

the GIST

News from Guy's and St Thomas' Issue 46 | 2025

A man and a woman are exercising outdoors. The man, on the left, is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and is holding two green dumbbells, performing a bicep curl. The woman, on the right, is wearing a white polo shirt and black pants, and is holding two pink dumbbells, also performing a bicep curl. They are both smiling at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building.

Fit for life

Supporting patients
through our healthy
weight programme

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Welcome

One of our top priorities at Guy's and St Thomas' is to ensure all our staff and patients feel included and supported. I am therefore delighted that we have recently launched our new Progress Pride Badges across the Trust. These badges are available for staff to show their commitment to providing a safe, open and non-judgemental space for patients to talk about issues of sexuality and gender identity. You can read more about our new badges on page 5.

Our magazine cover star is 56-year-old Lanceford Brown, one of our recent success stories from a free weight loss and exercise programme being run by the Trust. You can find out more about Lanceford's new healthier lifestyle and the impact of our community weight loss initiatives on pages 14-15.

Technology and innovation are also in sharp focus this edition. On pages 8-9, we discover how a new robot at Evelina London is revolutionising complex surgery for our young patients. Meanwhile, our specialist NHS drones are taking to the skies to deliver urgent blood supplies between Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals. Find out more on page 16.

Did you know that Harefield Hospital had its origins during World War I, receiving injured soldiers from Australia and New Zealand? You can learn how Harefield was transformed from a quiet country estate into a bustling hospital in our History Corner on page 21.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the GiST.

Ian Abbs

Professor Ian Abbs, Chief Executive Officer (He/Him)
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Meet the team

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Front cover: Healthy weight programme participant Lanceford Brown with physiotherapist Emmie Peck.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

If you have any comments about the magazine or suggestions for future articles, please contact

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First patients benefit from new PET scanner

A new total-body scanner that is quicker for patients and produces higher quality images has been launched at St Thomas' Hospital.

The new Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanner is up to 5 times more sensitive for studying single organs and up to 4 times faster than standard PET-CT scanners. This means it can provide quicker diagnoses and a more detailed view of the patient's whole body. It is co-managed by King's College London and Imperial College London at St Thomas' Hospital.

Sarah Corfield, 48, was the first person to use the new scanner at St Thomas' Hospital. Sarah has stage 4 melanoma and has been a patient at Guy's and St Thomas' since 2018. She has received regular PET scans as part of the diagnosis and



Sarah was the first patient to use the new scanner

treatment for her cancer.

Sarah, from Eltham in south east London, said: "The new scanner was good. It was much quicker – I was done in 15 minutes, and they told me the images were much higher quality. It was very smooth. I just lay there, like on a sun lounger, thinking of my little dog Maggie."

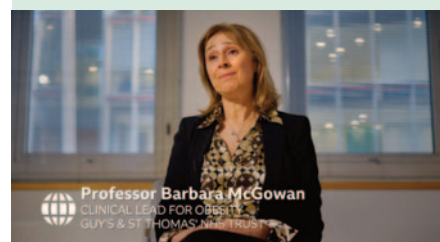
Data from the new PET scanner will also be used by researchers to gather insights into human biology. This will potentially improve understanding about illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease, helping to support the development of new medicines.

IN THE NEWS

A round-up of media coverage featuring Guy's and St Thomas'.

BBC Panorama

BBC Panorama interviewed 4 patients who have started taking Wegovy and Mounjaro as part of their weight loss journey. One patient, Ray Lambert, talked about how the treatment has helped him to reduce his weight, enabling him to undergo surgery. Guy's and St Thomas' consultants, Professor Barbara McGowan and Dr Piya Sen Gupta, were also interviewed in the programme.



The Independent

The Independent wrote about a new trial led by Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College Hospital to help young people in Lambeth and Southwark with their diabetes care. Dr Dulmini Kariyawasam, clinical lead for diabetes at Guy's and St Thomas', explained the importance of providing diabetes services that are tailored to the needs of young patients.

BBC

A reporter for BBC News captured the inspiring moment when teenager, Hamish Wilson, walked on his new prosthetic legs for the first time. Hamish is a patient at St Thomas' Amputee Rehabilitation Unit where he is recovering from a quadruple amputation, which he received after contracting sepsis. Hamish spoke about how he was looking forward to being able to return to university and start exercising again with his new blades.

Transplant patient creates comic book

Kidney transplant patient Naia Clarke and her dad, Adrian, have created a comic book dedicated to Evelina London Children's Charity.

Naia, now 12, was diagnosed with nephrotic syndrome in 2022. This is a condition that causes the kidneys to leak large amounts of protein into the urine. She was going into end-stage kidney failure and her only treatment option was a transplant.

She then received the best possible gift, one of her dad's kidneys, at Evelina London in November 2023.

Inspired by her care, Naia and Adrian have created an all-ages comic dedicated to the hospital's charity. This comic is part of a wider series called 'Shift', and features stories about detectives in a robot city. Naia also authored a piece about her care at Evelina London, and how the incredible team helped her.

Naia said: "The last 2 years have been incredibly difficult in so many ways, but



Naia with her dad, Adrian, and her sister, Elenie, at the British Transplant Games

Evelina London has supported me through every step of my diagnosis. They helped me understand more about my disease and how to help myself physically and mentally to be as resilient as possible when facing hard times."

The comic is available on the Shift website: <https://theshift.store/products/shift-it-retail>



Mica Weekes, with members of the Harefield clinical team and her family

Transplant survivor celebrates 30th 'heart birthday'

Mica Weekes underwent a life-saving heart transplant at 11 months old in 1994 at Harefield Hospital. Despite a predicted life expectancy of 5 years post-surgery, Mica recently celebrated her 30th 'heart birthday'.

She is sharing her story to inspire hope in others waiting for organ transplants and encourage people to register as organ donors. Mica said: "If seeing my story gives hope to someone or inspires someone to register as a donor, I am glad to share it."

Mica's dad Stuart credits their doctors, Dr Rosemary Radley-Smith and Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub, for supporting the family through this difficult period.

Growing up, Mica never let her condition hold her back, participating in events like the British Transplant Games and winning medals for long jump and sprinting. Dad Stuart said: "On the whole, she's lived a normal life. She has no limitations."

