

TALKING POINT

Autumn 2024

INSIDE

Seeing the patients who survived COVID-19 makes it all worthwhile

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Tees Valley to South
Luangwa Valley



Boro legend Juninho surprises maternity unit



Patients, relatives and staff at special celebration event

Seeing the patients who survived makes it all worthwhile

“LIKE angels without wings” – that’s how Helen Sharpe describes the critical care team who cared for her when she got COVID-19.

Helen was one of 65 patients and relatives who attended a special celebration event with the James Cook critical care team at Leonardo Hotel on Friday 28 June.

It was a chance for colleagues, relatives and patients to come together to reflect on the most challenging time of their lives, celebrate many success stories and remember those who were sadly not so lucky.

Jane Watson, senior sister from ICU 3, said: “The pandemic was such a historic period and I wanted these patients to know that we hadn’t forgotten about them.

“It was such an emotional roller-coaster for the staff and to see patients who had survived is amazing. It makes every second of hard work worthwhile.”

There was hardly a dry eye in the room as staff and patients shared the details of their own emotional journeys.

“You should all be so proud,” said Friarage nurse Helen, who was the first patient admitted into intensive care at James Cook. She said it was the little things such as a reassuring hand on her

shoulder and a colleague plaiting her hair that really helped her through it.

“We have had such positive feedback from the patients who attended,” Jane added. “They said it really helped them to hear other patients’ experiences as they no longer felt alone.”



From L to R: Annie Prest, sister (now retired), David Gaulter, patient, and Janet Pugh, advanced critical care practitioner (ACCP)

Laura Thompson, nurse, and Helen Sharpe, patient and Friarage nurse



Jane Watson, senior sister, Lindsay Garcia, director of nursing and Charlotte McClean, clinical educator

Middlesbrough mum's unique friendship with nurse helps overcome alcohol addiction

KATHYRN Hearn, 42, is leading a life as a senior rehab coach at Recovery Connections, a non-profit Lived Experience Recovery organisation based in Middlesbrough.

She supports individuals to overcome addiction to alcohol or substances whilst steering them towards a life of health and balance.

However, the mother-of-two's recovery from alcohol was never easy as her early life was filled with bumps and hardships.

"It started with a litre of cider with friends and going to pubs as a 16-year-old on a Friday night in Middlesbrough," she said.

But Kat's life as a 22-year-old took a sudden turn when she sadly lost her fiancé in a car accident.

This escalated her alcohol consumption as she started drinking heavily to cure her pain.

She added: "Although my past experiences led to drinking more than often, I would say I fell into addiction after my second child was born."

She was regularly in and out of the accident and emergency department at James Cook Hospital in 2018 – either because she had been found unable to respond, or inflicting self-harm related to her alcohol consumption.

This is where Kat met former A&E nurse and current alcohol care coordinator Jessica Beck, who Kat recalls used to treat her with love and compassion.

"I don't remember meeting Jess (Jessica) but I feel that I made a lasting impression on her. Although we can laugh about it today apparently, I was not very pleasant to her back then," she said.

Jessica said: "I met Kat many years ago when I was a nurse in A&E where she could be chaotic when she was a patient, wanting to go outside for a cigarette when staff were trying to carry out assessments and wasn't happy if stopped from doing so."

She referred Kat to HILT (hospital intervention liaison team) for further treatment and then started her rehabilitation journey at the Recovery Connections rehab facility in Middlesbrough.

Kat added: "I think Jess and the alcohol care team (ACT) are very valuable, and they are changing people's lives.

"She is the perfect person to run the alcohol care team. She is understanding, and non-judgemental, and believes everyone deserves a chance at life no matter how many times you have to try.

"We are now best friends and I think about how different my life would be if that random nurse from A&E did not make me her bestie – she came into my life when I needed her the most and I couldn't imagine my life without her."

Delighted with Kat's progress, Jessica said: "Over the last two years, Kat and I have become really good friends. She has just celebrated four years of sobriety and has successfully gained promotion as a senior rehab coach."



From L to R: Jessica and Kat

Mylene Amoroso and Jomer Beron



Going down memory lane with Mylene and Jomer

INTERNATIONAL nurses from the Philippines are taking a trip down memory lane as they reflect on their journeys after arriving in the UK during the height of the pandemic to now supporting newly recruited overseas nurses in their roles.

Mylene Amoroso and Jomer Beron, both from Philippines, are two of our overseas nurses who have travelled over 6,700 miles to make Teesside their new home.

The duo are one of the first cohorts in South Tees Hospitals to have arrived from overseas during Covid-19 to support our staff – which was crucial for services to continue providing treatment despite the huge

surge in coronavirus cases.

Following their successful stints in clinical areas, Mylene and

Jomer have recently commenced new roles as clinical educators for international nurses.

In the hope of inspiring overseas nurses that success will follow once they put in the hard work, they are sharing their inspirational stories with us.

“As a clinical educator for IENs, I now have this great opportunity to welcome and support them.”

From a tropical country to landing in a place with four seasons a day

Mylene, currently working as a clinical educator for overseas nurses, loves mingling with staff and is keen to learn more than just about their roles. She does this with a radiant smile on her face that shines bright across our hospital.

Working as a nurse in the Philippines and Saudi Arabia for a combined eight years, she was eager to come to the UK after hearing a lot of good things about the country.

