St Mark's Hospital Foundation

September Newsletter

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Our Latest Campaign: Celebrate Life, Celebrate *A* Life

We are delighted to share some highlights from the launch of our latest campaign: Celebrate Life, Celebrate *A* Life.

The campaign brings together inspiring accounts from St Mark's patients, their family members, and communities who have chosen to celebrate their important moments and the people they cherish while helping to improve clinical care and quality of life for individuals with complex, and rare, bowel diseases.



As Vicky and Simon, pictured above, started planning their wedding, they felt it was important to begin their married life by making a difference for others. In place of traditional gifts, they asked their family and friends to donate to St Mark's Hospital Foundation.

Vicky and Simon's generosity is a terrific example of celebration fundraising, which allows people to mark occasions like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, health milestones, and retirements in a meaningful way while supporting a charity.

In the same vein, memorial fundraising allows people to celebrate the life of a loved one and help keep their legacy alive by contributing to a cause they were passionate about.

Alec, pictured below with his wife Joan, suffered from severe ulcerative colitis, a form of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, and was under the care of St Mark's Hospital for more than 34 years. After Alec passed away peacefully in 2024, Joan asked family and friends to honour his memory

and recognise the hospital that made such a difference throughout his life by making donations to St Mark's Hospital Foundation.



Mr and Mrs Wright at a St Mark's Hospital Foundation event in 2015.

"Due to the excellent work performed by Professor John Nicholls and his team in 1989, Alec's ileoanal pouch was a success story, having served him well for 34 years. Indeed, so successful we both enjoyed travelling all over the world - all thanks to St Mark's Hospital." ***- Joan***

In the pages of our Celebrate Life, Celebrate *A* Life booklet, you will see that every individual has their own unique history with St Mark's. At the same time, they are all united by a desire to bring their communities together to celebrate life while making life better for people with bowel disease.

We are deeply grateful to our supporters who have given back by dedicating a special occasion, a health victory or a memorial event to St Mark's Hospital Foundation. We know this decision is deeply personal, and we are honoured to be a part of your important moments.

Interested in organising your own celebration or memorial fundraiser? Check out the resources available on our brand-new fundraising hub or

contact us at info@stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk for more information.

Read the Full Celebrate Life, Celebrate A Life Campaign

St Mark's Research Fellow Shortlisted for British Journal of Surgery Prize



Ms Alison Wallace is a St Mark's surgical research fellow under the supervision of Complex and Recurrent Cancer Lead, Mr Ian Jenkins. She has a particular interest in the characteristics of rectal cancer and the factors influencing patient outcomes following pelvic exenteration surgery.

Ms Wallace was recently one of two St Mark's research fellows shortlisted for the prestigious British Journal of Surgery prize at the Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain & Ireland 2026 Annual Meeting. She was recognised for her research titled, Quantifying Surgical Extent in Pelvic Exenteration.

Pelvic exenteration is a major surgery that removes advanced or recurrent cancers, including colorectal cancer, that have spread throughout the pelvis. It is a difficult surgery that involves the removal of organs and has life-changing impacts even after recovery. Because of this, the surgery is only performed in specific, rare circumstances and often as a last resort cancer treatment.



Ms Wallace presenting her ground-breaking research at the 2026 Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain & Ireland Annual Meeting.

Ms Wallace's research focuses on predicting patient outcomes in complex rectal cancer and identifying when individuals truly benefit from aggressive surgery like pelvic exenteration. She has created a single metric to quantify the extent of planned pelvic exenteration surgery and is exploring how this can be used in combination with measurable disease outcomes to support patients when making decisions about major surgery.

She shared, *"As a colorectal specialist trainee, my clinical and academic interests have always focused on improving our understanding and care of patients with colorectal cancer. What excites me most is the potential to spare patients—already facing one of the most difficult periods of their lives, alongside their families—from futile surgery and avoidable harm. More pragmatically, I hope this research can provide clearer information to support patients' pre-operative decision-making."*

As the scope of surgery as a cure for colorectal cancer has expanded significantly in recent years, this research provides important clinical guidance to ensure that the potential benefits of aggressive pelvic surgery outweigh the impact and potential risks on a case-by-case basis. By doing so, Ms Wallace is keeping patient quality of life, both short and long term, central to the conversation.

At St Mark's Hospital Foundation, we are proud to fund projects like this

that aim to address the unmet clinical needs of patients living with complex, and rare, bowel diseases.

Help Us Support the Cost of Our Research Fellows

Have You Spotted Our New Donation Terminal?



St Mark's Hospital Foundation recently set up an unattended donation terminal in the St Mark's Outpatient waiting area at Central Middlesex Hospital.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has already used the terminal to support research, education, and innovation at St Mark's Hospital. Every donation helps us to:

- Invest in more research pushing the boundaries of what is possible for patients.
- Fund the costs of our research fellows, the future leaders in gastroenterology and colorectal surgery.
- Deliver an annual programme of education which is helping to improve standards of care across the UK and internationally.

The new donation terminal provides supporters with a convenient and anonymous way to make a difference in the lives of individuals affected by complex, and rare, bowel diseases.

For anyone who wants to have a conversation about the research taking place at St Mark's, we encourage you to stop by the Foundation fundraising office. We are eager to discuss the projects we help fund and hear about the experiences of St Mark's patients and supporters.

You can find the St Mark's Hospital Foundation team down the hall from St Mark's Outpatients at Central Middlesex!