Harefield staff threw a party for Mica to celebrate her heart birthday. Expressing her gratitude towards the teams who have cared for her throughout her life, she said: "I can see how much the staff care for patients – everyone from the receptionist to my clinicians. I appreciate them so much."



Guy's Cancer Centre's balconies and outdoor spaces have been brightened by colourful new flower boxes. The cancer team approached local garden centres for help, and a host of vibrant blooms were donated by Lavender Green Flowers, who recently provided plants for the Royal Family.

Your voice

We love to hear from our patients, staff and supporters so join the conversation by following us on Facebook, X (previously known as Twitter), LinkedIn and YouTube.

@sjmozzawife (from X)

@GSTTnhs A big thank you to the urgent treatment staff who looked after me yesterday. Less than 3 hours from walking in sobbing in agony to hobbling out on crutches. Thank you so much ❤️

Tess (from Facebook)

Been a long day, but at Guy's Hospital they were amazing. Really gentle and understanding about my fear of the dentist.

Amanda (from Facebook)

GSTT Sickle Cell Service providers are the best 🙌👍👏 I would not change my care from there for anything. Thank you to the admin team for your support today.



@addyfilms (from X)

Have nothing but positive things to say about my experience @GSTTnhs for a mini semi-elective op. So weird being on the other side of fence. Shout out to team ENT, anaesthetics, recovery & day ward nurses at Nuffield House Theatres.



facebook.com/gsttnhs



X/Twitter @GSTTnhs
@RBandH @EvelinaLondon



YouTube
youtube.com/gsttnhs



New Progress Pride Badges launched

Guy's and St Thomas' has introduced Progress Pride Badges for staff wanting to show their commitment to LGBT+ inclusive healthcare.

The badge communicates that the wearer provides a safe, open and non-judgemental space for patients to talk about issues of sexuality and gender identity.

The Progress Pride Badge builds on the NHS Rainbow Badge project that began at Evelina London in 2019. The new design has been updated from the rainbow flag to the Progress Pride flag, reflecting the many identities within the LGBT+ community.

LGBT+ people can often feel reluctant to share information about their sexual orientation or gender identity in healthcare

settings. They might be worried about being treated unfairly or that their health needs won't be understood.

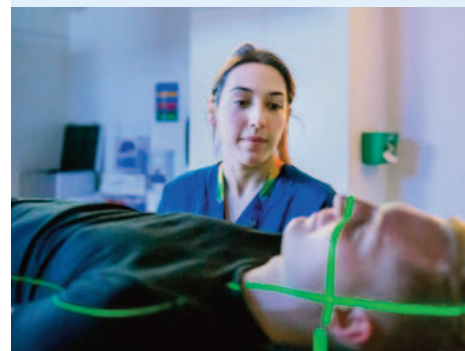
When our staff sign up for a badge, they are provided with a range of resources to help them understand these challenges. They are also given guidance on how to support someone if they share details about their sexuality or gender identity.

The new badges are part of our commitment to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect. They are a reminder that people in our care can be open about who they are. Our staff will listen, respect confidentiality, and offer a safe and supportive space.

The new badge design and initial rollout was generously funded by Guy's & St Thomas' Charity.



Transforming brain cancer treatment



HyperArc radiotherapy targets cancer tumours with increased precision

March was Brain Cancer Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the challenges faced by those living with brain cancer and the incredible strides being made in available treatments.

Guy's Cancer is proud to offer patients world-class technology and care. One such innovation is HyperArc, an advanced radiotherapy treatment for brain tumours which is transforming cancer care and improving quality of life for patients. This has been funded through the generous support of Guy's Cancer Charity.

HyperArc provides more targeted cancer treatment, focusing only on the tumour while sparing healthy tissue. This can reduce the side effects which are common with traditional whole-brain radiation, such as tiredness and memory loss.

HyperArc can also shorten treatment times from two weeks to one week, reducing disruption to patients' lives and speeding up their recovery.

Dr Kazumi Chai, consultant oncologist at Guy's Cancer, said: "HyperArc allows us to deliver faster, more effective treatment with fewer side effects, improving the patient experience."

Respectful awareness for end of life care



Kat Hall and Gemma O'Driscoll with one of the new SWAN boxes

Guy's and St Thomas' has launched a new Respectful Awareness initiative to improve the experience of patients and their families who are receiving end of life care in hospital.

As part of the initiative, staff will offer

families the option of placing a SWAN symbol near the bedside of patients who are in their final days. This symbol will indicate the importance of this time, guiding hospital staff to be mindful of creating a peaceful and quiet environment.

Hospital wards will also be provided with a SWAN box containing items designed to make end of life care in hospital as comfortable as possible. This may include fans, night lights and family care packs. It may also include memory making items, such as hand printing kits and knitted hearts.

Gemma O'Driscoll and Kat Hall, the palliative care nurses leading the initiative, said: "This has been welcomed by staff, patients and families and it has been incredibly impactful to add meaning to such a difficult time. It also shows how we continue to care for patients as individuals right until the end of their lives and beyond."

Lesley Walker looks at new technology helping patients who need life-saving procedures on their aorta.

Personalising patient care



Benito Cruz was the first patient in the UK to receive a new treatment for a complex aortic aneurysm, which is a bulge in the aorta wall



The vascular team at Guy's and St Thomas' have pioneered two new procedures

Pioneering technology has enabled specialist teams at Guy's and St Thomas' to be the first in the UK to do 2 new procedures on patients' blood vessels.

These procedures used innovative techniques and equipment for patients who had serious issues with their aorta. The aorta is the largest artery which carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body.

In November 2024, Bernard Thompson from Ascot in Berkshire, was diagnosed with a life-threatening tear in his aortic arch, known as an aortic dissection. A tear in this part of the aorta has previously been very difficult to treat, and Bernard was not well enough to have open surgery.

His team therefore decided to carry out a new type of keyhole surgery to repair his aortic arch. This procedure is less invasive

and allowed surgeons to carry out his operation without open surgery.

During the procedure, a small catheter was inserted through the artery in Bernard's groin, and was moved up into the aortic arch by his heart.