She was successfully interviewed by the trust in October 2019 and was one of the first cohorts to utilise the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) online application.

Mylene came to the UK during the peak of the pandemic in

February 2020, which was quite overwhelming due to lockdowns and adjusting to a new work culture. After passing the nerve-racking OSCE, Mylene started working on ward 7.

She said: "I have learned so many things while working here. The healthcare system in the Philippines is very different here. We didn't have a macerator, syringe pumps and other equipment that I could not even pronounce the names of.

"The ward was busy, but my colleagues helped me get through every shift. They became my friends and work family while I was miles away from home."

After stumbling across an opportunity for the role of clinical educator for internationally educated nurses (IEN), she felt motivated to apply for the post.

Following a rigorous process, Mylene was delighted to learn that she got the job. Speaking about why she values the role so much, she said: "I remember when I first arrived in the UK, the weather was cold, but we were warmly welcomed by

Eileen Aylott and the education and practice development team with Maureen Tiernan.

"As a clinical educator for IENs, I now have this great opportunity to welcome and support them."

The northeast's love for idioms threw me off

Immersed at the forefront of the pandemic response, Jomer arrived in 2021 and quickly got settled in respiratory medicine.

He had no clue about what he was about to witness, but seeing with his own eyes the havoc caused by the coronavirus was truly eye-opening.

Jomer said: "Although this time was difficult, in parallel, I had the chance to contribute as a nurse, as well as expand my nursing knowledge – including

undergoing accelerated training, and also working as part of an incredible team.

"From my arrival, the acceptance of open arms by my colleagues made me feel comfortable and welcome, generally making the process of transitioning from one country,

which was strange to me, to another very easy.

"The North East accent and their love of idioms threw me off! Regardless, everybody was so wonderful, despite facing one of the scariest times in their careers. It has been my greatest honour to be able to be a nurse in a time like this."

Following a year in respiratory, Jomer secured a role as oncology nurse. Working on ward 14 was emotionally taxing for him but ultimately rewarding.

He believes working in such an emotionally challenging environment and caring for patients with cancer has made him a better nurse and helped him fully appreciate how beautiful and fragile life is.

Currently, Jomer works as a clinical educator for international nurses. One of the main jobs is to train newly recruited international nurses to pass their OSCE and acquire their NMC pins.

"I have only been in this job for a year where I have been able to propose and implement a new programme that enables international nurses to have a better chance at passing their OSCE the first time. These changes have demonstrated to be effective in improving the trust's first-time passing rate," he added.

"It has been my greatest honour to be able to be a nurse in a time like this."

**GET THE
JAB
NOT THE VIRUS**



"Immunisation against the flu is about protecting the health of ourselves, our colleagues, and the patients for whom we care" - group associate medical director, Mike Ingram



"Flu is no fun! We all know working in the NHS over winter can be tough, let's make sure we give ourselves, our patients and the wider community a fighting chance by getting the flu jab, and reducing the risk of spreading the virus where we can" - Alison Kerr, AHP workforce strategic lead



THE flu campaign is back and this year, we are encouraging all colleagues to 'get the jab, not the virus.' We caught up with some of our colleagues across the trust to find out why getting the jab is important to them.

"The annual flu vaccine is the best defence against fighting the flu and helps to keep you, those you care for and your loved ones safe" - Jill McGee, occupational health and wellbeing manager



"Having a flu jab is caring in action. It allows us to minimise the risk to ourselves and those around us and protect those we love and those in our care" - Ruth Mhlanga, professions lead





Diana Lees with her dog, Poppy

Community teams taking big steps to improve falls prevention with online tool

THE community falls prevention team at the Friarage have launched a one-stop shop for falls prevention advice to help the community of Hambleton and Richmondshire to feel safer and steadier on their feet.

Falls in the community are a common cause of pain, distress and injury and can often lead to emergency care admissions.

However, the falls prevention team for Hambleton and Richmondshire is advising anyone at risk of falls to visit the Steady On Your Feet website to access practical tips and guidance on staying active, independent and safe during everyday activities.

"It provides everything from support with balance and dizziness, to identifying potential hazards around the home."

The team is encouraging people to complete the website's online self-assessment form to receive a free personalised falls action plan tailored to their needs.

People can also complete an online home safety check, download practical strength and flexibility exercise programmes and videos and access links to local support services in the Hambleton and Richmondshire area.



Diana Lees completing her personalised strength and balance exercises

Tina Wiffen, clinical lead for the specialist falls prevention team said:

"When a person falls or feels unsteady on their feet, it can really knock their confidence and reduce their independence, so we have launched the Steady On Your Feet platform in Hambleton and Richmondshire to provide people with helpful falls prevention advice, guidance and resources that can be easily incorporated into their daily routine.

"Falls not only affect the individual but their family members and carers too, so whether you are an individual wanting to improve your own health and wellbeing or a family member or health professional wanting to provide support to others – the Steady On Your Feet platform can help you.

"It provides everything from support with balance and dizziness, to identifying potential hazards around the home.

"It's a one stop shop for falls prevention advice and I hope it will give people the confidence to take small steps to improving their health, wellbeing and independence."

According to NHS England, around one in three adults over 65 and half of people over 80 will have at least one fall a year.

Somebody who would benefit from the Steady On Your Feet platform is Diana Lees from Northallerton who was referred to the Hambleton and Richmondshire community falls team in 2024.

