Front Cover: Tonya Kloppers (right), currently Deputy Matron, will succeed Caroline Cassels as Head of Nursing/Matron on November 1.
Introduction from...

It is a great honour for me to introduce a very special edition of the Friends newsletter. In this edition we bid farewell to our amazing Matron Caroline Cassels, who has worked at King Edward VII’s Hospital for over 30 years.

We celebrate Caroline’s time with us, learning of her journey from staff nurse in 1984 to her appointment as Matron in 1994, and the many wonderful patients and colleagues she has met along the way. She will be missed dearly by everyone associated with King Edward VII’s Hospital.

We also look back at the very beginnings of our Hospital as we approach the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, with fascinating letters and notes from the time.

We are reminded how your continued support and commitment to veterans is still changing lives today, with heart-warming testimonials from grateful patients who have received the highest standards of medical care.

In September we were delighted to see so many of you at our Annual Reception at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, a vital fundraising event which this year was dedicated to the past, present and future of the Hospital. I am happy to report the event was a great success.

I would like to thank each of you for your continued support in helping us to provide excellent care to all of our patients and I do hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Best wishes.

Chief Executive Lindsey Condron

Lindsey Condron
Chief Executive
We want to take this opportunity to thank our many benefactors for their support in ensuring that the Hospital can continue to develop its facilities, clinical services and grow its charitable work. Over the last year, we have been able to open a new Endoscopy suite as well as a new Ophthalmology Outpatient Unit. June 2018 also saw the opening of our Centre for Veterans’ Health.

Work has started in the Main Hospital as we redo our Reception facilities. We are modernising without losing that special ‘home from home’ feeling that makes us unique.

Our staff are our greatest asset and, after some simple refurbishment work, they are now able to take their meals in a more congenial environment with new flooring and furniture. Staff really appreciate the changes.
Mr Pearce was a noted bloodstock breeder and owner for over 80 years. Based in Hong Kong, he had racing interests in the Far East, but his equine world centered on Newmarket, of which he was very fond.

Racing was his lifelong passion, and his chief ambition was to breed and race a Derby winner. Over the years, Mr Pearce’s colours were carried by a series of top horses but none were able to win the much coveted trophy. He came close in 2006 when his horse, Dragon Dancer, came second.

His interest in racing had been fostered by spending his school holidays with family friends who maintained a private stable in Dumfriesshire. During his student years at Charterhouse, he developed a love of golf, cricket and above all of the thoroughbred. At 17, he acquired a share in his first racehorse.

For over 30 years and until his passing, Mr Pearce boarded his mares with Lanwades and had notable success with the trainer, Geoff Wragg. He enjoyed the challenge of selecting stallions for his mares and his trips to Ireland to see his yearlings.

Mr Pearce was to many the epitome of a British gentleman. He was known for his courtesy, generosity and straight dealing. He was polite, sometimes to a fault. He did not feel the need to trumpet his achievements, many though they were. He was always considerate and thoroughly genuine in everything he did. He much impressed by his obstinate appetite for life.

We are much indebted to Mr Pearce for his support of King Edward VII’s Hospital which goes back several decades. We are particularly honored that, thanks to a generous gift left in his will, we were able to open in January of this year our new outpatient Ophthalmology Unit, equipped with the finest diagnostic technology available today.

Mr Pearce’s racing legacy continues with a UK racing company called John Pearce Racing Limited.
Reflecting on my imminent retirement, I find myself experiencing a range of emotions, but mainly one of pride in the institution that is King Edward VII’s Hospital, and in the small part that I have played in making it what it is today.

I remember vividly my first shift as a Staff Nurse back in 1984. Applying for a job here was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. I quickly realised that it was here that I could truly be the nurse that I always wanted to be.

Working in a team, in a caring environment, with the time to nurse and to care for my patients: it was totally different to anywhere I had previously worked. A formal and disciplined hospital that was nevertheless up-to-the-minute and believed deeply in traditional values; caring, respectful and dignified.

Whilst this may all sound rather serious, and perhaps even dull, it was also great fun.

Starched white collar on a crisp navy blue uniform, with a starched white cap. Formal dress and formal address: no-one used first names. We stood up when Matron entered the room. Savouries were served after supper to brigadiers and admirals. I loved it.