There was a stent graft inside the catheter, which was carefully

guided into place at the site of the tear. It expanded inside the aorta to reinforce the aortic wall and allow blood to flow.

Now, several months after the surgery, Bernard is doing well. He said: "I'm on my way to a good recovery – I feel great. This is a good opportunity for me, and people like me who can't have open surgery."

Said Abisi, the surgeon at Guy's and St Thomas' who led Bernard's procedure, said: "This innovative approach has the potential to reduce both the scale and invasiveness of procedures for high-risk patients like Bernard."

Just 2 months later, the vascular team used a new type of bridging stent and stent graft to treat a patient with a bulge

in the aorta wall, known as a complex aortic aneurysm. This system has a simplified design that helps improve blood flow to the kidney and bowel arteries. Using this new technology helps save time during the surgical procedure and reduces risks to the patient.

Benito Cruz, a retired shipyard worker originally from Gibraltar and now living in Bermondsey, was the first person in the UK to have this procedure using the new equipment.

He said: "The operation went well and it was a success. When they told me I would be the first person in the UK to have this procedure done, I was surprised but it was so worth it. I am very happy with the outcome.

"My recovery is going to plan. I am now walking again which I enjoy but it was hard for me to do before my operation. I would like to thank the team for their care and expertise."

Prakash Saha, a surgeon who was part of the team for both procedures, said: "These mark a significant milestone in the evolution of aortic care and highlight our commitment to pioneering, personalised treatment options for every patient."

"I'm on my way to a good recovery – I feel great. This is a good opportunity for me, and people like me who can't have open surgery."

Caroline Watson

learns how our Hospital at Home service is transforming the lives of young patients.

There's no place like home



Teenage patient Guilherme is enjoying more time with his family, thanks to the children's Hospital at Home service

A children's 'Hospital at Home' service run by Evelina London is changing lives by dramatically reducing the time young patients need to spend in hospital.

The service, available in Lambeth and Southwark, aims to provide a range of medical care for children and teenagers in their own homes.

In many cases, this has helped avoid a hospital admission altogether or has allowed a child to leave hospital sooner.

One young patient who has welcomed the chance to spend more time at home with his family is 14-year-old Guilherme Niero Mansi from Southwark.

Guilherme, usually known as Gui, was born with a complex range of medical conditions affecting his spine and brain. This meant that when he was a younger child, he spent long stints in hospital at Evelina London. However, since signing up to the Hospital at Home service in 2018, his mum, Debora, says they have significantly reduced the time Gui spends in hospital.

She said: "Gui has low immunity and his lungs are not strong, so he gets a lot of infections. When he was younger, I'd

need to take him to hospital, and then he could be there for a month. And that could happen maybe 4 times a year.

"But now with the Hospital at Home team, if Gui needs anything I can't do myself, I'll call them and they'll come. If he has an infection they will come twice a day and they are really amazing."

The service allows young patients to receive a range of treatments and observations for short-term illnesses in their own home, under the care of specially qualified children's community nurses. This care can include giving medication, treating wounds,

collecting blood and measuring a patient's vital signs.

Staff involved in the service have also recently published a study measuring its impact on child patients from its launch in 2018 until 2022.

The study shows that during that period, the Hospital at Home service helped nearly 4,500 children to either avoid a hospital admission or go home from hospital earlier.

This in turn helped free up more than 11,000 'bed days' across Evelina London

Children's Hospital and King's College Hospital.

Dr Ronny Cheung, a consultant paediatrician at Evelina London who led the study, said the improvements in patient care offered by Hospital at Home provide the evidence needed to support a wider roll-out of the service to young patients across the country.

He said: "Our results show the children's Hospital at Home service can be safe and effective. Just as importantly, it can greatly improve the experiences of our young patients and their families.

"They have told us they are far happier receiving care and treatment in the comfort of their own home wherever possible."

Less time in hospital means Gui can focus on his schoolwork, as well as enjoying days out with mum Debora, his dad Claudio and older sister Luiza.

Debora added: "He's a very smart boy and he loves technology, as well as music, maths and English. He also loves playing with a ball and going to parks and museums.

"He gets a lot more chance to do the things he loves now. It's been a game changer for us."

"He gets a lot more chance to do the things he loves now. It's been a game changer for us."

Jacob Lipman meets a young boy benefitting from a revolutionary surgical robot.



The Evelina London team who supported Rufus' surgery

Shaping the future of surgery

Since a young age, Rufus Quinn has dreamed of being a scientist. He was therefore excited when his doctors told him that he would be the first child in London to have an operation using a 'revolutionary' type of surgical robot.

As a baby, Rufus was diagnosed with a blockage between his kidney and bladder. This type of blockage affects roughly 1 in 1,500 children. If left untreated, it can be painful and cause kidney problems.

When Rufus turned 7, his doctors at Evelina London told his parents he would need an operation to fix the blockage. They offered him the chance to be part of a ground-breaking clinical trial in which

his surgery would be carried out using a new type of robotic device called Versius.

Versius is a pioneering robot that has four flexible arms that mimic human joints. Each arm holds a small surgical instrument, with one arm also controlling a camera that allows the surgeon to see inside the patient.

Rufus' mum, Jenny, said: "Although Rufus was initially nervous about the surgery, he was mainly very excited. He wants to be a scientist when he grows up and he liked the idea of his surgeon using a futuristic robot to carry out his operation."

Rufus received his operation at

Evelina London from a surgical team led by consultant, Mr Pankaj Mishra. During the surgery, Mr Mishra sat in the same room as Rufus and controlled Versius' robotic arms using a console with a joystick and a screen.

Any movements made by Mr Mishra on his console were translated into smaller, more precise movements in the robot's arms. This type of robotic surgery can make operations less invasive and can help patients, like Rufus, to recover faster from their surgery.

Jenny said: "The doctors at Evelina London have been brilliant and we cannot sing their praises enough. The



Rufus received his surgery at Evelina London Children's Hospital



Mr Pankaj Mishra using the Versius robotic system

surgery went smoothly and Rufus has been able to recover really quickly. He was able to return to school after a few days and is now even back to playing on his ice hockey team for Streatham again."