Despite being an active walker, Diana had experienced several falls over the years, but it was a visit to her friend in Lancaster that ended with a split lip and broken glasses.

Over the course of six months, Diana embarked on a strength and balance exercise plan with the support of therapy assistant practitioner, Michelle Carter and was soon back to completing eight-mile walks and up-hill hikes with friends and daily walks with her dog Poppy.

She said: "Falling really knocked my confidence and made daily activities that I enjoyed doing, more difficult.

"Some of them are isolated in their homes, so the fact that it can be accessed online is perfect."

"I can't thank Michelle enough for creating a personalised programme of exercises to suit my needs. They've

not only helped to build up my strength physically but mentally too - I am steadier on my feet and my health and wellbeing is better than it has ever been.

"I can't wait to tell my friends that they can now create their own personalised falls plan – without needing to be referred.

"Some of them are isolated in their homes, so the fact that it can be accessed online is perfect."

Anyone residing in Hambleton and Richmondshire can access the platform by visiting: <https://hambleton-richmondshire.steadyonyourfeet.org>

South Tees is currently the only trust in the North East of England to have two Steady On Your Feet platforms. The first was launched in Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland in 2020 and can be accessed by visiting <https://south-tees.steadyonyourfeet.org>



Diana Lees with therapy assistant practitioner, Michelle Carter

SOUTH TEES STARS

THE STARS Awards present an opportunity to recognise the individuals, teams and services that go above and beyond their role in delivering excellent patient care.

Congratulations to the winners and to the hundreds of staff who were nominated.

You can also nominate your colleagues or teams that have made your day by the going the extra mile. Search STARS Award on the intranet to make a nomination. Members of the public can also nominate via southtees.nhs.uk.



Jake Coulthard – Attention to Detail

Jake won a STARS Awards in the attention to detail category. He was applauded for producing a very accurate and in-depth referral for a patient which was quite impressive, especially because he was able to manage this in a high-pressure environment over a long weekend.

Congratulations Jake.

South Tees STARS shine brightly

Michelle Shaw – Communication

Michelle Shaw, who is a critical care consultant, was recognised for her role in handling a very difficult conversation with a family with utmost respect and compassion.

The nomination said: "She is a credit to the unit and her empathy and kindness shone throughout this kind gesture."

"Michelle explained difficult circumstances clearly in a way that all family members could understand; she went the extra mile in ensuring that the wellbeing of the patient's family was maintained."

We are proud of you Michelle.



Gary Hood – Dealing with Difficult Situation

Gary Hood won a STAR Award for dealing with a suspected gas leak, promptly ensuring the safety of staff and patients until the area was confirmed as safe. Well done Gary.



Rebecca Carter – Going the Extra Mile

Rebecca Carter, who won a STARS Award for going the extra mile, supported a ward with a fast-track discharge during the weekend which she usually doesn't cover.

She went above and beyond to coordinate a difficult, emotional and time-sensitive discharge.

The nomination said: "The patient was able to return home with appropriate support and equipment. He passed away peacefully at home with his family by his side within 12 hours of discharge. Thank you Rebecca for going the extra mile - I'm sure the family will be forever grateful."

We are proud of you, Rebecca.



Palliative care, occupational therapies, discharge team, Heather Brunton and Ward 33 – Going the Extra Mile

The palliative care team, occupational therapies dept, discharge team, Heather Brunton and Ward 33 won a joint STARS Award for providing a patient with outstanding care and support during their final moments.

The nomination described how the teams worked together to grant the patient's wish to be at home as the preferred place of care.

"The ward team, palliative care

team, occupation therapies team and discharge team worked tirelessly to discharge the patient the day after they started palliative care.

"The team all went the extra mile to ensure the patient could get home - A real team effort that should be recognised.

"Meanwhile, Heather ensured this patient had the red wine that they wanted to taste as one of their last wishes and went to buy this after her busy shift. She also always ensured the wellbeing of her colleagues."

Hats off to our staff and teams for always going above and beyond for our patients.

Jen Mcara – Patient Compliment

Jen received a STARS Award in the patient compliment category.

The nomination said: "Jen detected an issue with a patient's heart rate when she was visiting the individual to undergo an exercise programme. She escalated her concern to his GP and the patient was hospitalised within an hour.

"The patient has documented in his letter to the team that Jen's quick action averted a potential heart attack."

Thank you for all you do.



Wards 1, 31 and 37 and Dr Hammad – Teamwork

Wards 1, 31 and 37 and Dr Hammad won a STARS Award for their impeccable teamwork.

The nomination said: "Over the bank holiday weekend, the acute medical team and Wards 1,37,31 have worked extremely hard together to provide safe and effective care for the patients being admitted whilst keeping flow through the units.

"They have supported other departments such as the emergency department. By enabling the patient flow, they have provided ambulance handover delays which has had a positive impact on the wider organisation and patients in the community seeking help via 999. Big shout out to Dr Hamad driving the teams."

Well done everyone.

New washer disinfectors for endoscope reprocessing departments

JAMES COOK is leading the way when it comes to decontaminating endoscopy equipment.

The hospital is currently the only one in the UK to have one scope, two scope and three scope washer disinfectors installed in the same department.

Installed by iM-Med, the washers improve infection control and decrease the risk of cross-contamination. The faster processes minimise the time between endoscope use, cleaning and storage.

