

Summer 2021



KING EDWARD VII's  
HOSPITAL



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# Friends newsletter

# Introduction from the Chief Executive

Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the summer edition of our Friends annual newsletter. I am delighted to be able to update you on some significant progress being made across the Hospital.

Our Centre for Veterans' Health is now in its fifth year and is going from strength to strength. The award-winning Pain Management Programme (PMP), now held virtually, saw 60 participants throughout the pandemic, with a further 88 assessed for future programmes. We are proud to continue serving the military community with the PMP, military grants and discounts available to those who have served.

We look forward to opening our fourth theatre in August and the work on Kantor Medical Centre, our new outpatient and diagnostic facility, is due for completion in the autumn. These new developments will enable us to continue to develop our centres of surgical and clinical excellence in women's health, musculoskeletal health, urology and digestive health, and I encourage you to get in touch if you would like to attend an exclusive tour once the work is complete.

Finally, I thought you might like to know that we continue to support the NHS and to date, we have operated on 1,052 NHS patients, something we are very proud of.

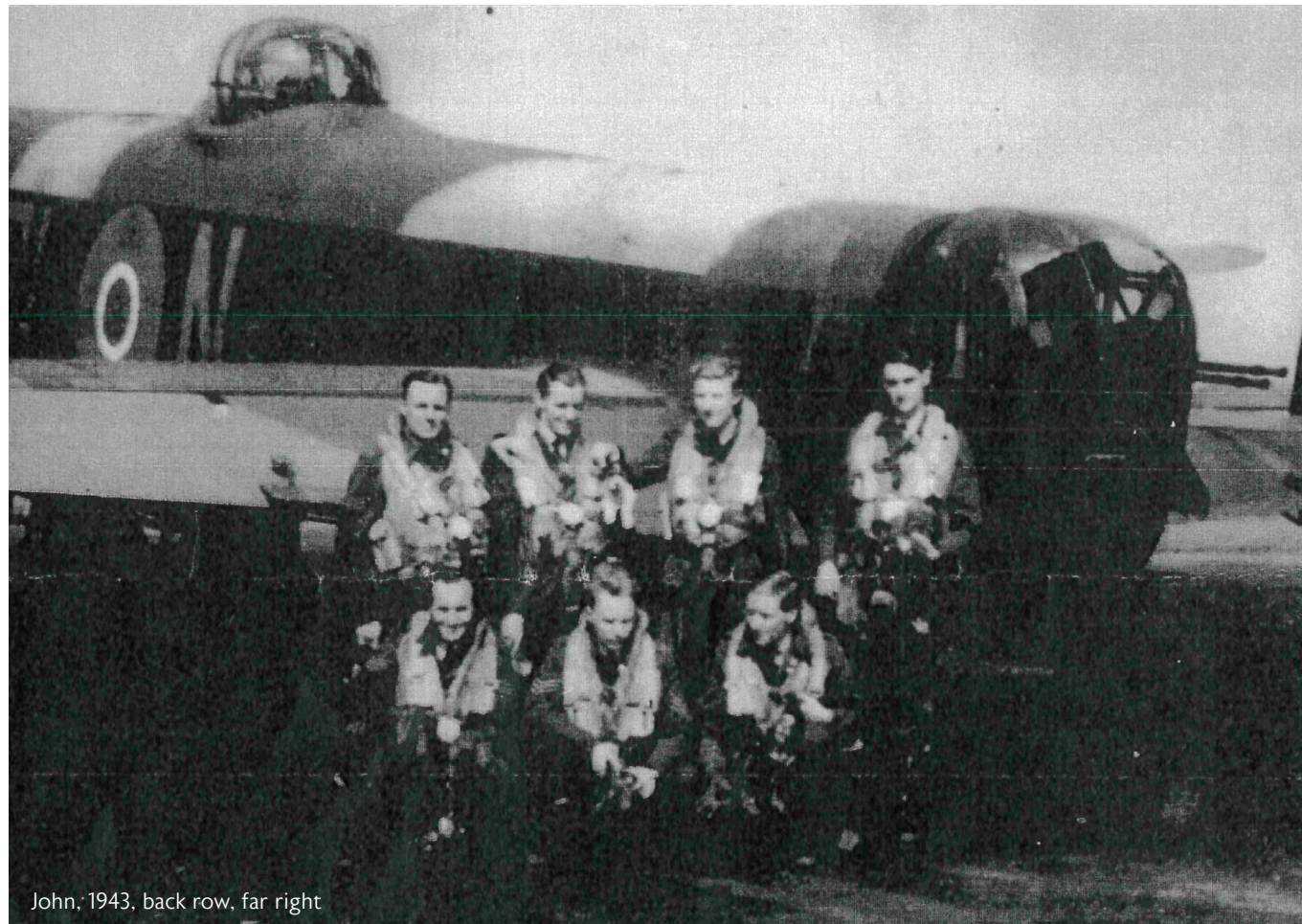
Thank you once again for your continued support and I wish you and your loved ones a lovely summer.



