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Issue 81, Spring 2025

PEACOCK

The Friends of Moorfields Magazine



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**Friends of
Moorfields
Eye Hospital**

A note from our Chairman

Regular readers will be only too aware of how proud I am of our staff and volunteers. I never cease to be amazed, and extremely grateful, at the wonderful work they do. World class volunteering supporting patients at a world class hospital.

Our volunteers, and the professional teams that support them, are an incredibly diverse group of people but they have much in common. They are committed to supporting others. They are kind and thoughtful. They demonstrate a generosity of spirit that is rarely found these days. In short, they are exemplary, individually and collectively.

Whether they be handholding nervous patients during eye surgery or simply helping them to arrive at the right clinic at the right time; whether they be telephoning patients to remind them of appointments or helping in our shop; whether they be supporting our staff in the health hub or engaging in many of the different activities we undertake; our volunteers are an important part of 'Team Moorfields'.



In closing, now is an appropriate time to recognise two special people who have demonstrated the qualities I have referred to in abundance. Shop volunteer June and Business Development Manager Florence Bayonne. June, now in her nineties, has been a volunteer for over 30 years. If one wished to seek a person who has given selflessly to support her fellow human beings one need look no further. Florence is leaving us after 10 years service. Her dedication and cheerful disposition will be much missed, I very much hope that we will continue to see her from time to time.

Tim Hutchings
Chairman of the Board
of Trustees, Friends of
Moorfields

Since you last saw us...

Here's some of what we've been up to since the last issue of Peacock.

The A&E at Moorfields City Road was rated higher by patients than every other A&E in the country in the 2024 CQC Urgent and emergency care survey. Our volunteers provide 78 hours of volunteer support a week to the fantastic A&E team. We're very proud of their contribution to this achievement!



Our handholding service has expanded to cover more sites than ever before! We now have handholding volunteers at Moorfields at Ealing and Moorfields at Northwick Park. We now provide around 200 hours of handholding a week, across nine Moorfields sites.

Congratulations to our volunteer Brenda, who won Volunteer of the Year at the annual Moorfields Stars awards. Brenda volunteers as a handholder, trains new handholders, and also knits items to sell in our shop!

Congratulations also to our volunteers Shyma and David, who were shortlisted alongside Brenda - thank you all so much for your hard work!



Good Luck, Florence!

After ten years of hard work and fun, our fundraising and business development manager Florence Bayonne is moving on to pastures new!

Florence joined Friends in March 2015, as Shop Manager, and was made Fundraising and Business Development Manager in April 2021. The shop has seen many changes since Florence took on the role, including introducing an Electronic Point of Sale till which integrates with our finance systems

She led on a project to reduce the amount of sugar that is in the drinks we sell - and offer other, healthier options for our customers.

Ten years ago we did not have a shop window, so Florence persuaded the trust to install one for us, which she kept



regularly updated with displays.

Florence introduced a range of products from Cobolt Systems to support visually impaired customers, such as talking clocks, kitchen equipment and large-button telephones.



Angela Smith, chief executive, said: "Florence will be greatly missed by everyone! She has been a pleasure to work with, and really made the hospital

shop into something very special. I want to thank Florence for 10 years exceptional service, and wish her the very best in the future."

Welcome Abdul!

Whilst it is sad to say goodbye to Florence, we are delighted to welcome our new Business Development Manager - Abdul-Samed Labaran. Abdul has an impressive CV, having worked for both The British Heart Foundation and AGE UK as well as managing departments in Primark and Ikea.

Please do pop in to the shop and introduce yourself to Abdul when you are next at City Road!



AGM Report

This January, we held our Annual General Meeting for the 2023-2024 financial year, and took the opportunity to reflect on the year's successes and learn from our colleagues at Moorfields.

The meeting took place at St Luke's Community Centre, just a few minutes' walk away from Moorfields City Road, and was attended by trustees, staff members, and dozens of our members and volunteers.

As well as handling the official business of the AGM, we heard from speakers from Moorfields and Friends on a variety of interesting topics.

After our chairman Tim Hutchings welcomed everyone, and the members approved the minutes from the previous AGM, Consultant Ophthalmologist Professor Andrew Webster shared his work on genetic eye conditions.

Next, the meeting moved on to official business. Long-serving trustee Michael Parker stepped down - we're very grateful for his valuable contributions over the years. He will remain a member of our governance committee. Three trustees co-opted during the year - Neil Ashcroft, Louise Boddy and Carl Curbishley - were elected by the full membership, and we're very pleased to welcome them aboard!

Following this, an incredible 26 long service awards were given out to volunteers. These

were mainly celebrating five years of service, as a number of volunteers joined us in 2019 following an appeal by HelpForce. Congratulations to all the volunteers who were recognised!

In his Chairman's Report, Tim Hutchings highlighted the wide range of tasks volunteers help with at Moorfields, and concluded by thanking the volunteers, members and staff for all their support and hard work.

Neil Ashcroft, treasurer, presented the annual accounts.

Chief executive Angela Smith gave an update on our progress towards our strategic objectives for 2022-2027, particularly focusing on the growth and diversity of our volunteer community - we now have around 340 volunteers, from a wide range of backgrounds. She also looked forward to the challenge of supporting patients with wayfinding after the move to the new centre in 2027.



Moorfields chief operating officer Jon Spencer gave a progress report on the new centre, as well as on the Electronic Patient Record project which will improve clinical outcomes by making clinical information easier for clinicians to access and use. Elena Bechberger, director of strategy and partnerships, talked about how innovation at Moorfields is driving improvements to care.