Sterile services and endoscopy decontamination team secured £825,000, £300,000 of which came from Cancer Alliance funding and £525,000 from the trust to replace obsolete washer disinfectors at James Cook, the Friarage and Redcar hospitals.

This team of 15 staff are available around the clock to ensure all flexible endoscopes are decontaminated to the highest standards, in line with national statutory requirements. They worked extremely hard to keep the trust flexible endoscope clinics running, without even one patient having to be cancelled during the three-to-four-month installation periods.



iM-Med case study recording with endoscopy team

Endoscopy decontamination is part of a larger team which also includes two sterile services departments who wash and sterilise all trust surgical instrumentation. Around 90 sterilisation and decontamination staff work hard in the background to enable surgical and endoscopic procedures to be carried out in a safe and timely manner.

Sue Shannon, head of sterilisation and decontamination said: "It's fantastic we have been able to purchase these washers, that the installation has gone so well and that the company want to feature us in a case study which will be publicised nationally.

"The purchase of the new machines has not only made it safer for patients and easier for staff to complete their job, but it has also improved the overall efficiency of the department. Urgently needed scopes can be processed through a washer in as little as 20 minutes now.

"The new service is very slick and much improved compared to the old system of 'caging' scopes which involved more of a manual handling/musculo skeletal risk plus there was more potential for damaging (very expensive) flexible endoscopes during the washing process.

"We are now able to wash and dry up to six of the smaller flexible scopes within the same washer, which we

hadn't been able to do before which saves on chemical use and has a positive impact on the environment by saving electricity and water.

"They have also started to bring decontamination assistants from other trusts to give them the opportunity to learn from our knowledgeable staff who were commended during the filming for their positive attitudes and huge attention to detail.

"Myself and the endoscopy decontamination manager, Theresa Harrison, are extremely proud of the staff and our newly modernised departments."



New washers in operation



Equipment to be washed

Smokefree team celebrating two-year anniversary

THE tobacco dependency treatment service (TDTS), which helps inpatients in our hospitals to quit, reduce or abstain from smoking through recognised methods, is celebrating its two-year anniversary.

Seeing its first patient on 30 August 2022, the team has come a long way and has to date reviewed more than 3,300 inpatients – which means every one of them has been offered Very Brief Advice (VBA) to either quit or reduce smoking.

The service is built on the proven model implemented in Canada and Manchester, which aims to provide all tobacco smokers admitted overnight in a hospital with a funded tobacco dependency treatment service.

While the primary aim is to help all inpatients quit or abstain from smoking, the team follows the model and refers consenting inpatients for long-term support in the community, of which 532 have taken up the offer for onward referral.

The team has taken a step forward to provide follow-up after two and four weeks post-discharge to offer support and guidance.

Hospital staff are also signposted to receive support to quit smoking or abstain whilst on hospital sites.

These past two years have seen the team of six being established as a permanent service and they have so far:

- Implemented automatic referral into TDTS via E-Camis CPI flag which identifies smoking status
- Helped patients receive two weeks' worth of supply of nicotine replacement therapy on discharge
- Offered all patients a referral to the community smoking cessation services
- Identified 100% of smokers on e-Camis are referred to the TDTS
- Submitted mandatory monthly national returns

Tobacco dependency treatment lead Maria Taylor said: "Our ward staff have

really embraced the service, and the team has worked hard to establish a successful service.

"Through education, presenting at various events including the care certificate course, we are raising awareness of how patients feel when they are in nicotine withdrawal, how NRT can help them in the withdrawal phase and how quitting can improve their health and wellbeing."

How can staff support the service?

Staff working on wards must ensure that the smoking status of every inpatient is reviewed and updated on e-Camis at every admission – and offer VBA to smokers.

These simple yet crucial steps support patients by generating an automatic referral to the TDTS, and initiate treatment early in the admission to prevent nicotine withdrawal.

If staff are looking for more support and information, please email stees.smokefree@nhs.net



The smokefree team, From L to R: Laura Daniel, Nikki Ellis, Maria Taylor and Dennis Cocker

Inspirational former nurse raising awareness on mesothelioma

A FORMER nurse diagnosed with incurable lung cancer is educating people of the risks posed by asbestos and breathing in deadly fibres.

Helen Bone, a former nurse and advanced critical care practitioner who worked at South Tees Hospitals for 24 years, is trying to get the government to act by ridding Britain of asbestos in public buildings.

Aged 42 years old and mother to three young daughters, Helen was diagnosed with mesothelioma, an incurable lung cancer caused by exposure to asbestos, in August 2021. Asbestos is odourless, tasteless and toxic. It is used in construction work and is contained in ceilings, floor tiles, walls, floors, artex and pipework.

Helen said: "The government really needs to start taking some action now and come up with a plan to look at the UK's older public buildings."

Mesothelioma (and other asbestos-related illnesses) was previously thought to be an 'old working man's disease' mainly contracted by ship workers, miners and builders. That is no longer the case. The trend is now seeing premature deaths of people who have worked in public buildings with asbestos.

Helen said: "It's now starting to affect people who you wouldn't normally expect and that's just not right."

As part of raising awareness and educating staff, patients' families and visitors, the trust joined the entire nation in celebrating action mesothelioma day on Friday 5 July. Macmillan lung cancer support nurses at James Cook were there to talk to anyone who wanted to learn more.