In my first 10 years I worked my way up to the post of Ward Sister. If I were asked today which was my favourite post, this would be it. Being a Ward Sister gives you the best of all worlds: hands-on care and running your ward to your standards, building your team and earning the respect of your consultants. I learned so much.

I then had the opportunity to throw my hat in the ring for the post of Matron when my predecessor retired. Being offered the job was a bit of a shock – but nothing to compare with the enormity of the role and its responsibilities when I started. My first day is etched in my memory. I hadn’t yet had time to decide on a uniform, so I wore a very formal navy blue suit. My first ward rounds were extremely interesting, as all the patients thought I was the “lady from BUPA”.

The support I had from family, friends, patients and colleagues certainly helped me through those early years, which were a learning curve with a near-vertical gradient!!

I have had the privilege of working with and learning from the most inspirational colleagues and I should like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for making me the person I am today.
The role of Matron is to ensure the day-to-day smooth running of the Hospital. It ranges from keeping all the staff motivated and empowered in their roles, supporting them through difficult times, as well as celebrating their successes, through to making sure their patients are happy and well-cared for. Long hours, hard work and some sacrifices – but all worth it.

A huge part of the Hospital’s heritage lies in its support of the men and women of our Armed forces, both retired and serving. What wonderful characters I have had the privilege of caring for as patients, many of whom were incredibly brave in the First and Second World Wars, or in more recent conflicts. Always modest - one never knew what they had been through until their obituaries appeared in the newspapers. So many of them to remember, and always with a smile, and the feeling of being so very lucky to have cared for them.

The role of Matron has changed beyond all recognition from my first day, 24 years ago, but at King Edward VII’s Hospital it has always been a hands-on role. I know that, as it is a small hospital that truly believes in personalised care, this will always be an important part of the job - and in my view the best part.

I leave the Hospital in good hands at a very exciting time in its history, with a team of individuals who believe in delivering excellence in everything that they do.
The Great War and King Edward VII’s Hospital

As we approach the 100th year anniversary commemorating the end of the First World War, it is a timely reminder of the exceptional care provided by Sister Agnes and the skilled medical staff of King Edward VII’s Hospital one hundred years ago. Those values of providing the highest quality medical care and unrivalled nursing standards are still as relevant today as they were one hundred years ago.

Call to arms

By the time war broke out in 1914 the Hospital (with a total of just 16 beds) had treated 1,500 patients since opening in 1899. Issuing a formal announcement at the start of the war Sister Agnes defiantly declared:

“I have enlarged this hospital and am quite READY for ANY NUMBER of SICK AND WOUNDED officers. There is nothing to pay and all officers are eligible.”

Eleven days later Sister Agnes admitted her first 17 wounded soldiers.

Eminent consultants

Since the Boer War there had been numerous important advances in medicine enabling Sister Agnes to equip the Hospital with a formidable army of 23 highly skilled doctors and surgeons, all specialised in their chosen fields.

John Lockhart-Mummery who, at only 39 years old when the war began, became tireless in his work for Sister Agnes. By 1918 he had probably carried out more operations than any other surgeon at the Hospital.

Royal patronage

Like his father before him, King George shared a keen interest in the activity of the Hospital. On 1 October 1915 the King, accompanied by Queen Mary, made a morale-boosting visit to the patients. Later, at the suggestion of Queen Mary, convalescent officers were invited to tea in Buckingham Palace gardens. Commander Michael St John RN recalls his father recounting one of these visits:

“One day my father was wheeled in on a chair and lined up with half a dozen others to be presented. Wounded officers in those days wore civilian clothes – the inevitable Marlborough jacket and bowler – and as the couple came down the line shaking hands, my father with difficulty got himself standing with the aid of two sticks, putting his bowler on the seat behind so as to have a free hand. Seeing how frail he was the King told him to sit down, and in his relief, my father forgot about his hat and started to subside gratefully into his wheelchair. Queen Mary, close behind the Monarch and spotting the impending disaster, leapt forward and with her rapier-sharp parasol, made as if to knock the bowler out of harm’s way, but instead succeeded in impaling it like a brochette and waving it aloft to everyone’s huge delight – Sister Agnes’ and King George’s in particular....”