Get in Touch with the St Mark's Hospital Foundation Team

St Mark's Consultants on 'The Integrated Pelvis'



Earlier this month, several of our St Mark's Consultants presented at a Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) event focused on 'The integrated pelvis: Advancing collaborative surgery in women's pelvic care'.

Many conditions affecting the pelvic health of women and people assigned female at birth sit at the interface between gynaecology and colorectal surgery and require multidisciplinary management. St Mark's Hospital Foundation is proud to support multidisciplinary research at St Mark's Hospital that explores how to better address these conditions.

The Royal Society of Medicine event brought together leading clinicians to highlight advances in diagnosis, surgical techniques and coordinated care pathways and explore the recognised benefit of collaboration between these specialities.



Mr Ian Jenkins is a St Mark's Consultant Colorectal Surgeon with an interest in improving the quality and speed of patient recovery after complex and major bowel surgery. At the Royal Society of Medicine conference, he presented on colorectal perspectives in pelvic endometriosis surgery.

Miss Carolynne Vaizey is the Lead Surgeon at St Mark's for the Physiology Department, a specialist unit dedicated to the management of patients with pelvic floor disorders. She presented on the colorectal management of pelvic trauma related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period.





Mr Gregory Thomas is a St Mark's Consultant Colorectal Surgeon with a specialist interest in pelvic floor disorders and other non-cancerous colorectal diseases. His RSM presentation focused on multidisciplinary approaches to pelvic prolapse, which is when the womb, bladder or bowel bulges into the vagina.

Mr Kapil Sahnan is a Consultant Surgeon and the Director of Innovation at St Mark's Hospital, specialising in complex colorectal and robotic surgery. He has a renowned international profile as an academic and educator and spoke on future directions in multidisciplinary pelvic surgery, specifically robotic surgery.



Read More About Cutting Edge Research at St Mark's

Upcoming Events at St Mark's

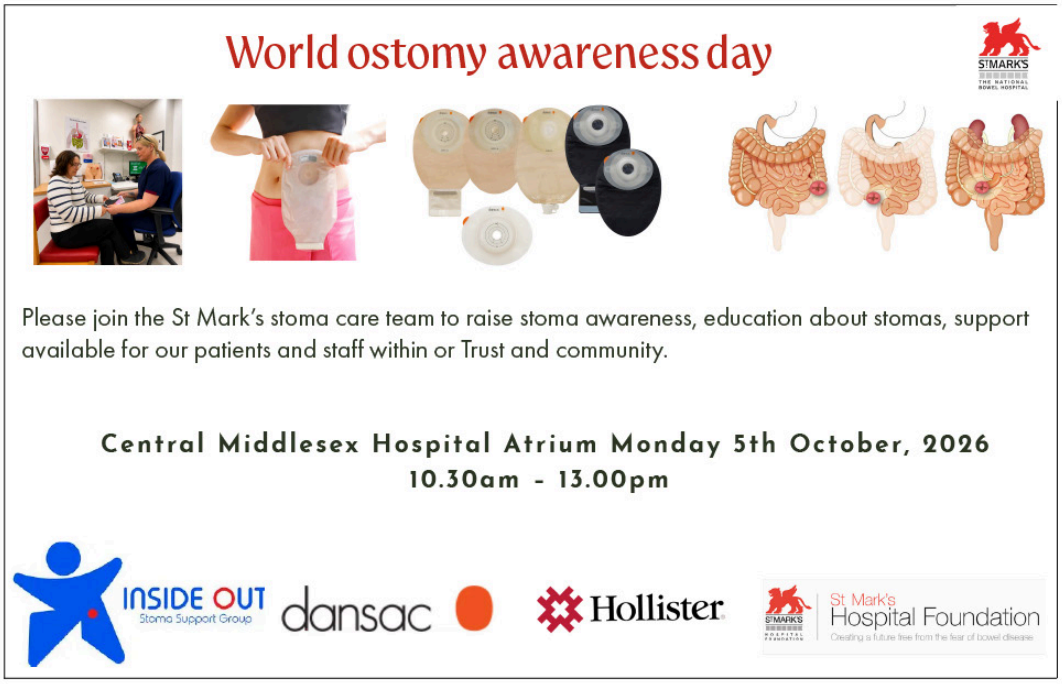
World Ostomy Day Awareness Event



Every year, World Ostomy Day is recognised on the first Saturday of October and provides the important opportunity to raise awareness of stomas and advocate for better resources and medical care for the 205,000 people in the UK and 13.5 million worldwide currently living with a stoma.

This year, and every year, the Stoma and Pouch Care team at St Mark's Hospital is dedicated to providing individualised, expert and research-based nursing care to patients with stomas.

As part of their mission to ensure every patient undergoing stoma or internal pouch surgery is supported, understood and empowered, they are hosting an awareness event for World Ostomy Day on Monday 5th October.



Fistula Awareness Day Event



Fistula Awareness, a patient-led support group for individuals with fistulas, will be hosting their second event at St Mark's Hospital to mark Fistula Awareness Day in November. The theme of the day is 'Community', and attendees can expect:

- Real stories from people who understand what it is like to have a fistula.
- Answers from world-renowned clinicians and researchers from St Mark's Hospital.
- A community setting and space to connect with other fistula patients, friends, and family.
- A range of optional activities aimed at sharing tips, tricks, and solidarity for fistula care.

Fistula Awareness Day is open to patients, family members, healthcare professionals, and anyone else interested in learning more about fistulas. Register for free on the Fistula Awareness event page.

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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