In addition to speeding up recovery times, Versius can also make complex operations easier for surgeons to carry out. This can reduce strain on surgical teams, helping them to perform more surgeries each day.

Mr Mishra said: "This robotic system has the potential to revolutionise the way we carry out complex surgeries in children. This type of system is much less tiring for the surgeon involved, which

means that difficult surgeries can become a lot easier.

"At the moment, we typically only carry out one complex operation each day. However, Versius has the potential to allow us to do more of these types of operations in a shorter period of time."

Although Versius has previously been used for adult surgeries, Rufus' operation was part of a new trial to test using the robot on children. This is taking place across multiple NHS hospitals in the UK.

The trial will initially use Versius to carry out operations in 150 children suffering from bladder or kidney conditions. If successful, this could lead

to Versius being used to treat a wider range of illnesses in children.

Dr Lance Tooke, clinical director for children's surgery, theatres and anaesthesia at Evelina London said: "Guy's and St Thomas' has the largest robotic programme in the UK and we, at Evelina London, are proud to be part of it. We are delighted to participate in this initial trial and hope this will open up new possibilities for using robotic systems in surgeries for children."

Maxine Hoeksma

meets an armed forces veteran who is using his skills to help patients in need.

From warship to operating room



Alex Oliver began working as an operating department practitioner in 2019

Alex Oliver's decision to switch from the Armed Forces to a career in the operating theatres at St Thomas' has put a decade of military expertise to excellent use.

As a teenager, Alex decided that he wanted to join the Royal Navy once he had finished school. At 17, he began serving as an able seaman and eventually moved into a role in logistics. During his 12 years in the navy, Alex was deployed to 56 countries and territories across the globe.

Alex said: "I was reasonably academic at school and probably would have ended up going to university, but I got a bit of wanderlust. I thought the Royal Navy looked quite interesting – it goes to a lot of places around the world."

However, after getting married, Alex decided that he wanted a more settled life at home and decided to change careers. He began looking at jobs in the NHS, where he could repurpose his navy

skills to help patients in need.

He said: "I'd always had an interest in science and we trained as first aiders in the navy. I originally thought about doing nursing and did a year of nursing at King's College Hospital.

"But one day I went to the operating theatres at Guy's Hospital for a patient follow through and I thought, 'wow!'. This is a completely different atmosphere. It's more dynamic and more suited to environments I'd been to in the past."

After completing a 3-year degree, he joined St Thomas' Hospital as an operating department practitioner in 2019. In this role, Alex works alongside doctors and nurses to prepare patients for surgery and support their arrival into the recovery unit after their operation.

Alex said: "Without a doubt I find that the communication is very similar in the operating theatre and a place like a warship or a military establishment. There are a list of aims that need to be



Alex Oliver and wife, Emily

achieved for the day. Each person has a fundamental role, or they wouldn't be there.

"Because of the pace, you have to be direct, and you have to have confidence



Fiona Sandford at Guy's and St Thomas' Armistice Day service

in your team and in your own skills. You also need to build a rapport quickly to put people at ease. For the patient, it's one of the biggest, most important days of their lives potentially."

Alex found that his military background also helped him to adapt quickly to extraordinary situations, such as when the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

He said: "The pace changed and suddenly we were responding to an emergency. But in terms of organisation and putting new policies and procedures in place, that was stuff I'd done before.

"I got involved in trying to implement the cleaning routines without cross-contamination. This was similar to the navy and their chemical and biological

warfare routines."

Alex is one of many veterans who are following the rallying call to join the NHS.

"Communication is very similar in the operating theatre and a place like a warship or a military establishment."

NHS England is leading a collaboration with the Trust and a number of universities to recruit former members of the Armed Forces into healthcare roles, where their skills are vitally needed.

Fiona Sandford, a consultant physiotherapist and lead of the Armed Forces programme at Guy's and St Thomas', said: "As an Armed Forces spouse, I know the resilience, adaptability and dedication of the Armed Forces community.

"These are just the transferable skills we are looking for in the NHS and I would encourage anyone from the

Armed Forces community, Armed Forces leavers, veterans, partners and spouses, families, and people from all backgrounds with different levels of qualification, to consider joining us. Your experience and knowledge will be invaluable."

The programme is open to serving and retired Armed Forces personnel and their families who are interested in retraining in a range of healthcare roles. To find out more, email:

armedforces@gstt.nhs.uk

Alana Cullen

meets a young patient determined to get back on the playing field following life-saving care at Evelina London.

Saving young lives



Austin Hunter has received over 25 operations at Evelina London



Austin's dad, Warwick, will be running the London Marathon to

This time last year, hockey-loving Austin Hunter was a happy, healthy 12-year-old. He didn't know that within a few months his life would change forever.

In June 2024, Austin started to have leg pain. Next his ears and toes turned blue. He was taken to his local hospital in Surrey, and within a few hours his condition deteriorated.

Austin had sepsis, a life-threatening reaction to an infection. It happens when your immune system, the body's defence system, overreacts to an infection and starts to damage your body's own tissues and organs. Symptoms are hard to spot, but may include fast breathing, feeling very cold to touch, or a rash that does not fade when you press it.

He was taken to Evelina London Children's Hospital by the South Thames Retrieval Service. Upon his arrival, 8 clinicians were waiting for him, ready to deliver life-saving care.

Austin had a less than 5% chance of survival. Warwick Hunter, Austin's dad, said: "That night we were told it was highly likely that Austin would lose this battle, and to prepare for the worst possible outcome.

"During the first 6 hours, it was incredible to witness the dedication, focus and determination across the team. Ultimately, he survived and as the sun rose he was still with us, still fighting. I can never thank all of the staff enough for giving us our son back."

Thanks to the commitment and expertise of the people caring for him, Austin woke up after several days in a coma. He remained in Evelina London's intensive care unit for 10 weeks, where his organs slowly started to recover, and his limbs regained circulation.

Austin had weekly surgeries and to date, he has had over 25 operations at the children's hospital.

The journey wasn't over yet for Austin. His left foot remained infected and continued to make him unwell. Following lots of discussion, Austin's family made the difficult decision to have his lower left leg amputated.

