

Re:Mark's

The Supporter Newsletter of St Mark's Hospital Foundation | 2023



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A message from Jason

It has been another busy year for St Mark's Hospital Foundation.

Inside your 2023 edition of Re:Mark's, I am delighted to share with you a selection of research projects including an update on the Surgical Robotics Research Programme, and the PERFECTs project, a training and accreditation programme for radiologists and radiographers practicing CT Colonography, to improve early detection of bowel cancer. We also profile some of our community champions who have undertaken a host of fundraising activities and our legacy supporters who have left a gift in their will to the Foundation.

I again want to express my sincerest thanks to you, our supporters. Our research programmes represent collaborations with other hospitals, healthcare companies and scientific labs across the UK and globally. St Mark's Academic Institute contributes clinical expertise, a large scale of patients and research fellows, and your support enables us to make the most of this contribution to research.

Thank you,



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CAPTION: Jason representing the charity at the IBD patient support day and participating in a challenge event for 40tude curing colon cancer.

Community Champions



Saj

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) patient and ambassador Saj took on yet another challenge event for St Mark's, this year taking part in the London Marathon raising an amazing £1.4k.

"I have had Crohn's disease for the past 14 years and have personally experienced the excellent care and treatment from all at St Mark's. This year, I took part in the London Marathon to show my support and gratitude!"



Rupert

Diagnosed with IBD in 2005, and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2014, Rupert has benefitted from the care and expertise provided by St Mark's. Despite his health-related adversities Rupert is not one to shy away from a challenge and completed the London Landmark's Half Marathon raising a staggering £2.8k.

"Not only did they provide excellent care throughout my journey, they saved my life on multiple occasions."



Rachel

Rachel completed the Winter Walk Half Marathon raising over £481. Rachel's son Toby has Peutz-Jeghers Syndrome and is under the care of St Mark's.

"Living with this would be impossible without the dedicated care and expertise of the staff at St Mark's. We know we are in the safest hands possible and, as a mother, I simply cannot put a price on the reassurance this gives."

FUNDRAISING FOCUS



Tom

After a bowel cancer diagnosis in 2019, and subsequent surgery, Tom decided to undertake an epic challenge; covering 100 miles for St Mark’s and Help for Heroes, two charities close to his heart. Tom successfully completed the challenge raising over £1.8k for our charity.

“Since 2019 I am a very different person, but I made myself a promise that while facing an unknown demon, this would not stop me.”



Dorota

Dorota and her fiancé Jakub completed the Barbarian Challenge in Poland, raising £785 to support a database project in the St Mark’s Polyposis Registry which aims to improve equity of access and care for polyposis patients across the country.

“Although it was exhausting, it was a very fun experience and I am so happy we participated!”



Colin

Colin hosted two golf fundraisers in memory of his wife Jane and is set to be hosting a third this summer! The past events raised a staggering £3,649 which is supporting complex cancer research by St Mark’s consultant surgeon Mr Ian Jenkins.

“I want to thank everyone for their kindness; I know that Jane would have been very happy to know that these funds will help support complex cancer research.”



Andrew

Andrew took on the challenge of walking the entire length of Hadrian’s Wall in aid of St Mark’s and A Bear Named Buttony raising nearly £1k for our charity.

“My Hadrian’s Wall walk, is to show my gratitude to everyone at St Mark’s over the many years of care. It is to also show that having a stoma isn’t limiting and, within reason, the sky is the limit!”

FUNDRAISING FOCUS



Kiera

Kiera completed the epic 25k Jurassic Coast Walk raising over £400.

“St Mark’s Hospital have treated my Dad, Grandad and Aunt for bowel cancer and I have seen the progress that vital research can do to help prevent and treat bowel cancer. Raising money for this research helps treatment evolve and members of my family are living proof of this.”

Royal Park’s Runners 2022

Massive congratulations to our amazing Royal Park’s Half Runners Bethan, Chris, Isa, Jason, Julie, Lydia and Mitch, who took on the 13.1 miles last Autumn. Special shout out to Bethan who raised over £1.8k and Lydia who raised £1k!