The lung condition is responsible for the deaths of 20,000 people in Britain every year. That's six people every day. That makes it the nation's number one occupational killer.

"The lung cancer team at James Cook have been a fantastic source of support and comfort to me."

5.5 million buildings in the UK still contain asbestos.

After undergoing six cycles of chemotherapy, Helen joined the Hope clinical trial with University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust who are looking at the effectiveness for patients whose illness has relapsed or have other conditions.

Helen said: "The lung cancer team at James Cook have been a fantastic source of support and comfort to me. The whole team have been amazing and so supportive. I can ring up anytime. The staff are happy to help and have even liaised between myself and Leicester with the clinical trial."

Helen's blog: <https://helenbone82.wixsite.com/itiswhatitis> details her story from the beginning from being diagnosed, treatment and through to her awareness campaign.



Helen Bone raising awareness

Pilot programme honours AHP support workers

FOLLOWING a regional pilot scheme devised in partnership with NHSE and Redcar and Cleveland College to recognise allied health professional (AHP) support workers, the trust celebrated its first cohort of the Higher Development Award (HDA).

A professional and personal development programme, the award equips support workers with the skills, knowledge and tools to improve confidence and lead a positive impact upon service improvement in their clinical areas.

The programme results in either an Institute of Leadership and Management recognised award or a level two or three qualification in leadership and management alongside the HDA qualification and functional skills qualifications, if not already achieved.

Education lead for nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals (NMAHP) Bev Smith said: "This was an opportunity which we were delighted to be a part of, and we are passionate about our AHP support workers."

Alun Tray, who works as an MRI assistant, was one of the recipients of the award. He described the programme as a 'good way of learning' and 'getting a foot in' and encouraged others to join the scheme.

Carolynn Lloyd, the programme lead facilitator said: "I am so proud of the



Recipients of HDA award

dedication, passion and enthusiasm the pilot group has shown throughout during their Higher Development Award."

Ruth Mhlanga, professions lead for allied health professionals (AHP) added: "It was fantastic to see our support workers getting involved in service improvement, showing their leadership skills and having a person-centred approach to service delivery.

"It shows that talent is not in the job title, and we need to be able to harness this wherever it is. The confidence they gained was great to see."

Interested staff can find out more information about the Higher Development Award and upcoming cohorts by contacting stees.educationpractice.development@nhs.net.

Inspiring next generation of doctors as residential course returns to James Cook

AMBITIOUS students from low-income backgrounds were welcomed to James Cook as part of its annual residential programme aimed at inspiring the next generation of doctors.

More than 50 students from across the UK came together from Monday 22 July to Friday 26 July to learn and interact with the trust's diverse workforce whilst learning more about their roles and responsibilities.

The 'I Want to be a Doctor' course commenced in 2017 as a partnership between South Tees Hospitals and Social Mobility

Foundation – to support high-achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The week consisted of budding pupils putting their skills to test by learning more about the roles of staff from various professions and interacting with them – helping these youngsters acquire behind-the-scenes knowledge of a busy



Doctor showing pupils around an ultrasound test

acute hospital trust.

Head of medical education Louise Campbell said: "It was such a pleasure

to have 50 students here last week as part of the Social Mobility Foundation. They spent the week fully immersed in the role of a doctor."

Boro legend Juninho delights everyone with surprise hospital visit

A SURPRISE visit by legendary Middlesbrough player Juninho set the atmosphere euphoric at the maternity department in James Cook.

Juninho, who returned to the North East as part of his tour, posed for pictures with a sea of gleeful new parents and staff as he signed a few Boro jerseys on the ward.

The 2002 World Cup winner wanted to visit James Cook as his son and daughter were born in the hospital's maternity unit while he was playing for Middlesbrough FC.

Also dubbed as the "little fella" by local admirers, Juninho said: "I brought my son to James Cook and it was lovely



to show him around where he was born.

"My little girl was also born here, so I have great memories of this place and that's why I wanted to visit."

Parents on the ward rushed to catch a glimpse of the little fella as the Brazilian spent the entire time signing autographs and taking pictures with their newborn babies.

Long-time Boro fan Daniel Chapman, who was over the moon with the arrival of his young child Ovie, was

ecstatic to learn that his childhood hero was going to make a special visit to the ward.

He said: "It was nice for the little fella to meet our little fella.

It was also great to see a local hero coming back and hopefully, encourages more heroes to visit the amazing heroes who work tirelessly on this ward."

Not only did Juninho's arrival elate the mood among parents but also staff who were not able to contain their excitement.

"It was also great to see a local hero coming back and hopefully, encourages more heroes to visit the amazing heroes who work tirelessly on this ward."



Lucas Giroldo, Juninho, Lauren-Kenny, Ovie Chapman and Daniel Chapman (left to right)

Consultant elected as president of prestigious national association

TIM Meek, a consultant anaesthetist at James Cook Hospital, has been elected as president of the Association of Anaesthetists.

The association is the UK's largest membership organisation for anaesthetists with over 10,000 members.

He said: "I am really looking forward to working with the association's

talented and enthusiastic board and staff, continuing our work ensuring patient safety, improving staff well-being, providing world-class professional education and collaborating on international projects."



Tim Meek

National recognition for hospital's cancer care services

BOTH the haematology and chemotherapy day units at James Cook retained the five-star Macmillan Quality Environment Mark (MQEM) mark, after a rigorous judging process.