Following Austin's amputation, his mum Holly said: "We knew his left foot was making him ill. Following the amputation, he began to grow stronger, he started to thrive, and Austin was back to his old determined self."

After major reconstructive surgery on his right foot, Austin managed to make it home for Christmas. Since then, he has now also opted to amputate his right foot.

The next milestone for Austin will be having his new set of prosthetic legs fitted, in time for a comeback on sports day. These new legs will help him get back to doing his favourite hobbies, such as playing hockey and cheering on his favourite football team, Brighton and



to raise money for Evelina London Children's Charity



Austin at a football match

Hove Albion.

Austin, now 13, said: "I will still need more surgery, but it will be the best chance for me to get back to my activities."

"It is important that people know what sepsis is and what the symptoms are."

The sports loving teen will also be cheering on his dad who is running the London Marathon in April. So far, Warwick has raised over £50,000, most of which will go to Evelina London Children's Charity.

The 44-year-old has never run a marathon before, but he is doing it for Austin and to give back to his life-saving team. Warwick said: "It was a raft of specialists who cared for Austin: consultants, nurses, nutritionists, physiotherapists, play team specialists, everyone was involved. Over 100 different people were involved in Austin's wrap around care."

Evelina London is one of only two specialist children's services in London, and the expert teams work seamlessly together to coordinate and deliver the highest quality of care.

Jennie Lambert, paediatric intensive care consultant and Austin's clinician, said: "Austin was critically ill with multi-organ failure when he came to us. He defied the odds in surviving that night."

"We meet a lot of extremely unwell children, but Austin is a truly remarkable young man, who has inspired us all in his unwavering determination to recover and help others."

To support Warwick's fundraising, visit his web page:

www.gofundme.com/f/austin-hunters-official-fundraise-austinspowers

Fast Facts

Evelina London Children's Charity helps the hospital to provide life-saving care all under one roof:

- They support the South Thames Retrieval Service to help transport critically ill children from local hospitals to intensive care units
- They transformed Sky Ward into a state-of-the-art intensive care unit, caring for children across the south east of England and beyond
- Their funding has allowed surgeons to access the latest 3D software, helping to plan delicate surgeries before entering the operating theatre
- They support the play team to provide specialist care that reduces anxiety for children in hospital

Maxine Hoeksma finds out more about Guy's and St Thomas' healthy weight programme.

Lanceford Brown
with Healthy Weight
physiotherapists
Emmie Peck and
Céline Causeret

Getting fit for life

When Lanceford Brown was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure in his mid-30s, he began a personal mission to have a healthier lifestyle.

After years of yo-yo dieting, his GP referred him to his local Healthy Weight hub to help him lose weight in a more consistent way. Run by Guy's and St Thomas', the hub offers a 12-week weight loss and exercise programme for residents living in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark.

The programme delivers classes that help people to make healthy changes to their lifestyle, by giving them information on important topics, such as nutrition and diet. It also runs free exercise sessions, supporting attendees to grow their fitness and work towards their weight loss goal.

This provided Lanceford, a 56-year-old civil servant from Stockwell, with just the motivation he needed to improve his health. Since joining the programme at West Norwood Health and Leisure Centre in October 2024, he has lost 8kg.

Lanceford said: "I'm happy with the way things are going, it's going in the right direction. I'm steadily losing weight. The main thing that the programme has given me is structure. It allows me to plan my meals at regular times. I also do my exercise at regular times and I'm now very specific with my shopping.

"I stay away from the processed food

and have everything in moderation, even if I am buying the healthier option. You also learn to choose fresh produce, and brown rice rather than white rice."

Classes can be taken online or face-to-face at healthcare settings, leisure centres or a gym. Groups of up to 20 people meet for weekly hour sessions run by the Trust's Healthy Living team, which includes physiotherapists and health improvement practitioners.

Louise, 59, is an office manager from Clapham who has had several health conditions including breast cancer.

She joined the programme at Gracefield Gardens Health Centre in October 2024.

She said: "I've had a weight problem most of my life. I thought, 'I'm going to be 60 in 2025. It's time to do something about it!'

"My weight went up to about 105kg, around 16 stone, which terrified the life out of me. The programme makes you look at labels and start eating better. It takes away the complication, explaining food portions and hidden calories. For example, you can have a healthy meal, but if you put tomato ketchup on it, that's very high in sugars."

Since joining the programme, Louise has particularly enjoyed how supportive and kind other group members have been to her. She said: "Everybody is in the same boat. There is no judgement,

you feel comfortable to talk. The lessons are amazing!"

In addition to its regular programmes, the Healthy Weight hub also runs a group specifically for people of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. In Lambeth, half of people who used the hub between January 2023 and October 2024 were Black or Black British.

These specialist classes provide advice on ways people can maintain a balanced diet, while still being able to enjoy their favourite traditional cultural dishes.

Lanceford, whose parents are Jamaican, said: "I found the programme very educational. You can talk about putting different food groups on your plate, but if you go to most Caribbean dinners, you also have to consider the height of the food too!"

Céline Causeret, a community health improvement coordinator who supports the programme, said: "We accompany people for 12 weeks, but we want them to continue that journey and sustain the weight loss.

"It's never too late to do something, and something is better than nothing. If you do a little bit more physical activity you will start to see the difference. A little bit of weight loss will help you in your daily life, and will make you feel better."

"The programme has given me structure. It allows me to plan my meals at regular times, and I'm now very specific with my shopping."

For more information about joining the Health Weight programme visit: guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/healthy-weight-programmes or contact 020 3049 5242.



Matt Barker

learns how NHS delivery drones are offering faster and greener patient care.



NHS drone in flight against the London skyline

A new service taking flight

High above London's rooftops, too small to see from the ground, flies a precious cargo. Urgent blood samples are being transported by electric drones in a medical delivery service which aims to improve patient care by speeding up testing turnaround times.

The service involves delivering blood samples for patients undergoing surgery who are at high risk of complications from bleeding disorders.

Usually, blood samples are delivered by van and motorbike couriers. Moving these between the Synnovis lab at Guy's Hospital and the lab at St Thomas' Hospital can take more than half an hour by road.