Lindsey Condron  
Chief Executive



# A very important pilot



John, 1943, back row, far right

Acting Squadron Leader, John, is one of the few surviving Second World War Lancaster bomber pilots. John recently visited King Edward VII's Hospital to have a cataract operation and we were honoured to have the opportunity to hear his remarkable career...

“On leaving school, I volunteered to join the RAF hoping to become a pilot. I had been too young for call up, so joined the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) as a warden. At 16 and three quarters, I was in uniform making concrete blocks until I was 17 and could then officially enlist.

It would've been 1941 at this point and I travelled to Perth for my assessment. I passed with flying colours and from Perth I found myself on a ship called SS Pasteur over to the States.

From New York, I went over to Canada where potential air crew dispersed to the various training stations. 250 out of the 700 went down to Pensacola in Florida to be trained by the American Navy. It was January 1944 when I finished my training on a Catalina flying boat. The Catalina is a flying boat so when it's afloat it's essentially a ship and has to comply with all nautical rules. My extensive flying training comprised of seamanship, all aerial aerobatic manoeuvres, Morse code, radio beam and astro navigation. Having successfully passed all tests, I was awarded the Naval Wings United States Navy and RAF wings three days later.

From Pensacola, I was posted to Prince Edward Island for a general reconnaissance course, where images of friend and foe, aircraft and ship were committed to memory. Our great HMS Hood was sunk by a shell fired from the German battleship, Bismarck, 20 miles away! Both the Bismarck and Tirpitz were chased and finally sunk by our Navy.

On returning to the UK, I expected to go to coastal command flying the Short Sunderland on missions looking for U-boats and dropping lifeboats for those who had been torpedoed. I was told because I had long legs, I'd be going to bomber command, this being so, I was then trained to fly the Anson and Oxford planes before moving onto the Wellington medium bomber. Interestingly; they were made of lattice work called geodetic construction and covered with hessian, the only metal work was the under carriage and engines, thus reducing radar detection. The Wellington was not a fast aircraft, had a limited range and bomb capacity and therefore phased out in favour of the Lancaster heavy bomber. I piloted the Lancaster with its crew of 7 for about a year, when the European War ended on Victory over Europe (VE Day).

Prior to being posted to the far-east, I was trained to tow and snatch croup carrying gliders off the ground with the Dakota plane of Transport Command. My 18 months in Burma was subjected to the heat of the monsoon, mosquitos, dysentery and prickly heat. After Victory over Japan (VJ Day), I was glad to return to a life in Civvy Street. I have not piloted a plane since, apart from a modern aircraft in a simulator. In the years since 1946, I've been a farmer and done veterinary work.

My daughter was invited as a VIP nurse to watch an air display in Torquay and asked if I would be her guest. I was sitting in the tent being treated as a VIP, when one chap came over to me (I presume because I was wearing my wings of the Naval Aviators of the United States). It later turned out to be Red 10, the Leader of the Red Arrows. We chatted for a good 15 minutes when there was a tap on my shoulder by one of the sponsors, she said, 'Excuse me Mr Kent, but there is a queue of people who would like to talk to you'. The red arrows commentator, who was in charge of the display, gave way to these other people including the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, the Vice Admiral of the Fleet Retired, a BBC interviewer and it went on from there.

I then became a bit of a local celebrity I suppose; as I was in the eye of the general public. Word went round and The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF), who carry out the displays over Buckingham Palace with the Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane, somehow invited me to their end of season meetings. I was given a bit of a priority and have wonderful books. I've got wonderful books signed by 180 guests at that time and had a memorable evening. Now I've become an honorary member of the BBMF and an RAF VIP. Then my eye sight failed and I was recommended King Edward VII's Hospital.

Association with the RAF ended just after the war and has started up again recently. I've been honoured, privileged and overwhelmed. I think overwhelmed is probably the word I'll leave you with. It brings tears to my eyes because I can't believe it myself, becoming something of a celebrity in RAF circles is truly amazing.”