The MQEM is a national award that recognises the world-class care provided to patients by hospitals and celebrates environments that provide the highest standards of cancer care.

Part of the James Cook Cancer Institute, the chemotherapy day unit was commended for exceeding the level required to retain the MQEM award.

The unit was applauded for bringing a number of changes that have made a positive impact on cancer patients.

One of the changes was their work in redesigning the treatment area in April 2024 to include 18 static chairs plus a central lounge area with each chemotherapy nurse being allocated four chairs per shift.

Prior to this, the treatment environment included four static chairs where treatments were initiated and patient feedback suggested this system was leading to delays.



The chemotherapy day unit team

However, the redesign of the area has helped reduce waiting times. It has also received positive feedback from patients highlighting that their care feels 'more personal'.

Clinical matron Clare Allinson said: "We are delighted to have retained our MQEM status.

This recognises the excellence in care, patient experience, and environment within our department."

James Cook's haematology day unit was also the recipient of the prestigious award as the department was congratulated for exceeding the level required to achieve MQEM.

"We are delighted to of been able to maintain the highest MQEM award possible."



The haematology unit team

The unit was commended for receiving positive user feedback from patients, who highlighted they were well-cared for and felt safe throughout their hospital journey.

The patients went ahead in complimenting the service by mentioning they enjoyed attending the unit despite their serious conditions.

Caroline Wadlow, unit manager said "We are delighted to have maintained the highest MQEM award possible. It has truly been a team effort that shows dedication and commitment to making a caring and friendly environment for patients and visitors."

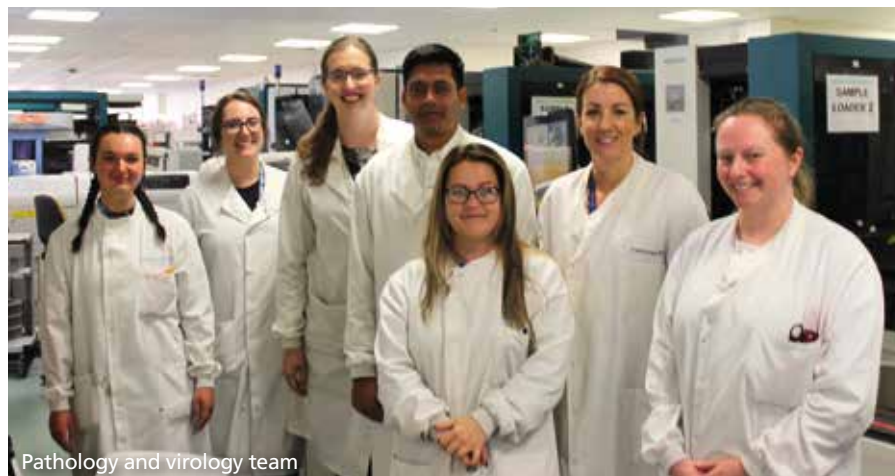
Innovative research project wins prestigious award

A PILOT scheme which screens emergency department patients for infectious diseases has proven to be a huge success, testing more than 3,700 patients in its first seven months.

The James Cook team, which was made up of the emergency department, pathology research team and virology lab, won a prestigious award at the British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) conference for the initiative. This involves testing for blood borne viruses (BBV) and syphilis when people have any blood samples taken in the emergency department. South Tees Hospitals was the first unit to include syphilis screening.

By August 2024, 142 patients have tested positive for one of the infections allowing early medical intervention. Most patients have been contacted, and, where necessary, started treatment. This has also, through treatment and partner notification, led to reduced transmission of these infections.

The project has shown that there are groups of people, especially those living with hepatitis C and syphilis, who have not been reached through conventional screening efforts (for example, in drug rehabilitation



Pathology and virology team

venues, sexual health clinics or general practices). However, they attend the emergency department and can be identified via screening there.

The project was presented by Hannah Williams, a foundation year two doctor, who won the prize for the most publishable work.

David Chadwick, consultant in infectious diseases said: "We are delighted that our team's efforts have been recognised through this award and we have been able to show that screening people for these infections in A&E works, particularly in groups of people who don't access other services for screening."

Blood-borne viruses - BBV (HIV, hepatitis B/C) and syphilis infections are more common in deprived and marginalised populations. HIV and

hepatitis B are disproportionately found in African and Asian minorities, hepatitis C in IV drug users and some ethnic minorities, and syphilis in those of lower socioeconomic groups.

In Teesside, levels of hepatitis C and syphilis are above national averages. Late diagnoses of BBV infection are relatively common with poor outcomes such as AIDS, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Since January this year, screening started for these infections in James Cook's emergency department as part of a service evaluation project based on similar projects in London and other large cities.

Following the presentation, several other units around the country have confirmed they plan to implement a similar screening programme for syphilis along with BBVs based on this project. The success of the pilot project is a result of the staff in the emergency department, virology lab and pathology research team, as well as the centre for clinical infection and local Teesside Sexual Health services working collectively together.

Sarah Essex, research team lead for South Tees said: "This excellent project is the result of a great collaboration across research, clinical and pathology services within the trust and the local area. I'm really proud of all the teams for coming together to deliver this study for our patients, highlighting the importance of BBV and syphilis screening and setting an example for other centres."