Want to take part in 2023? Contact the team before **31st August 2023** to secure your spot!

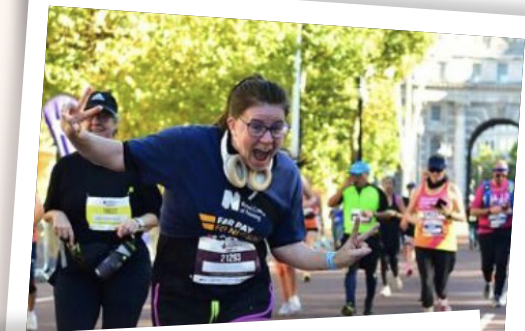
Contact Emma at info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk

Work for Good

Turn the work you do into good! Your business can have a powerful and positive impact, whatever its size. Fundraise through your sales via Work for Good and you can support us in a way that’s easy and sustainable for your business.

Easyfundraising

Thank you to everyone who already supports us via easyfundraising. To date, you have raised over £1,450. If you haven’t signed up, simply visit easyfundraising.org.uk and every time you shop online with over 7,000 retailers, we will receive a percentage at no extra cost to you!



Want to take on a challenge or community event in aid of St Mark’s?
Contact Emma at info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Contribution by Bowel Cancer Screening Health Improvement Principal, Andrew Prentice



“Lynch Syndrome accounts for 3.3% of all colorectal cancer cases in England, equating to around 1,100 cases a year.”

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month is an annual opportunity to raise awareness of bowel cancer and is the perfect time to remind everyone about the importance of taking part in the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. The age people are invited to take part is lowering, as of April 2023 people aged 54 are being invited, taking the age range from 54 to 74. This will lower to 50 over the next two years.

The Health Promotion Team at St Mark's Bowel Cancer Screening have been out and about spreading the word and raising awareness of the programme at local community groups. As you can imagine April is going to be a busy month for them, with many events lined up to get the word out far and wide!

But it's not just the Health Promotion Team who are keeping busy, with the age lowering, even more patients are coming through the screening pathway and this is due to increase further

when people with Lynch Syndrome will be included in the NHS Bowel Screening Programme for colonoscopic surveillance. Lynch Syndrome is a genetic condition that, over time, allows mutations to accumulate, potentially causing cancer. Therefore, people with Lynch Syndrome have a higher risk of developing bowel cancer.

Lynch Syndrome accounts for 3.3% of all colorectal cancer cases in England, equating to around 1,100 cases a year and is the most common cause of hereditary bowel cancer. The screening team are currently in the process of calling people in our area known to have the condition and welcoming them to the bowel screening programme, no mean feat in and of itself!

But the team, as always, are raring to go and are lining up to welcome their new patients!

So, a big shout out to all the Team at St Mark's, where every month is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month!

Celebrating World IBD Day

It was a privilege to support our clinical colleagues in hosting the first patient IBD day at Central Middlesex, the new hub of St Mark's Hospital. Over 70 guests heard talks from St Mark's Clinical Director Professor Omar Faiz, Consultant Gastroenterologist Dr Nikolas Kamperidis, IBD Clinical Nurse Specialist Comfort Opekh, Consultant Surgeon Kapil Sahnan, Stoma and Pouch Nurse Rali Marinova, Dietician Lucy Freeman, and Foundation CEO Jason Bacon.

Attendees were then invited to breakout rooms hosted by Lead Paediatric Gastroenterology and IBD Clinical Nurse Specialist Kay Crook, IBD Advanced Nurse Practitioner Pearl Avery, Clinical Nurse Specialist Jitka Adio, and IBD Clinical Nurse Specialist Comfort Opekh.

The day was a great success, and we are looking forward to hosting the next event in 2024!