# Centre for Veterans' Health

## An update on our Pain Management Programme

The pain management team were quick out of the blocks to find ways in continuing to offer a veteran specific Pain Management Programme (PMP) since lockdown in March 2020. The team have now completed thirteen assessment days and delivered eight complete PMPs, with the first of 2021 now complete. Many of the veterans attending have reported that they would not otherwise have attended if the programmes were offered face to face, as they would not have been able to manage the commute to and stay in London.

The PMP team ran several assessment days via Zoom, 88 veterans were offered assessments to be considered treatment on the virtual PMPs 23-30. 60 veterans' have subsequently attended these programmes.

The content delivered on the virtual programme was the same as with the residential programmes with additional one to one time offered by the clinical team. The programme addresses the impact veterans' face while living with chronic pain. The overall aims being to provide practical strategies for the veterans' to utilise in order to reduce the negative impact caused by the pain. Veterans reported that the areas in their life most affected by their pain included a negative impact on their mood, day to day activities, uncertainty regarding medication use, family and relationships, work and planning for the future.

We are pleased to say that the virtual PMP compares favourably with the face-to-face programmes, and statistically positive changes were observed.

There was a 99% attendance rate and 100% of the veterans on the PMP agreed that it had been a helpful experience and 100% of veterans would recommend the virtual PMP to another veteran.

With greater understanding of pain related medications and the development of additional pain management strategies from the programme, veterans, if they choose to, are able to review their medication use alongside support from the GP.



### Coronavirus

The pandemic has resulted in increased anxiety and distress for some of the veterans', which in turn can negatively impact on their pain. The ability of the clinical team to deliver virtual PMPs during this time has meant that veterans have not lost vital support and pain management treatment during the pandemic.

### Some feedback from veterans who have completed the programme

***"I would recommend this to anyone who has long term pain. I never thought that I could find a non-invasive option to help me with my pain and its management until now."***

***"The programme has been hugely beneficial in helping me to understand my long term pain and identify potential triggers as well as providing positive coping mechanisms."***

***"In hindsight the PMP made me realise how low I had become. The ability to understand and specify where the pain locations are is hugely beneficial. I feel much more confident about my ability to succeed again."***

***"I feel much more confident now and able to do more, but to pace myself. I also feel more confident that my pain is not being caused my further injury, which has relieved my anxiety in relation to my pain."***

***"I have found the support and communication towards individual support networks (i.e. GPs and professional medical services, family and friends) absolutely fantastic. Also the knowledge that further support is available if required."***

***"Zoom was wonderful for me, I would not have been able to cope with face to face and travelling."***

*From left to right: The emblems of the Royal Air Force, Merchant Navy, Royal Navy and the Army in stained glass in the Reception of the main Hospital demonstrating our commitment to those who have served*



# Testimonial from one of our veterans

One of our patients from the Pain Management Programme, was scrolling through social media when something caught her eye.

After 21 years of uniformed service in Northern Ireland I was broken both in mind and body. I had been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress syndrome (CPTSS) and endured daily chronic pain. I had withdrawn from my friends and dreaded being invited to social events, except to my own pity party.

Then, late one evening I was drawn to read a friend's post on social media and I felt that it was addressed to me personally. It was about an award winning Pain Management Programme specifically for veterans. I clicked on the link, read it carefully and immediately applied for a place.

A few weeks later and there I was on a flight to London, alone, off to join a group of strangers. I was totally out of my comfort zone. However this was, without a shadow of doubt, the best decision I have ever made.

I immediately felt that I was in very safe hands of the highly skilled team of clinicians at King Edward VII's Hospital. Their care and compassion is utterly outstanding and they listen! Sadly there is no magic cure for my condition.

I chose not to use pain relief drugs due to their unwanted side effects plus the fact that they only provide temporary relief from pain and can actually slow natural healing. Dr. Jannie Van Der Merwe, Clinical Psychologist extraordinaire, helped us to understand the link between our "monkey brain" and chronic pain and more importantly how to break that link. The team taught us evidence based techniques, for example, how to use mindfulness, body scanning and gentle stretching exercise to take ownership of our pain and therefore improve our mood.