However, these new electric drones can reduce this journey time to only 2 minutes. This enables samples to be tested faster, helping to quickly determine whether patients are safe to undergo surgery or be discharged from hospital.

Switching to drone deliveries can also reduce traffic congestion and has significant environmental benefits.

"This drone trial to deliver blood samples will speed up test results for some of our most vulnerable patients, ensuring they have the very best care."

Using commercial drones instead of petrol cars can reduce the carbon emissions of each journey by up to 99%. Drones also require less transportation electricity than electrically-powered delivery vans.

However, before this exciting project could get off the ground, it required almost 2 years of planning.

This was organised through a partnership between Guy's and St Thomas'; Apian, a

healthcare logistics company founded by NHS doctors; and Wing, a global drone delivery company. The operation is also regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Sailesh Patel, a senior project manager in the data, technology and information team, explained how many different teams had to come together to bring this initiative to life. He said: "We had to develop a workflow to get the Trust's systems to talk to Apian's systems so that everything worked. Lab staff have access to Apian's platform and Apian

have access to the part of our IT systems that link to the porters. Everyone across the digital teams have been fantastic. To get to this point is incredible."

One of those porters supporting the project is Michael McPherson. He takes the samples from the lab at Guy's Hospital to floor 12 of Guy's Cancer Centre. From there, the samples are packaged and attached to the drone.

Michael said: "It's exciting. Anything that is going to be helping people is a plus. I'm happy to be part of what is going on and helping get things from one place to the other more quickly."

Using commercial drones to transport blood samples is a landmark first for the NHS in London. This new system is initially being tested as part of a trial. If successful, this could serve as the foundation of a larger drone distribution network for NHS hospitals across the capital.

Professor Ian Abbs, Chief Executive Officer of Guy's and St Thomas' said: "This drone trial to deliver blood samples will speed up test results for some of our most vulnerable patients, ensuring they have the very best care. It combines innovations in healthcare with sustainability to give us an NHS fit for the future."

Alana Cullen
finds out how
to improve our
wellbeing.

Caring for your mental health



Mental health is how we think, feel, and act. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health, and looking after it is vital for a happy, healthy life.

If our mental health goes down, it can start to affect our lives. Every year in England, 1 in 4 people will have some kind of mental health problem. Some of the most common conditions are depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Our mental health can vary from week to week, and is affected by the things happening in our lives. For example, stress, sleep, and relationships can affect our mental wellbeing. Any time is a good time to reflect on how we are feeling, and create good habits to help us look after ourselves.

We spoke to Jackie Waghorn, mental health lead at Guy's and St Thomas', for some advice about how to get support with your mental health.

She said: "The most important thing is to ask for help if you need it. There's no shame in saying you're finding it difficult at the moment.

"Share how you are feeling with someone. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. Things can and will get better."

You can also check in on your friends, family and people around you. Jackie said: "Ask people how they're feeling, and listen. You don't need to have the answers, but you can support them in the moment and point them in the direction of help and support."

If you need help for a mental health crisis or emergency, you should get immediate advice and assessment. Call 111 and select the mental health option. They will tell you the right place to get help, or you may be able to speak to a mental health professional on the phone. You can also search 'urgent help for mental health NHS' online for more information.

Some top tips to look after your mental health include:

- **Connect with people.** Spend time with your family and friends, or get away from your desk and have lunch with a colleague.
- **Live healthily.** Being active and eating a balanced diet can affect how we feel. Stopping bad habits, like smoking or drinking lots of alcohol, can also help.
- **Sleep well.** Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel physically and mentally.
- **Learn a new skill.** Joining a club, or learning something new, can help build confidence.
- **Be kind.** Acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing and create a sense of reward. It could be as small as thanking someone for something you are grateful for.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Pay attention to the present moment, including your thoughts and how your body feels.

If you work at Guy's and St Thomas', you can access free counselling via our 'Showing we care about you' wellbeing programme, which is supported by Guy's & St Thomas' Charity.

There are resources and other support services available for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including:

- **Hub of Hope:**
<https://hubofhope.co.uk>
- **South East London Mind:**
<https://selmind.org.uk>
- **Samaritans:**
www.samaritans.org
- **Papyrus, for young people:**
www.papyrus-uk.org

Jacob Lipman learns more about a play sharing the experiences of intensive care patients.

Stories of survival

In 2019, Seb Harcombe was working at a drama school in central London when his world was suddenly turned upside down. While teaching an acting class, he suffered a cardiac arrest. He was rushed to St Thomas' Hospital's intensive care unit (ICU), where he was in a coma for a week.

After waking up from his coma and being discharged from hospital, Seb was invited by his doctors to join a peer support group for ICU survivors. This support group was created in 2016 by consultants, Dr Joel Meyer and Dr Andrew Slack.

During these group meetings, ICU survivors and their families come together to share common experiences and help each other through the emotional challenges of their recovery. Each session is hosted by a specialist nurse and psychologist who facilitate a free-flowing discussion amongst group members.

Reflecting on the support group, Seb said: "After waking up from a coma, it can be really hard to fully come to terms with

what has happened to you. Attending this group provided me with the opportunity to connect with other people, share my recovery story, and begin to process my time in intensive care".

While attending this group, Seb was inspired by the moving stories shared by other members. As a professional theatre director, he wanted to write a play that would capture the inspiring stories of patients whose lives have been saved by ICU staff at Guy's and St Thomas'.

Seb said: "During the group sessions, I was struck by all the strange and interesting memories of what people had seen and heard while in a coma. I wanted to create something that captured these unique experiences, and celebrated people's inspirational stories of resilience and recovery.



Some of the intensive care team, including Katie Susser and Dr Joel Meyer, outside St Thomas' Hospital

"I also wanted to do something that could express how grateful I am to all the amazing staff at Guy's and St Thomas' who looked after me. If it hadn't been for their care, I could very easily not be here, and I am so thankful for everything they have done."

Seb began developing the play in 2019 and, following a delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, finished this towards the end of last year. The play was performed at Guy's Chapel earlier this year.