Hannah Williams presenting at BASHH conference

Ghana team receive warm welcome to Teesside

AFTER five trips to Ghana to deliver life-saving procedures and training, our heart team were delighted to welcome their Ghanaian colleagues to Teesside.

Staff from Ghana shared their experiences at a well-attended Schwartz Round and joined James Cook colleagues on ward rounds and in clinics to improve their general cardiology and cardiac surgery skills.

Their packed three-week schedule

of training also included cardiac advanced life support, aortic surgery (in Liverpool), bypass surgery, valve surgery and sepsis awareness.

South Tees consultant cardiothoracic surgeon Enoch Akowuah, who grew up in Kumasi, Ghana, and has been leading the regular fundraising missions said: "It has been an amazing opportunity to have the Ghana team with us at University Hospitals Tees for the last

three weeks. The enthusiasm with which they have seized the opportunity afforded to them by this visit was wonderful to see.

"The enthusiasm with which they have seized the opportunity afforded to them by this visit was wonderful to see."

"We have learned so much from them too. We really look forward to returning to Ghana later in the year to see the team put all the new amazing skills and knowledge to work for the benefit of their patients."



Heart surgery training for Ghana colleagues



The Ghana team attending a Schwartz Round at STRIVE

National role for orthopaedic surgeon

PROFESSOR of orthopaedic surgery, Amar Rangan, has been named British Orthopaedic Association (BOA) president for 2026-2027.

Amar has been delivering specialist shoulder and elbow and arthroscopic reconstructive surgery to patients for over 24 years in his role as a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at James Cook.

He will become vice-president elect for the BOA in September 2024 before taking on the presidency in 2026.

The British Orthopaedic Association is the surgical specialty association for trauma and orthopaedics in the UK.

"It's truly an honour to lead the largest national surgical specialty association, and I'm delighted to have

been elected to this role. We will continue to promote highest standards of care for our patients in trauma and orthopaedics through policies, education, training, and high-quality research," he said.

Amar also heads up the South Tees Academic Centre for Surgery (ACeS) where he leads a programme of clinical and translational research.

This fantastic achievement is testament to Amar's commitment and dedication to improving the future of trauma and orthopaedics for our patients.



Amar Rangan, professor of orthopaedic surgery

Tees Valley to South Luangwa Valley

AFTER 17 happy years working as a consultant paediatrician at James Cook, Ginny Birrell, 58, hung up her UK stethoscope and picked it up again as a volunteer doctor in rural Zambia.

Ginny, who retired in 2021, and her husband, Keith Birrell, a retired general practitioner have a real passion, adventure and drive for life.

They first went to the South Luangwa Valley on holiday in 2012, returning with Ginny's parents when they turned 50 in 2016. It was then they first heard about the valley doctor job. Their intention was to retire in 2021 and begin a new career.

In 2021 they officially became volunteer valley doctors supporting the South Luangwa Valley national park community.

Their roles are varied. The post is funded by the tourist industry. This means they are on-call for sick or injured tourists, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Thankfully this is not too demanding. The main work they do is in the local clinic. They work there every morning Monday to Friday.

"We support the staff to provide care to our local population. About 35,000 people."

The clinic receives a variable medicine supply once per month, including Malaria treatments. If a drug is not available, the patient will have to go and buy it from the local pharmacy.

14% of the population have HIV. There are good supplies of HIV and TB treatments. Ginny explained: "We have a big problem with medication as people often don't have the money to buy it. The clinic can run out of basic drugs."

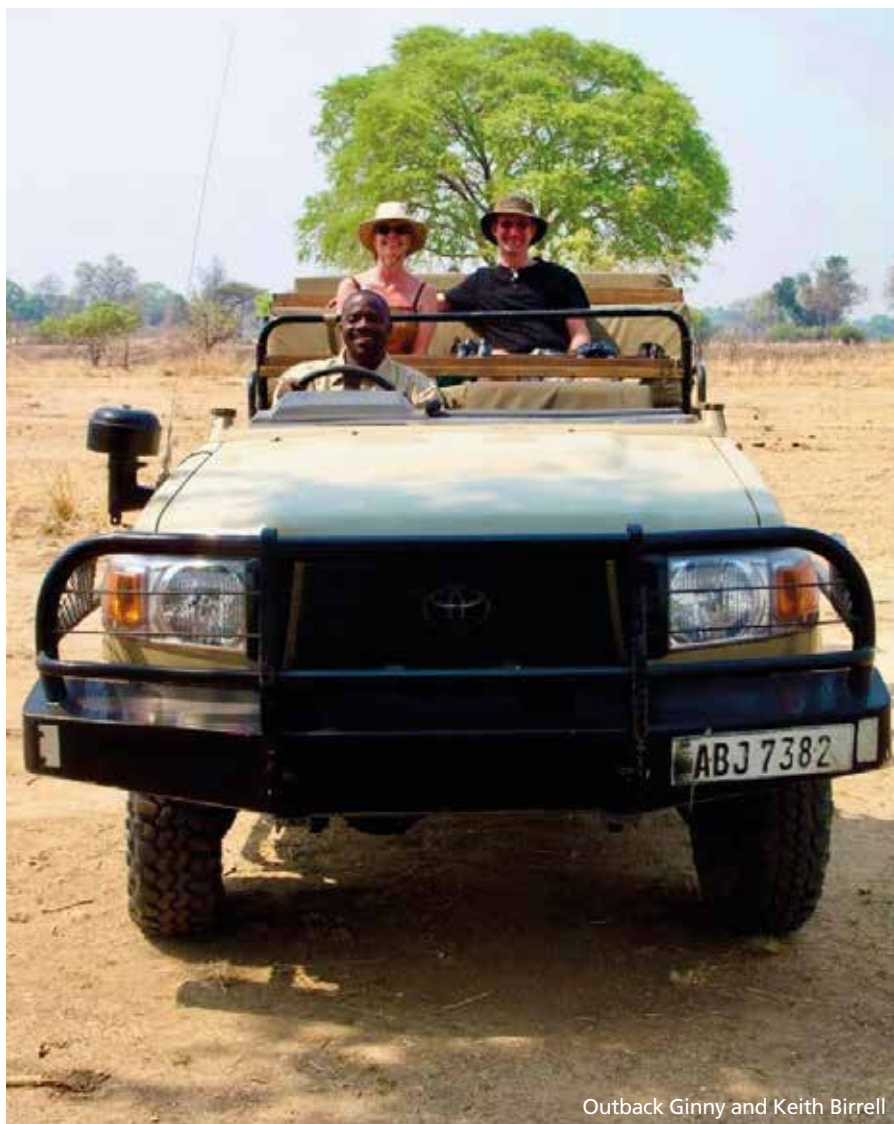
"We love the differences of splitting our time between the UK and Zambia. The worlds are poles apart."

