of gut bacteria and genetics in cancer. Isabel requires significant funding in order to process all the samples she has collected from Polyposis Registry patients, to determine risk factors in cancer progression. The Foundation connected Isabel with a past patient who wanted to fund a genetics-focused project following a history of complex bowel cancer, which resulted in a 17-hour operation here at St Mark's 15 years ago. The patient met with Isabel to find out about the project and agreed to fund 2 years' worth of lab sample research, potentially opening up new possibilities in the world of genetics and bowel cancer.

Find out more about education at St Mark's:
w: www.stmarksacademicinstitute.org.uk
e: info@stmarksacademicinstitute.org.uk
t: 020 8235 4046/8

LONDON MARATHON CHAMPIONS

The iconic London Marathon attracts thousands of runners every year, many of whom not only undertake their own fitness and time challenges, but also commit to raising significant amounts of money for their chosen charities. The Foundation was very lucky to have two runners in last year's event, who collectively raised over £9,000. Claire ran in memory of her friend, Joe Dyer, who was treated at St Mark's. Brian ran to thank St Mark's Hospital for the ongoing treatment and support that he receives. Thank you, Claire and Brian.



MILFORD GOLF CLUB



We are grateful to once again have been supported by Milford Golf Club and its Captain and long-term supporter of the Foundation, Sam Tan, as part of their Charity of the Year fundraising initiative. They organised a calendar of events, including a sponsored bike ride and a quiz night, which raised over £5,000. Thank you for your continued support.

COMMUNITY GROUP REACHES £70,000



The Foley family and their local community have consistently raised money in a number of different ways, including their ongoing buying-and-selling page on Facebook. With the support of her local community and family, Chris (left) has raised, including gift aid, a fantastic £70,000 for the Foundation. Thank you to Chris, the Foley family and the community of Cheltenham.

24-HOUR SWIM CHALLENGE



In June 2018, Laura and her team, known as the 'St Mark's Mermaids', took on the 24-hour swim at Bardowie Loch to raise money for the Foundation. Those taking part must swim 1 mile every hour, for 24 hours in a relay format. Laura and her team not only successfully completed the 24 miles in 24

hours, but also smashed their original £500 target by raising over £1,000. Thank you St Mark's Mermaids.

40TUDE'S 100KM SAHARA WALK

Congratulations to the intrepid trekkers who, in January 2019, completed 40tude Curing Colon Cancer's latest challenge: to walk 100km of the Sahara over 4 days. St Mark's doctors, David Burling and Warren Hyer, joined 40tude's two back-to-back expeditions, walking from the Faija Plateau to M'Hamid in the Moroccan Sahara.

Each day they experienced the range of the desert's winter temperatures, which plummeted at night and then rose in the day. So far, a fantastic £57,000 has been raised as a result of their Sahara



Challenge, enabling 40tude to continue supporting research projects at St Mark's, targeted at the prevention of colon cancer. Thank you.

LET'S GET QUIZZICAL



For those of you who haven't already seen, we have been organising new events to engage better with our Hospital and local communities.

Thanks to the support of Northwick Park Social Club and Alan Wright, our dedicated quiz master, we have been hosting bi-monthly quiz nights on site here at St Mark's. We really hope you'll join us, if only to beat the reigning champions, Quiztula-in-Ano.

ROYAL PARKS HALF 2018



In 2018, we had 8 fantastic runners sign up to support the Foundation by taking part in the iconic Royal Parks Half Marathon, collectively raising over £3,900! Serial challenge event participant, Saj,

tells us why he wanted to support the Foundation in this way. "I'm a Crohn's patient at St Mark's Hospital, and have been for many years. I was diagnosed at 14, and for all of my adult life I have been going to St Mark's. They have helped me a lot. I took part in the marathon in 2013, also in support of the Foundation, and I was motivated to do it again." Thank you to our RPHM 2018 team.

