

St Mark's Hospital
Foundation

March Newsletter



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St Mark's Surgeons Test Out Exoskeleton Device



"We are a small hospital with a long history of innovation regarding bowel disease, so we should pay tribute to our predecessors by continuing to push forward."

- **Mr Kapil Sahnan**, Colorectal surgeon & Director of Innovation for St Mark's
(pictured above)

According to the Royal College of Surgeons, musculoskeletal injuries, muscle fatigue, and the development of back and neck pain are incredibly common amongst surgeons due to the demanding physical requirements of the profession. This month, Kapil Sahnan, a colorectal

surgeon at St Mark's, was the first to operate wearing an exoskeleton device—a custom tailored suit designed to reduce muscle strain and fatigue during long-lasting surgeries.

To create the lightweight exoskeleton suit, an ErgoScan app is first used to assess a surgeon's movement. The device is then specifically tailored to the individual. The suit is worn over scrubs and helps the surgeon maintain good posture without compromising the dexterity of their hands.

During the trial, the device supported Mr Sahnan's arms and shoulders for over seven hours while he removed the ileoanal pouch of a patient with inflammatory bowel disease. Asked about the suit's future, he said,



"we're a specialised hospital with a small niche workforce, so we can't afford to have surgeons going off sick with issues like muscular disorders, which is a common side effect of the profession."

While he was the first, Mr Sahnan will not be the last to wear an exoskeleton device. Several other St Mark's surgeons are already being fitted for their own exoskeleton suits.

By implementing the use of cutting-edge wearable technology, St Mark's Hospital is ensuring that their world class clinicians are supported and therefore better able to provide long term care and improved patient outcomes.

[Read More About the Trial Here](#)

Fundraising Feature: Aidan's Sculpture



Aidan has been a patient of St Mark's Hospital since 2012 when he was referred to the care of Dr Jeremy Nightingale, a now retired Consultant Gastroenterologist specialising in intestinal failure and inflammatory bowel disease.

Last week, Aidan sat down with the Foundation to share his story and his decision to give back.

"I see St Mark's as an adult version of Great Ormond Street in the way staff and nurses are with patients—nothing is too much bother for them. I am a self-taught welder and have been welding since 1997. I have decided to make some dog and cat sculptures to raise money for St Mark's. This is how I would like to give something back to the hospital."

Interested in supporting St Mark's by purchasing a garden creature of your own? Each sculpture costs around £30 and is made to order from recycled scrap metal. Click the button below, and we would be delighted to put you in touch with Aidan.

[Buy a Sculpture to Support St Mark's](#)



Are you interested in turning your passion into purpose?

We love when our supporters bring their own unique approaches to fundraising for St Mark's Hospital Foundation. There are lots of ways to get involved in whatever way works best for you.

The Foundation team is always here to help. Find out how you can get involved on our [website](#),

or email us at info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk for more information.

Interview with Gita Lingam, St Mark's Research Fellow



Research and education at St Mark's Hospital are central to improving clinical care and outcomes for patients with complex, and rare, bowel diseases. Thanks to our generous supporters, St Mark's Hospital Foundation is able to fund the cost of around 30 research fellows every year. These fellows represent the future of not only St Mark's, but gastroenterology and colorectal surgery worldwide.

Every year at St Mark's Academic Institute's flagship conference, Frontiers in Colorectal and Intestinal Disease, one research fellow is awarded the John Nicholls Prize for Research. The prize, presented by the prestigious surgeon and creator of the J Pouch, Professor John Nicholls himself, goes to the individual whose work best illustrates the ground-breaking research done by St Mark's research fellows.

The 2025 winner, Dr Gita Lingam, sat down with the Foundation to discuss her research, her experience as a fellow at St Mark's Hospital, and her thoughts on the impact of artificial intelligence in the field of gastroenterology and colorectal surgery.

She told us, *"my experience at St Mark's has been exceptional. The hospital's history creates an environment where research is embedded into daily practice. What makes it unique is the culture there is a genuine openness to collaboration, academic discussion, and innovation. Working alongside clinicians and researchers who are leaders in their fields has been both inspiring and humbling."*

[Read the Full Interview with Gita Here](#)

Seasonal Appeal: We Reached Our Campaign Goal!



The numbers are in! The 2025 Seasonal Appeal, The St Mark's Difference, raised a total of £15,080 over the last three months.

We want to express our gratitude to each and every person who donated to the appeal and helped us reach our campaign goal. Your generosity allows us to fund research and education at St Mark's Hospital and makes a real difference for individuals affected by complex, and rare, bowel diseases.

A special thank you to Caroline, Mark, Ian, and Tash for featuring in the appeal and sharing their stories with us.

Upcoming Events at St Mark's



At St Mark's Hospital Foundation, the stories we hear from patients inspire us daily. They motivate us to raise the funds needed by St Mark's Hospital to conduct research and education programmes that will improve patients' lives.

Throughout Bowel Cancer Awareness Month in April, we will be sharing the stories of St Mark's patients who have been affected by colorectal cancer and who continue to inspire us with their support.

Are you interested in sharing your story with us and raising awareness of bowel cancer? Get in touch at emma.klahr@nhs.net

Join the IBD Patient Panel for

World IBD Day 2026

Tuesday 19th of May 2026: 10am - 3pm
Central Middlesex Hospital - ACAD Square

Meet the IBD Patient Panel and learn more about Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis, and the support available at St Mark's Hospital



Save the Date



INSIDE OUT
Stoma Support Group

STOMA OPEN INFORMATION DAY

A day for ostomists and their families to come together, gain stoma care knowledge, and learn about new appliances and accessories aimed to improve your quality of life.



Saturday 20th of June 2026
10:00 am

CENTRAL MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL
ACTON LANE, LONDON NW10 7NS
ACAD SQUARE NEAR OUTPATIENTS



Looking to find out more about upcoming events at St Mark's?
Interested in joining the IBD Patient Panel or Inside Out Stoma Support

Group?

Get in touch at info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk

Thank you for supporting research, education and innovation at St Mark's, the UK's national bowel hospital.

Donate to St Mark's Hospital Foundation



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