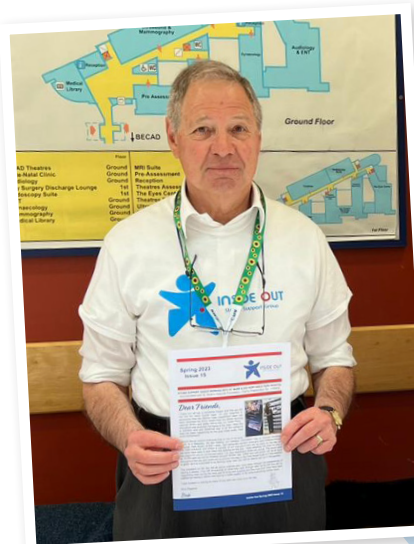
What our attendees had to say!

“I felt well informed and very happy to have the opportunity to re-engage at such a positive patient event. Thanks to all organisers and staff participants.”

“I really enjoyed both the breadth and depth of the talks.”

“It was good to meet other people with IBD, and hear about developments at the hospital!”

“The day was great and the staff were extremely knowledgeable.”



CAPTION: Pictured top-right, Some of the Stoma and Pouch Care Team, the Red Lion Pouch Support Group and, bottom-left the Inside Out Stoma Support Group

40tude helps to establish a major new research fellowship

In late 2022 the charity 40tude curing colon cancer, a key St Mark's donor, helped to establish the Tom Smith Research Fellowship to investigate the hereditary causes of colon cancer. This new research post was made possible by the funds raised by 40tude Andy Peterson through his epic Tom Smith 4 Points Ride, in memory of the former 40tude Ambassador and rugby legend Tom Smith who passed away from colon cancer in 2022 at the age of 50.

In seven days, Andy cycled 2,500 kilometres, solo and unsupported, between the four compass points of the UK. Riding day and night he successfully reached Ardnamurchan, a very special finish point as it is where his late father came from. Andy explains, "Both my dad and Tom were diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer, they had the symptoms but were

either unaware of them or ignored them. Tom wanted to not just raise awareness but to help find a cure for colon cancer. 40tude has been partnering with St Mark's since the foundation of the charity and has helped St Mark's to pioneer several breakthroughs in the treatment and early identification of colon cancer."

As a result of his extraordinary efforts Andy raised £170,000, enabling the Tom Smith Research Fellowship to be created. Others have also been inspired to make contributions in memory of Tom, including his former colleagues from Dundee Rugby Club who raised £6,000 through a lunch at their club in Tom's honour. Earlier this year 40tude was also delighted to announce that Tom's former teammates, Gregor Townsend and Andy Nicol have taken on the role of Ambassadors for 40tude to honour Tom's legacy.



Dr Penelope Edwards, Tom Smith Research Fellow

"Working with my supervisor Dr Kevin Monahan in the Centre for Familial Intestinal Cancer at St Mark's Hospital and co-supervisor Professor Trevor Graham in his lab at the Institute of Cancer Research I am undertaking a PhD exploring the key differences in both healthy, pre-cancerous and cancerous tissue in patients with Lynch Syndrome, a familial cancer syndrome. The tissue that will be tested has been kindly donated by patients during their routine colonoscopies and stored in the biobank at St Mark's. In understanding more about the genetics and immune landscape of this tissue matched to clinical details about individual patients we hope to understand more about why some patients with a family history of cancer develop cancer, and why some don't."

CAPTION: 40tude fundraiser Andy Peterson meeting with Dr Penelope Edwards.

Spotlight on the Academic Institute



St Mark's has a well-established history of academic excellence and continues to maintain a proactive attitude to colorectal education and support a diverse array of research projects. Since 2002, the Academic Institute has hosted an annual international congress called Frontiers. Now adopting a hybrid model with both a physical meeting and the option of online attendance, the congress attracts an increasingly international audience. The 2022 congress, 'A spotlight on IBD,' covered a broad range of multi-disciplinary topics encompassing real issues that clinicians deal with in their day-to-day clinics presented by leading experts from the St Mark's faculty and specialist external speakers.

CAPTION: A panel discussion at Frontiers 2022 including St Mark's clinical staff and external faculty.

Spotlight on the Academic Institute

Introducing our Research Team

We are delighted to share that, with the support of the Foundation, a robust research team has been established at St Mark's to support the hospital's Consultants and Research Fellows with the set-up of, and recruitment to their projects. The team consists of a Research Manager, Project Lead, a Research Coordinator and 20 Research Fellows.