She added: "Sometimes we can see up to 200 people in a morning clinic. Being a paediatrician, I tend to see children and young people and Keith sees the more complex adult cases."

"We recently had a six-month-old baby come into the clinic because she wouldn't stop crying. The parents couldn't work out what was wrong, so they brought her into the clinic. Within a couple of minutes, I had diagnosed sickle cell disease. The baby was crying because she was in intense pain. I

was then able to refer the baby onto the local hospital to receive the right course of treatment. However, I know the standard of treatment is not the same as the baby would get in the UK. I felt pleased to be able to offer a diagnosis. But frustrated and sad for the family that I could not do more. We have a large population of babies with sickle cell disease. I know this baby and family will have a tough life dealing with multiple painful crises, severe anaemia, multiple infections and perhaps even dying in childhood."

Keith and Ginny have founded a programme that facilitates primary prevention of strokes and heart attacks in Zambia. There is little education



Outback Ginny and Keith Birrell



Ginny and Keith up close and personal

about health in Zambia but the inspiring doctors aim to change that.

Although there are huge differences in cultures, landscapes, terrain, wildlife and healthcare; some of the challenges remain the same as the NHS; patients have high blood pressure (hypertension), type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular problems linked to heart attacks, strokes, high cholesterol and glucose levels.

The focus is primarily on prevention, education and training as Zambian diets are based on a high content of sugar and salt. They visit remote camps tackling unmet needs in some of most beautiful parts of the world dedicated to game reserve and wildlife conservation.

"People can't really go out and walk or run as we do in UK. It's too



Ginny and Keith jeep safari watching

dangerous as the valley has a lot of elephants and hippos walking about. Ten people in the surrounding area lost their lives to elephant attacks last year.

"It's currently the end of our winter season, so it is similar to back home as we have a flu outbreak. There are no general tests available. It makes us realise how lucky we are with the NHS. We do see a lot of tropical diseases though, so that's why I've recently undertaken a diploma in tropical medicine."

Although retired, when Ginny returns to the UK, she still provides flexible cover to the paediatric team at James Cook.

"We love the differences of splitting our time between the UK and Zambia. The worlds are poles apart. We go



Ginny and Keith photographing an elephant

from the intense heat, ruralness and diversity of being in the bush surrounded by elephants, lions roaring in the distance, crocodiles, hippos and snakes. Let's just say it's a bit different to Tees Valley.

"It's so rewarding. We've built up those trusting relationships with our local community and colleagues. We plan to come back for the next 10 years. We understand we can't deliver the same depth of healthcare as we do in the UK but we do the best we can with the resources we have. It makes a real difference to the community we support."

If you are interested in volunteering, support their prevent stroke programme or read their daily online blog: https://free-4448611.webador.co.uk/blog/1958763_time-critical



Valley doctors, Ginny and Keith Birrell

American students visit James Cook

OUR group chief nurse Hilary Lloyd welcomed American students from Teesside University on Friday 7 June.

The annual visit is part of a long-standing partnership with Teesside

University. As part of a national two week visit to the UK, the North Florida

psychology and health and social care students were presented with an overview of the NHS, how we work at University Hospitals Tees and a tour of James Cook.



American students visit James Cook

Exemplar cleaning award

FOLLOWING the successful retention of the Five Star EHO food hygiene rating, Serco have reached yet another pinnacle in the James Cook being awarded "Exemplar Status" for cleaning by NHS England.

This award acknowledges the best-in-class service being provided by Serco at James Cook and is testament to all of the hard work, commitment and diligence shown by all of our domestic colleagues.

As part of the certification process, NHS England colleagues visited James Cook on Tuesday 11 June.

Steve Taylor, director of estates said "It's great to see all the hard work paying off and the teams efforts being rightly recognised for this achievement. Well done!"

Congratulations and thank you!



NHS England, South Tees estates team and Serco colleagues confirm exemplar certification

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