Advances

As the war advanced, the nature of the fighting was reflected in the injuries suffered by the patients. There were fewer multiple bullet wounds and bayonet wounds, but many more shell fragments. One such patient was Oscar Orr who, on 16 July 1917 was hit with a piece of shrapnel measuring 5.9 inches, between the eyes.
“We arrived at Charing Cross station, met by huge cheering crowds throwing flowers on our stretchers. It was the first day I had the bandages off my eyes and everything looked pretty wonderful to me. I was put in an ambulance with a major from the Irish Guards. We were unloaded at this big house and carried up a broad staircase.

At the head of the stairs was this lovely, tiny figure in a starched pale blue uniform with the ribbon of the RRC (Royal Red Cross). She had marvelous hair and the smallest waist I ever saw on a lady of her size. She was obviously the boss and greeted us both kindly before assigning us to our beds.

The care at King Edward VII’s Hospital was excellent. The butler used to come round the wards before meals and take one’s order for dinner. Liquor was available in any form by request. …”

Polesden Lacey

Set in the Surrey countryside, Polesden Lacey was the weekend home of Edwardian socialite, Margaret Greville. In 1915, like so many other country estates, Polesden Lacey was turned into a convalescence home for wounded soldiers. During 1915 and 1916 more than 80 soldiers spent time at Polesden recovering from their wounds, including patients from King Edward VII’s Hospital.

Janet Durban, volunteer tour guide at Polesden Lacey, recently visited the Hospital’s archives on a fact-finding mission. We all were fascinated to learn that Oscar Orr was one of many patients sent to Polesden Lacey from King Edward VII’s Hospital. Janet was delighted to regale the time when she met with Oscar’s granddaughters who live in Canada. Incredibly they have in their possession the piece of shrapnel that had been removed from between their grandfather’s eyes.

Armistice

On 11 November 1918 at 11.00am the German High Command met the Allies and signed a Treaty of Armistice. Sister Agnes continued to admit the wounded long after the Armistice and the cessation of fighting, with Mr Lockhart-Mummery carrying out two operations on the day the Armistice was signed.

Since first opening in 1899 the number of admissions had risen to a total of over 7000. When the King was given this figure he wrote this letter to Sister Agnes:

Dear ‘Sister Agnes’,

Grateful memories will remain in the hearts of many at home & overseas of ‘King Edward VII’s Hospital for Officers’, of you, its founder, and the noble Medical Staff, whose eminent advice and unerring skill have brought to so many sufferers relief, comfort, & restoration to health.

It is to these Physicians & Surgeons that I, as Patron of the Hospital, desire to express my deep appreciation of & lasting thanks for the valued services & precious time which, during these momentous years, they generously placed at the disposal of the Hospital.

Believe me, dear ‘Sister Agnes’

Sincerely yours,

George RI

In 1914 the hospital had just 16 beds. Today, in comparison, we currently have 56 rooms and treat over 4000 patients a year.
We Owe Them a Duty of Care

Marshal of the Royal Air Force the Lord Stirrup, KG, GCB, AFC, FRAeS, FCMI, is a former senior Royal Air Force commander, Chief of the Defence Staff from 2006 until his retirement in late 2010. He has been on the Advisory Board of King Edward VII’s Hospital since 2016.
“Good evening everybody,

It’s a great pleasure to welcome you all to this milestone in the long and distinguished history of King Edward VII’s Hospital: the formal opening of this Centre for Veterans’ Health.

The men and women of our military are frequently called upon to do difficult and dangerous things on our behalf. They dare much, and accomplish much, but in doing so they also risk much. They are not the only ones who face hazards and incur harm on behalf of their fellow citizens but they are the only ones for whom legal and sometimes lethal force is an integral part of their profession.

When people risk their mental and physical well-being, and sometimes their very lives, to protect this country and its citizens, then we as a society owe them a great deal in return. We owe them not just our gratitude; we owe them not just our respect; we owe them a duty of care. When the guns fall silent, we cannot simply return to “Tommy this, an’ Tommy that”, in the words of Rudyard Kipling. We have a duty to help alleviate the difficulties and sufferings that in all too many cases persist long after conflict has ceased.