Research Manager, Pooja Datt, manages the research portfolio at St Mark's, working closely with the Academic Institute Dean, Professor Ailsa Hart, and Foundation CEO, Jason Bacon to ensure high quality research is delivered. Her key role involves supporting the research team and Research Fellows with their post-doctoral research and providing training to ensure adherence to the research governance framework.

Project Lead, Reshma Kanani, manages the St Mark's Tissue Bank and Fistula research projects, led by Mr Phil Tozer and Professor Hart. The St Mark's Tissue Bank is successfully established with over 500 samples bio-banked. This will be crucial in supporting our research in perianal fistula formation with the hope of improving treatment for this complex disease. The Fistula Outcomes Database study is collecting clinical data from patients to identify factors correlated with treatment response and, so far, we have over 300 patients consented for this specific project.

Research Coordinator, Sindhu Varughese, manages three Lynch Syndrome projects under the supervision of Dr Kevin Monahan and Pooja Datt. Lynch Syndrome is an inherited disorder that increases the risk of cancer. Her projects are looking at screening and novel treatment options to prevent and detect cancer at early stage to improve outcomes in Lynch Syndrome patients.



CAPTION: Pictured left to right: Research Manager Pooja Datt, Project Lead Reshma Kanani and Research Coordinator Sindhu Varughese.

Recent Success Stories

PERFECTs

CT colonography (CTC) is a less invasive alternative to traditional colonoscopy to identify pre-cancerous and cancerous growths however, accuracy levels for identifying these growths vary significantly across the UK. PERFECTs was a collaboration between St Mark's and the radiology faculty at University College London Hospitals to address the UK-wide variability in CTC scan reporting.

PERFECTs robustly tested a training model which has had real world impact; the interest generated has led to the development of the national CTC training and accreditation programme, funded by Health Education England and 40tude. The programme includes the core PERFECTs team in addition to collaborators from radiology departments across the UK and is aimed at radiologists and radiographers whose roles are vital for more accurate CTC scan reporting. Its aim is to formally introduce CTC into the national Bowel Cancer Screening Programme alongside FIT and endoscopy. The team look forward to continuing their work and are grateful to the donors that contributed to PERFECTs which has led to the development of the national programme.

Surgical Robotics Research Programme

After a successful capital campaign by the Foundation, St Mark's took delivery of a da Vinci Xi surgical robot in 2018. The focus of the Programme, unlike in other UK hospitals, is colorectal surgery.

Programme highlights include:

- 400 robotic operations performed between 2018 and 2022 and almost 50 in the first quarter of 2023
- The robotic colorectal procedures being performed at St Mark's are different to other institutions
- To achieve the aspiration to become a national and international training hub in robotic colorectal surgery, to date, more than 60 surgeons have been hosted at St Mark's from UK and overseas hospitals for one-day case observations
- Intuitive Surgical Inc., maker of the da Vinci Xi surgical system, has funded 3 robotic fellowships at St Mark's

Thank you to the donors who helped seed fund the Programme; ongoing financial responsibility has transferred to our hospital trust which, due to the Programme's success, is looking to purchase two additional robots.



CAPTION: Mr Danilo Miskovic, the Surgical Robotics Research Programme Lead, using the da Vinci Xi surgical robot.

Miss Nusrat Iqbal

Improving the assessment of anorectal fistula



“We were one of the first centres in the UK to pilot the use of Mesenchymal Stem Cell (MSC) treatment.”

An anal fistula is an abnormal connection between the inner surface of the bowel and the skin surrounding the anus. Patients with a fistula will typically suffer from pain, discharge, and recurrent abscesses around the back passage, which interfere with daily activities and adversely impact quality of life. These fistulae are more common in patients with Crohn's disease, where they are known to be associated with the need for multiple operations and repeated hospital admissions.