THE BLAZE ENSEMBLE

Dr Maxton Pitcher, one of our senior consultant gastroenterologists, has worked at St Mark's for 21 years. Not only a fantastic doctor, Max is also a keen violinist, playing in chamber music ensembles and orchestras, including the European Doctors Orchestra, of which he has been concertmaster. The musicians of the Blaze Ensemble, a 60-piece orchestra in which Max plays, last year donated their services with a spellbinding performance in aid of St Mark's Hospital Foundation, raising over £600!

NCS SUMMER AND AUTUMN

Working in partnership with The Challenge, more than 50 young people from the local community gave us their time over the summer and autumn months as part of the NCS programme. The 15-17-year-olds visited the Hospital to learn about us, the research we do, and why it's so important. They then used what they had learned to raise awareness and funds by packing bags with us at local supermarkets, and planning and executing their own events, raising over £2,200. Thank you to everyone who took part!



TESCO BAGS OF HELP

In 2018 we nominated our Surgical Robotics Research Programme for a grant from Tesco and Groundwork's Bags of Help scheme, which uses money raised from carrier bag sales in Tesco stores to fund local good causes. We were delighted to be shortlisted as one of three groups in our region to receive a grant of either £1,000, £2,000 or £4,000. Shoppers were invited to vote in local stores this January and February. We'll find out how we did later this year but for now, thank you for voting for us.

FUNDRAISING IS A FAMILY AFFAIR



Brunel has been fundraising for St Mark's for a number of years, supported by his family and friends throughout. He's taken on some of the most extreme challenges, including multiple Ironmans and the downhill, snow-filled Mega

Avalanche race. In 2018 his son, Theo, who usually cheers from the sidelines, joined Brunel for not one, but two challenges, taking part in the Superhero Triathlon and the Winter Wonderwheels. In doing so, they have now raised over £8,000. Thank you, Brunel and Theo.

COLON CHALLENGE 2019

After a 1-year break, Paul and his wife, Gill, are back into full-scale planning and fundraising for this year's Colon Challenge. This colon-shaped cycle event will take its team of 14 riders from Berkhamsted, up through Woburn, across to Peterborough, down through Thetford and Clare, across Waltham Abbey, finishing at King's Cross. The 4-day challenge commences on the 5th of June, 2019, with a combined fundraising target of £30,000. Each rider pays their own £300 costs for accommodation and travel, and pledges to raise a minimum of £2,000. All the money raised goes towards research and education at St Mark's. Good luck to all our riders.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although it is easy to see why the symbol of the Hospital is often mistaken for a griffin, it's actually not. The mythical beast associated with St Mark - after whom the Hospital was named in 1854 - is in fact a winged lion. In Venice, where Mark is the patron saint, there are several monuments of winged lions.



ROYAL PARKS HALF JOIN OUR TEAM!



Looking for a way to support St Mark's? Want to take part in one of London's most iconic running events? Whether you're a seasoned runner looking for a new challenge, or a beginner needing a goal to work towards, the Royal Parks Half Marathon is the one for you! This spectacular

event which takes place in central London - the first and only one of its kind - follows a stunning 13.1 mile route taking in the capital's world-famous landmarks on closed roads, and 4 of London's 8 Royal Parks. To sign up, or discuss another event, contact us using the details below.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT?

There are a number of ways in which you can support St Mark's, from **volunteering** at events, **fundraising** using a special occasion, or, in memory of a loved one, leaving a gift in your will as a lasting **legacy**. You can even just **let people know** who we are and what we do.

If you would like to donate to any of our strategic research programmes, please contact us.

CONTACT US

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CELEBRATE LIFE, CELEBRATE A LIFE



Sarah and Mark decided to use their wedding day to raise money for St Mark's Hospital Foundation, following her diagnosis of indeterminate Crohn's/colitis. "St Mark's has been nothing short of fantastic in its

treatment of me and my condition...We'd just like to give something back to enable more people to benefit from this wonderful hospital and the staff therein, particularly Prof. Sue Clark and her team." Their friends and family were keen to get involved, having seen Sarah's journey with St Mark's, and raised over £400! Congratulations Sarah and Mark. All the best for the future, from everyone at St Mark's Hospital.

TWEET, LIKE, FOLLOW AND WATCH US IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS!



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