Although it has been 5 years since Seb attended these meetings, the Guy's and St Thomas' peer support group is still helping patients to recover from their time in intensive care. Group meetings are now held each month, and are attended by approximately 30 people.

Dr Joel Meyer said: "Although patients



Above: Seb's play captures the inspirational stories of ICU survivors

Below: Seb Harcombe at rehearsals for his play, 'Elysium'



have different illnesses that bring them into ICU, we have always said that these differences are just skin deep. Many people who come out of ICU have the shared experience of feeling like their world has been turned upside down.

"These group meetings provide a safe and supportive environment for people like Seb, where they can really be themselves and feel understood by people who have gone through the same experience as them."

Katie Susser, the critical care recovery nurse lead who facilitates the current support group, said: "It is such a privilege to witness the visible positive impact that these groups have on patients. There is something incredible about seeing these people come together to help each other through what can be one of the most

emotionally difficult and challenging periods of their life."

Katie also recently organised an in-person tea party to celebrate past and present group members. This event brought together over 100 ICU survivors who have benefitted from the group over the years to meet and share personal experiences. This event was supported by funding from Guy's & St Thomas' Charity.

Katie said: "Since the start of the support group in 2016, we've had hundreds of people attend these sessions. Some patients only come for short periods, while others have been attending the group for years. We had feedback from patients that it would be nice to do something in-person so we wanted to hold an event to celebrate all the patients that have joined the group over the years."

What is post-intensive care syndrome?

- Post-intensive care syndrome is a range of symptoms that can appear in people who have survived a life-threatening illness.
- These symptoms can affect an individual's quality of life for many months, or sometimes years.
- Typical symptoms can include anxiety, physical pain, memory loss and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Behind the scenes

Tracy Ryden, senior employee relations adviser at the Trust

Q What does your job involve?

A My role is to support and advise line managers who have various levels of seniority across the Trust. I give managers guidance on the Trust's policies and how to apply them in practice.

Q Do you have a personal connection to the Trust?

A I do have a special personal connection to the Trust for various reasons.

I was born at Guy's Hospital and years later was treated at St Thomas' Hospital following a motorcycle accident. The orthopaedic and rehabilitation team saved my leg and helped me to recover.

I also met my husband here 20 years ago and gave birth to my 2 children at St Thomas' Hospital.

Q How does your team's work make a difference?

A The employee relations team makes a big difference at the Trust. We run a helpline available for all line managers, attend formal meetings and give advice in complex cases.

It is important that line managers feel confident to manage employees fairly and in line with the Trust's policies. Our job is to support managers to do this in a way that encourages positive working relationships.

Q What do you enjoy about your job?

A I like helping people and feeling that I have supported managers to do their jobs well. It is particularly rewarding when I support clinical managers to run services and make the best use of their teams. This



contributes to high standards of patient care.

The employee relations team is like a second family to me. Many of us have worked together for a long time and we support each other with our own development.

I am about to go on secondment to another NHS Trust. I would not be able to make the most of this opportunity without the support of such a great team.

From the frontline

Christina Rowe, tobacco dependence specialist from the Lambeth Stop Smoking Service

I have been part of the Lambeth stop smoking service for the past 13 years. This is a proactive service that works closely with healthcare professionals at Guy's and St Thomas'. We give patients support in hospital or in the community to help them stop smoking.

Our service is for anyone who lives in Lambeth. We also reach out to groups that might not otherwise engage with the service. Examples include people who are homeless, refugees, the LGBTQ+ community and amputees at a rehabilitation centre. We give these groups information adapted to their needs.

If somebody wants to stop smoking, we will arrange an initial assessment for them. This is where we explore the



patient's reasons for smoking, relationship with cigarettes and any attempts to quit. We then explain treatments that can help, such as

medicines, vaping or nicotine replacement therapy.

After this, we invite the patient to take part in a 12-week support programme. We can offer support face-to-face, by video or on the phone, or do a home visit.

It is rewarding when patients who have tried to stop smoking eventually quit and share how their health has improved. These patients trust me enough to show their vulnerability. I give them specialist support to overcome challenges and achieve their goal.

As a tobacco dependence specialist, it is important that I listen to patients in a non-judgemental way and show empathy. I try to empower them to make positive changes in their behaviour that will have benefits for their health and wellbeing.

Luke Blair learns about
Harefield Hospital's
World War I origins.

One of the first weddings to take
place amongst patients

Caring for our troops

In May 1915, a quiet country estate near London was preparing to receive casualties from the First World War.

Huts had been built on lawns, and a small group of nurses were scrubbing floors. In less than a week, 80 beds were ready. The first group of wounded soldiers arrived on 2 June 1915 – and Harefield Hospital was born.

The origins of the hospital started with a young woman, Letitia Billyard-Leake, whose family were among Australia's early European arrivals. The family was wealthy and Letitia decided to move from Australia to London, buying the Harefield Park estate.

When World War I broke out, various members of the Billyard-Leake family joined the army to fight. So when the Australian government asked for help looking after casualties, Letitia responded, offering Harefield Park estate and its grounds for their use.

Within months, hundreds of troops from the Australia and New Zealand forces were being treated there. The soldiers who arrived at Harefield were often severely injured. Some had lost arms or legs, many were blind, and many had seen friends die beside them.

The medical challenges were daunting. At the time, the Australian government reported: "The surgical requirements... will tax the capacity and resources of the most experienced surgeon."

By 1916, Harefield had 1,600 patients, an eye ward and an X-ray unit. One of the first ever workshops making artificial

limbs was also created there. Physical exercise and recovery were important too. This is a tradition which remains today, particularly among organ transplant patients.

Overall, it is estimated that around 50,000 people were treated at Harefield during the First World War. This affected the village profoundly. Many villagers volunteered for hospital work and every death was honoured with a local procession.

A cockatoo and a wallaby were also brought over from Australia, to make the patients feel more at home. Deep bonds were formed, including marriages which

took place in the local community.

When Letitia passed away in 1923, Harefield Hospital was bought by Middlesex County Council as a sanatorium for tuberculosis. The current hospital's unusual, curved shape was constructed in the 1930s, to ensure patients got as much sunlight and fresh air as possible.