The prime responsibility for this duty does of course fall on the government. This duty of government is reflected in part in the Armed Forces Covenant, and in the way that veterans’ medical records are appropriately annotated to alert physicians to their special circumstances.

We must continue to insist that government lives up to its obligations in this regard, but we should not think that by doing so we free ourselves from any further responsibility. Care of its veterans is a key measure of any civilised society. We must engage personally, and charities offer us a practical way of doing so.

King Edward VII’s Hospital was of course founded with this very purpose in mind. It has expanded its activities well beyond those of its early years, but it has never forgotten its original aim.

This is why it continues to offer 20% discounts to veterans, their spouses and partners and why it has devoted so much time, effort and money to the ground-breaking Centre for Veterans’ Health.

The Centre provides a focus for research, as well as a Pain Management Programme that has already treated over 100 veterans, adopting a multi-disciplinary approach, with plans to continue and indeed expand the Programmes. The progress already made is an enormous tribute to the entire team, and I should like personally to express my gratitude and my admiration for their untiring efforts and their notable accomplishments.

The Pain Management Programme received an outstanding report following the recent Care Quality Commission inspection. Now we can try to imagine the difference this Programme makes to individual lives, but only those who suffer pain can truly understand and appreciate the impact of this work. And in that regard, the feedback from the veterans has been hugely positive.

All this, however, is just a start. It’s a sad fact that doing anything costs money. The Centre’s outstanding work relies upon charitable giving, and we need to raise much more money. I know that these are challenging times, that there are many calls for charitable giving. But what call could be more pressing or more compelling than to support those who have themselves given so much? The Centre for Veterans’ Health is an outstanding facility. We would all, I know, wish to express our thanks for that. But let us ensure that those thanks also take more tangible form, and that we, as a society, fully live up to the obligations that we have incurred.”

The above is a transcript of the speech given on June 13 2018 at the Opening Reception of the Centre for Veterans’ Health.
A Career in Pain Management

Claire Fear BSc (Hons) RGN is Lead Nurse at King Edward VII’s Hospital’s Pain and Neuroscience Centre of Excellence. She has specialised in pain management for 17 years, holding senior nursing positions in chronic pain management teams, leading, developing and delivering the nursing element of programmes.

What is your background and what made you specialise in pain management?

I qualified as a general nurse in 1995. My first job was working on a Haematology/Bone Marrow Transplant unit, where I cared for patients undergoing treatment for leukaemia and lymphoma. I saw many patients experience significant episodes of pain. Whilst we did our best using strong painkillers, it always struck me that we had a long way to go in helping patients manage the effects of pain. Suffering from chronic pain has a huge impact on almost every area of a person’s life. It can affect education, employment, relationships, social interactions, mood and quality of life. What I witnessed prompted me to want to learn more about managing long term pain, and this led me to take up a position at the INPUT Pain Unit at St Thomas’ Hospital, London. Thus began my career in pain management.

Can you give a brief overview of your role?

I am the Clinical Nurse Specialist in the interdisciplinary team delivering a Pain Management Programme specifically for veterans. Its aim is to help veterans gain a greater understanding of their pain and the processes behind it and to help them develop strategies to manage it more effectively.
This enables veterans to resume meaningful activities that they may have had to give up, as well as to manage the impact that long-term pain has on mood and psychological well-being. We cannot cure the pain but we can help sufferers feel more confident in their ability to reduce the “bothersomeness” of the pain.

My role is to provide information about the common medications used for chronic pain and thus to help veterans rationalise their pain-related medications or reduce those that are providing minimal benefit but are producing unwanted side-effects. I teach relaxation techniques and discuss sleep management strategies.

I also provide education sessions on pain management for nursing and medical staff across the Hospital. This has included developing a pain triage service for prospective patients contacting the Hospital with enquires related to pain management.

What can you tell us about pain, and what do you see as the key issues around pain that your patients have to deal with?

Pain is a very complex phenomenon and is often poorly understood by both patients and healthcare staff. Understanding acute pain is often easier because there is generally a clearly identifiable cause such as an injury or medical procedure. Patients expect to experience pain in these situations, and there is an expected time-frame in which the pain will go away.