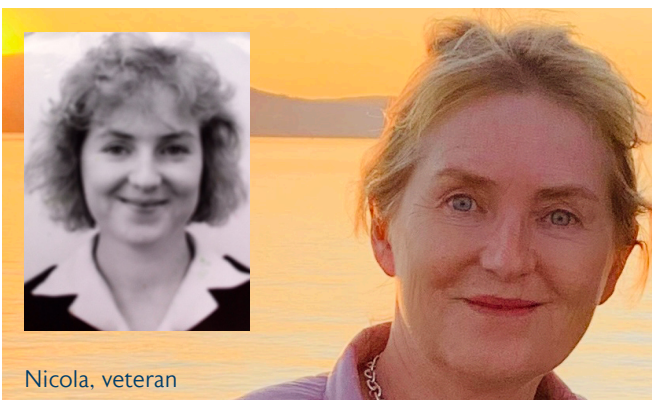
As for the strangers... veterans just instinctively 'get' each other and we quickly became a group of supportive friends.

Completing the King Edward VII's Pain Management Programme gave me the key to unlock the manacles of pain and CPTSS that had been holding me back for years. Since then I have been able to return to work on a part time basis. It has also led me onto furthering my education and I have completed a course on Conflict Archaeology with Utrecht University and I am undertaking two further courses this year. I have also gained a place on a dig at Waterloo Battlefield, sadly postponed until next year due to the pandemic. I have so much living to catch up on.

Thank you to everyone involved in this wonderful programme, including Caroline Dunne who does such a sterling job in coordinating the programme. However a special vote of thanks goes to the sponsors and benefactors. Without your help none of this could happen. Your generosity is making a huge, positive impact to the lives of wounded veterans of Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

Thank you,

Nicola



Nicola, veteran



## A special thank you

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our Friends and supporters who decide to donate a gift or include a gift to King Edward VII's Hospital in their will.

Individuals give to us because they value the way we look after them, or their relatives and friends. We put people before profit and foster a culture of kindness. We go the extra mile for our patients.

Your gift will ensure we can continue to flourish in the future. Due to our loyal supporters in 2020 we have been able to progress our facilities to accommodate the Kantor Medical Building, a department specialising in Women's Health and state of the art imaging equipment. We strive on excellence; it's in our blood and a key value taken from our Founder, Sister Agnes.

The family of the late **David Thompson** of **The Thompson Family Trust** who very generously gave £12m towards the hospital redevelopment

The late **Maira Jordeson** who kindly donated in excess of £600,000 as part of her legacy

The late **Yvonne Cannell** who kindly donated in excess of £500,000 as part of her legacy



# Our treatment starts at ‘hello...’

An interview with Rob Ferguson, Head of Therapies.

Rob joined the organisation in 2019 bringing with him a wealth of experience due to both his military and medical background. Rob believes in a strong physical and holistic approach to the wide variety of rehabilitation programmes he and his team offers.



Rob Ferguson, Head of Therapies

## Tell us a little bit about your role at King Edward VII's Hospital?

I am responsible for the physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics and speech and language therapy which comes under the Allied Health Professions (AHP) within the hospital. In addition to that, my team oversee women's health – including the Breast Rehabilitation post-surgery care.

## What makes the Therapy team and the Hospital so special?

***“All patients’ treatment starts with a hello, from the moment you enter the Hospital to the moment we say goodbye.”***

We offer a bespoke care journey; no two cases are ever the same. Patients can be seen twice a day, before and after surgery whilst they are either an inpatient or outpatient, depending on their requirements. They will also be seen by the same therapist throughout their time with us. We thrive on trust and expertise and feel having a familiar face puts everyone at ease and makes the journey more pleasant. Our team of twenty are honoured that patients open up their concerns and share their successes with us and therefore I feel it's really important to sustain that relationship whilst they're going through, in some cases, a life altering experience.

## Do you feel your military background contributes to your role?

I joined the Army at 17, initially looking at Physiotherapy; however after watching, perhaps too many re-runs of Sands of Iwo Jima, I didn't hesitate to join the Infantry. I was in Ireland for a 6 month tour however after specialising. I served in Ireland for a further two and a half years. Following this, I moved to Cyprus just prior to the start of the first Gulf conflict. Upon returning, I left, which later I learnt was a mistake as I struggled with 'civvy' street. I re-enlisted to the Marines, however unfortunately was soon medically discharged due to a diagnosis of bilateral compartment syndrome.