At the Robin Phillips' Fistula Research Unit, my research focused on improving the assessment of both Crohn's and non-Crohn's anal fistulae by developing tools and systems to clinically classify and radiologically assess the extent of fistulising disease, as well as measuring the impact it has on patient quality of life. We brought together an international panel of patients and clinicians to determine the most important outcomes to

measure when studying the success of fistula treatment in research studies. This resulted in the development of an Anal Fistula Core Outcome Set (AFCOS).

We were also able to trial new technologies in the management of anal fistula, such as the use of 3D printing to enhance patient understanding of the disease in outpatient clinics, and we were one of the first centres in the UK to pilot the use of Mesenchymal Stem Cell (MSC) treatment for Crohn's anal fistula.

The output of these studies will help to standardise and improve the assessment of patients with anal fistula, enabling both patients and clinicians to make evidence-based decisions regarding their care.

Congratulations to Nusrat who passed her PhD viva this year, an outstanding academic achievement.

Leaving a gift in your will

Leaving a gift in your will to any charitable cause is a deeply personal and important decision and, for our charity, gifts bequeathed in wills continue to help us facilitate a diverse array of research. Legacies bequeathed to the Foundation benefit either 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. This flexibility has also helped us raise even more funds for research into complex and rare bowel diseases. We were also extremely privileged to receive a 'living legacy' in 2019 from Michael and Therese Paolini, who were so inspired by the Surgical Robotics Research Programme that they decided to release their gift to St Mark's so they could see the impact of their gift in their lifetime.

We are grateful to our supporters who have decided to leave a legacy for future patients by including a gift in their will to the Foundation. Here, Janet and Vincent, two of our legators explain their reasons for choosing to support St Mark's in this way:



“

“My name is Janet Fitz-Gerald and I am a long-standing patient of St Mark's Hospital. For 33 years, during my secretarial banking career, I was plagued with the condition, Ulcerative Colitis – not recommended! With sheer determination and a positive attitude (mostly!) I persevered with very regular visits (City Road Outpatients Department) to the wonderful specialist hospital of St Mark's culminating in a live-saving operation at Northwick Park Hospital with the formation of my ileostomy in 1995. Having had such expert care during those early years, it is the least I can do to include in my will a legacy as my way of expressing a huge debt.”

Leaving a gift in your will



“

“I was first referred to St Mark’s, and Professor Robin Phillips, in January 1992 with Familial Adenomatous Polyposis. 31 years later, and after an ileo-anal pouch, too many flexis and endoscopies to count, and finally a stoma, I am still here and very active – due to the ongoing excellence of the St Mark’s team. By leaving a legacy in my will, I can think of no better way to repay some of their expertise and support, and hope that future patients will be able to benefit from their skills.”

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

Suggested wording for inclusion 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 officer for the time being shall be sufficient discharge to my executors.

Registered Charity Name: **St Mark’s Hospital Foundation**

Registered Charity Number: **1140930**

By leaving a gift in your will to St Mark’s Hospital Foundation, you will be helping create a better future for people living with complex bowel diseases.

An evening of entertainment

Join us on Thursday 30th November 2023 for a unique celebration of St Mark’s in the beautiful setting of St James’s Church in Piccadilly. Featuring performances from St Mark’s patient and accomplished classical pianist, Amanda Scott, and St Mark’s patient and vocal coach, Chris Mitchell, this is an event not to be missed.

We look forward to welcoming you to an evening of entertainment and fundraising for St Mark’s!



Event information



St James’s Church, Piccadilly, W1J 9LL



Thursday 30th November 2023



6pm-9pm



Tickets £30



Scan here to secure your ticket

Scan here to secure your ticket or visit eventbrite.co.uk and search for St Mark’s Hospital Foundation

How you can support St Mark's



Make a one-off donation



Set up a standing order or direct debit



Participate in a challenge event



Create a Facebook fundraiser



Employer support schemes



Fundraise in memory of a loved one



Leave us a gift in your will



Follow us on our socials

If you would like to donate to one of our strategic research programmes, please email info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk



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@bowelsofstmarks

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Registered charity number 1140930



Your donations make a world of difference!

A gift today will help transform the lives of people living with complex bowel diseases at St Mark's and beyond