It becomes more difficult to understand when the pain becomes chronic in nature. With chronic pain there may be no identifiable cause; the pain continues far longer than would be expected and often does not respond well to traditional pain killers. In addition, chronic pain is frequently an invisible condition - the person experiencing pain may not have any obvious visible signs that anything is wrong.

Generally one does not expect pain to continue for months or years, and many patients with chronic pain can feel not believed and their pain doubted. For the patients with whom I work this can be one of the most difficult challenges they face. Providing a service for veterans with chronic pain is invaluable in helping them feel accepted, understood and believed.

What do you find most rewarding or challenging about the work you do?

The most rewarding aspect is to be part of a team, both clinical and administrative, that provides a unique service solely for veterans. Veterans face many difficulties, both physical and psychological, and report that they have often felt let down by services not designed with their needs specifically in mind. It is a privilege to work with this patient group, and I am immensely proud of the work that is undertaken at the Centre for Veterans’ Health.

The complex nature of the issues faced by the Veterans makes the work challenging, but all the more rewarding when they report back positively on the gains that they have made as a result of attending the Pain Management Programme.
An Update on our Military Grants

Since 2014, we have helped 401 men and women by providing grants and subsidies in order for them to benefit from an extensive range of surgeries, procedures and investigations with leading consultants. Orthopaedics, ophthalmology, urology and ENT have been among the most called-upon areas of our medical expertise.

The quite extensive range of medical care made possible include hip and knee replacements, spinal surgery, diagnostics (MRI, CT scans), but also programmes of hydrotherapy which ease conditions such as muscle pain and can be beneficial for rehabilitation.

We aim to treat those men and women who have been most seriously injured. Many live daily with the trauma, disability and pain of their injuries. We are proud that our medical expertise can make a real difference to their lives.

“I would like to thank you and your Committee for making it possible for me to have my eye operation at King Edward’s with the superb Mr Jagger.

I am enjoying life now, crossing the street with confidence, and seeing London as never before!

I was a very worried man leading up to the procedure as I only have sight in one eye anyway, but this has surpassed all my expectations.

Thank you, I will never forget your generosity and goodwill towards me.”

Mr T. F.

“It is about a year ago that I realised I had to try and get something done about my crippled state, and thanks entirely to Professor Cobb and the wonderful nursing staff at King Edward VII’s, I am now well on the way to recovery. This would not have been possible without everything you did, as well as the Centre for Veterans’ Health.

Please could you pass this somewhat inadequate letter to everyone you can to express my deepest, heartfelt thanks. After years of degenerating, the treatment and care I received at the KEVII has been life changing.

Thank you very, very much is utterly inadequate, but I really mean it.”

Mrs P.R.
It all started with a snooty snivel serpent on the telephone. . .

“Hang on! I am a British taxpayer. What do you mean, I’m not entitled to NHS care? You tax my State and my Army pension at source. I’ve been paying British taxes for over fifty years,” I demanded of the voice from UK. “What about no taxation without medication?”

“Sorry, you chose to live in Cyprus so your taxes don’t count. As a non-resident you’re no longer entitled to the NHS.”

I was speechless. The voice had just condemned me to a lot more pain from two clapped-out knees or a whopping bill to a private Ankara clinic. To add insult to injury, my knees had been worn out in the service of the Crown; as a regular soldier I had averaged about one and half miles a day of hard exercise for over 31 years.

My wife and I reviewed our assets. Going private seemed the only option. I brooded on the problem while listening to bone grinding on bone as my cartilage-less knees hurt their way downstairs every morning. My wife spelled it out. “If you go on like this, John, you’ll end up in a wheelchair.”

A friend suggested an answer; “Why don’t you talk to the King Edward VII’s Hospital? They have a charitable fund for people just like you.”

He was right. To my astonishment my application for a grant from the Military Grants Fund was swiftly approved and a few months later I found myself with the top orthopaedic surgeon. His no-nonsense manner weighed his patient up swiftly: “I’ll do both knees together. Save you an expensive return trip.”

Within weeks I was back in London, coming groggily out of an anaesthetic and with two partial new knees. The quality of King Edward VII’s Hospital’s treatment was a revelation. The nurse explained: “We treat everyone here as royalty, Colonel.”