Today, the hospital and graveyard at the village church of St Mary's are still a focus for Australia and New Zealand commemorations. Letitia and her husband, daughter, and daughter-in-law are all buried there, alongside many of the soldiers who spent their last days in Harefield all those years ago.



An amputee soldier playing cricket in
the grounds of Harefield Hospital

Meet the governor

Professor Koku Adomdza talks about his passion for achieving excellence as a governor.

Guy's and St Thomas' governors represent the views of our patients, public and staff members, ensuring the Trust's services meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Professor Koku Adomdza became a governor at Guy's and St Thomas' in July 2022, and is one of 10 public governors.

Koku first decided to become a governor following the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, he was inspired by the resilience and dedication of NHS staff. He said: "I did not think that clapping for them was enough and thought that this could be a way to use my competencies to scale-up my support."

Koku is a consultant specialising in corporate ethics, and has a lot of experience in working with large

organisations to help them run efficiently.

As a governor, he aims to work with the Trust to make sure it continues to deliver a high-quality service for patients and provides the best possible working environment for its staff.

Another focus of Koku's role is member engagement. He is keen for more people to sign up to become a member of the Trust, and would encourage anyone who is eligible to vote in the upcoming governor elections to do so.

He said: "Nothing can be more rewarding than to know that one's involvement, no matter how little, is not wasted, and contributes to the lessening or lightening of the burden of poor health on patients, when they are most vulnerable."



Elections to the Trust's Council of Governors will be held in Spring 2025, from 27 February to 21 May.

All eligible members will receive the election information and are entitled to vote within their constituency. Voting will close on Monday 19 May 2025.

For more information about the Council of Governors elections and how to vote, please visit the 2025 election webpage at:

<https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/governors-elections-2025>

Meet the member

Zosia Krajewska shares what being a member means to her.

Guy's and St Thomas' members are made up of staff, patients, and public volunteers.

Members can get involved by providing feedback on how we can improve our services to meet the needs of our communities.

Zosia Krajewska, from Barnet, became a member of Guy's and St Thomas' in October 2024. She has been a patient at the Trust for nearly 3 years, and regularly visits the Trust to receive blood tests for her care.

As a patient, Zosia was inspired to become a member to learn more about how the Trust works. She said: "I think it's important to grow your understanding of this, as it can help you advocate for yourself and make more informed decisions about your care."

She has enjoyed attending members' seminars, and has found them a useful way to learn more about the exciting



innovations taking place in the Trust. As an IT consultant, she is particularly interested in how digital technology can improve patient care.

She said: "I am really excited about the introduction of MyChart. I now get all my

blood test results through MyChart. It's really helpful to have this information directly at my fingertips."

After her experience of being a member, Zosia has decided to also run as a candidate in the upcoming governor elections.

Reflecting on why she wants to stand as a governor, she said: "I'm fascinated by healthcare and I love medicine. Although I'm not a doctor, I think I could add real value because I've had a patient perspective on what works well and where things can be improved."

To become a member call **020 7188 7346**, email **members@gstt.nhs.uk** or visit **www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership**

Get involved and make a difference

Sign up and help us shape your services

We involve patients, their families, carers and Foundation Trust members in planning, designing, improving and monitoring the services and care that we provide.

How to sign up

Complete this form – <https://bit.ly/PPInvolvement> – to tell us what interests you. We will get in touch when there are opportunities to get involved.

Current opportunities for children's services

We are looking for young people, parents and carers who are interested in improving services at the Evelina London to join our Youth Forum and Involvement Register. To find out more and get involved, please email ELCHEngagement@gstt.nhs.uk

Make a difference to maternity and neonatal care

We want to hear from parents who have used maternity or neonatal services to join the St Thomas' Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP). To find out more and get involved, please email stthomasmnvp@gmail.com

Other opportunities

You can also help us to improve our:

- heart and lung services
- cancer and surgery services
- local community health services

Events and activities

We involve people in different ways, such as workshops, interviews and advisory groups. Some events are held online and others face-to-face. We will adapt activities to help you take part wherever we can.

Find out more

If you have any questions, email getinvolved@gstt.nhs.uk or call 020 7188 6808.

Raise money for your hospitals and community services

For all the latest news about our amazing fundraisers and how you can support us, follow:

 [facebook.com/GSTTCharity](https://www.facebook.com/GSTTCharity)

 [facebook.com/evelinalondonchildrenscharity](https://www.facebook.com/evelinalondonchildrenscharity)

 [facebook.com/RBHCharity](https://www.facebook.com/RBHCharity)

 [facebook.com/guyscancerc](https://www.facebook.com/guyscancerc)

COMPETITION



We have a pair of adult tickets for **Thames Rockets Ultimate London Adventure**. To be in with a chance of winning, simply complete the wordsearch below.

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blossom bunnies daffodils lambs showers
bulbs chicks flowers picnic sunshine
bumblebee cleaning gardening rain tulips

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Send your entry by **Wednesday 18 June 2025** to the GIST competition, Communications Department, 4th floor, Staircase C, South Wing, St Thomas' Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7EH; or you can email gist@gstt.nhs.uk.

The winners will be selected at random and notified within seven days of the draw. The result will be final and we will not enter into any correspondence regarding the competition winners. The prize is non-transferable. Your name and details will be collected solely for the purposes of this competition and in order to be able to contact the winner and send them the prize. By entering this competition, you give your consent for us to use the data you provide in this way.

Thames Rockets T&Cs: The prize winner will be able to redeem the prize using the code provided online or over the phone. Prize is valid 12 months from the date of issue. There are no age restrictions- however children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult on board. Please note those with past or current back or neck conditions are strongly advised not to travel with us. Without exception, expectant mothers are not permitted on-board at any stage of their pregnancy.

**Guy's &
St Thomas'
Charity
&...**

running &...

Royal Parks Half Marathon

Sunday 12th October 2025

Take on one of the most beautiful half marathons in the running calendar. You'll run through four of London's stunning Royal Parks – passing some of the capital's most famous landmarks – while raising money to support the incredible staff and exceptional care at Guy's and St Thomas'.



**Scan the QR code or visit
gsttcharity.org.uk/royal-parks to sign up today.**

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