Having gone through rehab, it turned the light back on in terms of pursuing physiotherapy and being able to pass on my learnings to others. I've always lived by an ethos, 'If you're going to fall over, it doesn't matter that you've fallen, it's how you style it out when you pick yourself up'. I feel passionate about reiterating that to patients, it doesn't matter how long it takes or if a route we explore isn't right, let's learn from that and find the right therapy and journey for you. We never give up and do all we can to support, we're there every step of the way and help patients 'style it out' when they pick themselves up.

## How does your programme contribute to patient recovery?

***“As for my colleagues across all departments; we stop, chat and support each other; we want each other to succeed which fundamentally means our patients do too.”***

We are given a clinical presentation that allows us to create rehabilitation options for the patient. We will assess what we think is the most effective form of recovery directly for that case. I'm immensely proud of my team as together we have a great wealth of experience with such a wide variety of rehabilitation specialties.

We also try to integrate a holistic approach, for example here is no such thing as failure (another Forces lesson), only outcomes.

Sometimes the outcome isn't what you expected but it gives us a learning opportunity as to what doesn't work and for us to try something else. Combine that ethos with our specialities, we will always find and explore a new strategy. It may take longer than anticipated, but there is no time stamp on our programmes, we are there for the patient as long as they need us. We are proud to be by their side on their journey.

## What do you like about working here?

There have only been two jobs in my life where I've got up in the morning and loved getting out of bed for: the Forces being the first and Physiotherapy at the Hospital the second. I feel privileged that I am part of a family and community that truly reflects values that I believe in. As for my colleagues across all departments; we stop, chat and support each other; we want each other to succeed which fundamentally means our patients do too. We have remained with our founder's beliefs from over 120 years ago. I think our ethos today is a rarity, for us it's our community.

## Lastly, what do you like to do outside of work?

I am a very keen hiker! I've been fortunate enough to have climbed and hiked all over the world and feel the fresh air contributes greatly to anyone's worries or concern no matter the size!





# A peek into our archives

We are delighted to feature a new article for this and many more newsletters to come, as we delve into our archives. We are fortunate enough to have such committed supporters who entrust and donate such special artefacts. We have over 315 items, dating from 1895 to 2015 with beautiful paintings, military artefacts, medals and much more.

Here are our two picks for the season.



## Sister Agnes' Medals

A gold coloured metal, diamond and red enamel Brooch, shaped as an E with central VII, surmounted by a crown.

Her gold and red enamel Cross, possibly from the Order of Mercy, engraved in red verso To Sister Agnes, South African War 1899 – 1900, from R.C.W., on a fine gold link chain;

Her gilt metal and red enamel Cross engraved Faith, Hope, Charity, 1883, with pink and grey ribbon;

Her white enamel and silvered metal Star Medal, the pointed stars interspersed with lions rampant, with black ribbon;

Lastly, a silver-coloured metal Medallion with the Heads of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra.







## Save the date

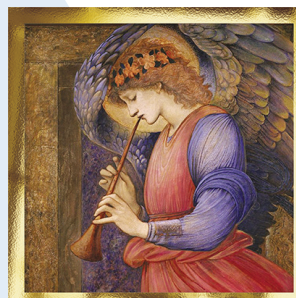
Support our Veterans at Christmas – an evening of carols, readings and music

**St Paul's Parish Church Knightsbridge,  
Friday 10th December 2021 at 6.30pm**

The beautiful St Paul's Parish Church will play host to our quintessentially Christmas evening filled with readings by a few well-known names, carols and music. Guests can also look forward to mulled wine and home-made mince pies.

## Christmas Cards

Our ever-popular traditional Christmas Cards will once again be available for purchase, with proceeds going towards our veterans work. To reserve packs of 10 for £5.00, please contact **Olivia Simson** at [OSimson@Kingedwardvii.co.uk](mailto:OSimson@Kingedwardvii.co.uk).



Angel playing Flageolet



Winter Ride

## Ways to give

There are many ways to support King Edward VII's Hospital and we'd love to hear from you.

### Celebration Giving

Whether you are celebrating an anniversary, a wedding or a big birthday, asking your friends and family to give donations to King Edward VII's Hospital instead of gifts, can make your day that little bit more special.

### Gift in Will

Gifts in Will, however big or small, help us plan ahead to continue supporting our veteran community.

### Fundraise for us

We have always enjoyed hosting supporters at our events, why not host a Dinner on our behalf, or compete in a challenge event. The avenues are plentiful and results are always gratifying.

### Letting us know

If you are thinking of supporting us in any of the ways above or via a different method, we'd love to hear from you so we can support you in any way we can.

## Please get in touch

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