The full-time aftercare was superlative. Within hours of waking up Professor Cobb was checking that my new knees worked and bending them (rather forcefully) just to make sure. Within 24 hours I was taking my first tentative steps under the eagle eye of a diplomatic but equally forceful Italian Physio-Terrorist called Davide.

King Edward VII’s Hospital was an education in how to look after a patient. The staff would have fitted into the UN in New York, coming from so many countries; yet all of them were friendly, dedicated, hard-working, kind and thoughtful, from the cheerful cleaners to the sharp-witted assistant surgeon.

When I walked out of the Hospital after five days with two half-healed knees, crutches for confidence, a happy wife on my arm and the sure and certain knowledge that I had been looked after like royalty, I realised that King Edward’s had revolutionised my quality of life. Now, after a year I am free from pain and it’s all thanks to the KEVII, its surgeon and its dedicated team.

I owe it all to a superb hospital and a compassionate and generous charity. Thank you.”

John Hughes-Wilson, 
Turkish North Cyprus, 20 September 2018
On 27 September 2018, over 250 guests gathered in the Great Hall of the Royal Hospital Chelsea for our Annual Reception.

November marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Given our deep rooted military heritage it seemed fitting to hold this year’s Annual Reception at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, and we were delighted to welcome so many Chelsea Pensioners who kept our guests entertained!

The evening was dedicated to the ‘Past, Present & Future’ of the Hospital and our 260 guests were able to discover more about our history through a specially curated exhibition of photos, artefacts and records taken from the Hospital’s archives. Particularly poignant was the case record of a young officer wounded in Amiens on the 27th September 1918 – a hundred years ago to the day of our Reception.

Our Chairman, Robin Broadhurst, introduced our guest speaker and Trustee, Lieutenant General (Retd.) Sir William Rollo KCB CBE, who spoke eloquently about King Edward VII’s Hospital during the First World War, and our continued support of veterans today through our Centre for Veterans’ Health.

After the speeches, guests were treated to a heart-warming performance from the North London Military Wives Choir, who sang perennial favourites and songs from their new album, Remember, which commemorates the centenary of the end of the First World War.

In true military style our guests were treated to a rousing ‘Beating Retreat’ from the Pipes and Drums of the Royal Dragoon Guards – a fitting finale to a very successful event.
Our Thanks

The evening witnessed the official launch of our Autumn Appeal, focusing on raising funds in order to help even more veterans receive grants for the medical care they desperately need.

We aim to raise £260,000 each year enabling us to conduct more complex surgical procedures. We are delighted to announce that through your generous donations we have raised so far over £90,000. Thank you!

The evening would not be possible without the support of our event partners, who worked tirelessly to make the event such a success. Thank you to all those involved in the organisation of the evening.

With special thanks to...

Royal Hospital Chelsea

Pipes & Drums of The Royal Dragoon Guards
With special thanks to Nicholas and Susie Freeman

The Military Wives Choir

Video by Big Yellow Feet - with special thanks to Gail Holland

Exhibition and brochure design by Claire Lythgoe; Event production by Wise Productions; Event catering and staffing by Blue Strawberry; Champagne supplied by Berry Bros. & Rudd; Exhibition and event photography by Gary Morrisroe.
Christmas Cards

This year we are offering two designs ‘Bronzino, Adoration of the Shepherds’ and ‘Ride in the Snow’ at a cost of £5 per pack of 10, plus postage.

The greeting inside the cards reads “With Best wishes for Christmas and a Happy New Year”

If you would like to purchase Christmas cards, please see the order form in the insert attached. Alternatively you may contact the Fundraising Department on 020 7467 3923 or by emailing fundraising@kingedwardvii.co.uk.

All proceeds from the sale of these cards will aid the charitable work of King Edward VII’s Hospital.
Save the date

We are pleased to confirm the following event this year.

We would be delighted to see you, your family and your friends there.

Carols, Readings and Music for Christmas

10 December 2018, 6.30pm
St Marylebone Parish Church, 17 Marylebone Road, NW1 5LT

Join us, and our special guests, for a festive evening of music and readings, followed by home-made mince pies and mulled wine.

Free entry, donations welcome on the evening

To reserve your place please email events@kingedwardvii.co.uk or call 020 7467 3923.

In support of our Autumn Appeal 2018
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*Founded by Sister Agnes*

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Registered charity number 208944