Many thanks to everyone who attended the AGM! If you were not able to attend, or would like more detail on the presentations, visit our website for a fuller report.



From volunteer to patient

Steve shares how his experience as a patient brought a new dimension to his volunteering.



During the last almost four years of volunteering, I have had contact with thousands of patients and carers. I volunteer at the front entrance at Moorfields City Road.

Some patients are what I call “frequent flyers” – that is, they have been to Moorfields many times and are comfortable with where they need to go,

and also with what is going to happen when they see the clinical staff. Some patients are not so confident, but we get them to where they need to be. Some will be experiencing a degree of anxiety, especially if they are due to have a surgical procedure. I assure patients who walk through the door feeling anxious that there’s no reason to be concerned, because the staff at Moorfields are fantastic.

Who would have thought that I was to become one of those patients! I thought I had my nerves under control, but as my cataract surgery date approached, my anxiety levels rose. I had heard about the handholding service delivered by my fellow volunteers, and the week prior to surgery, I asked if I could have a handholder. After arriving at the clinic and being admitted by the



wonderful hospital staff, I was warmly greeted by Parul, who is a volunteer handholder. She stayed with me for the entire surgery, although I don’t remember much after being moved into theatre. While I waited, Parul and I had a chat about anything and everything. She showed a genuine interest in my life without prying. She has a very special skill to put you at ease and make you totally forget any anxieties. In fact, the whole team were great, from the moment I arrived at the Sedgwick ward reception through to the pre-op room where I met the anaesthetic nurse and anaesthetist, right up to when I eventually arrived in the post-op room, where a lovely hot cup of tea was

waiting for me. All the clinical staff were very aware that the procedure may be daunting to some, particularly if it’s your first eye surgery.

I am a convert to the value of handholding for patients. My experience was heightened by having someone there who held my hand and reassured me, and the whole thing has given me a new perspective on how a patient who is having eye surgery might feel. Not only can I say (and do say) that Moorfields clinicians are among the best in the world, but I add that I can back that, as I’m living proof. My vision improvement is life changing and it was done at Moorfields City Road.

Volunteers Around the World

Friends of Moorfields volunteers make their way all around the world! We talked to two former volunteers about their new adventures.

Swee Lee, who volunteered with us for two years, was recently accepted to medical school

“I joined Friends of Moorfields in 2020 and volunteered in their hand-holding programme. During my shift, I would approach and speak to patients who were scheduled for surgery. I loved listening to each of their unique stories which are often inspiring and heartwarming. Sometimes, I would offer to accompany patients into the theatre and hold their hand throughout the procedure. Patients had fed back that doing



so helped to put them at ease, and I am ever so grateful for this opportunity to be part of an initiative that is so fulfilling.

Later this year, I will be starting

medical school in Singapore. My experience volunteering in Moorfields greatly influenced my decision to pursue Medicine. I loved seeing different medical professionals work together to deliver quality care to patients – you can see it in the smiles of patients here. If an

Elizabeth Lee Wen Yu, who volunteered with us last year, is now working as Staff Nurse, Ward 13/23-ICU, Sengkang General Hospital

“My volunteering journey began in May 2024, where I took on the role of handholder. In the waiting room, I engaged with patients, offering comfort and reassurance before their procedures. I then accompanied them into the operating theatre, holding their hands throughout the procedure and providing reassurance, helping to create a calm and supportive environment.

opportunity arises, coming back to Moorfields for training would most definitely be part of the plan. I’ve made many quality friendships and genuinely appreciate the friendly environment that is found in Moorfields. Thank you for having me!”



As a handholding volunteer, I developed invaluable skills in building rapport with patients from diverse backgrounds. I learned how to be a comforting presence, whether through providing a listening ear or a few reassuring words, or simply

In memory of Colin Spence



It is with great sadness that we must share the passing of long-term volunteer Colin Spence.

Colin, who passed away unexpectedly last November, started volunteering in January 2018, supporting the Medical Imaging team by greeting patients and passing image requests for various cameras on to the technicians.

During the pandemic he moved to the RDCEC reception and helped keep patient safe by

helping the team there to ensure social distancing and other restrictions the trust put in place during this difficult time.

When all the restrictions were lifted in late 2022, Colin went back to his previous role supporting Medical Imaging. He also joined a team in a specialist genetic clinic on Tuesdays, where he helped patients moving around the hospital for tests and images.

Natalia Tomashpolskaya, Volunteer Service Manager, said: "Colin was a much respected and loved member of the volunteer team. He really enjoyed being part of Friends of Moorfields and always said his volunteering was something he really looked forward to doing every week. Colin rarely missed a day and always helped others with kindest smile and great sense of humour that lifted everyone up. Colin will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by everyone who met him at Moorfields."

My experience as a handholding volunteer at Moorfields taught me invaluable transferable skills that I bring into my nursing practice every day. I learned how to support anxious patients and families, and how a few words of encouragement or a simple gesture—like holding a patient's hand—can bring warmth and reassurance in moments of fear. These small but meaningful acts of care have helped me become a more compassionate and patient-centered nurse, always striving to create a comforting environment for those under my care.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to volunteer with Moorfields Eye Hospital and to share my experience. Volunteering has not only allowed me to give back in a meaningful way but has also taught me so much in return. The connections I made, the skills I developed, and the moments of kindness I experienced will stay with me forever."

holding a patient's hand. It was truly rewarding when patients would tell me after their surgery that my support had helped put their minds at ease.

Beyond my time in the theatre, volunteering allowed me to form meaningful friendships with fellow volunteers and Moorfields staff. Seeing them regularly and getting to know them added another layer of joy to my experience. When I returned to London for my graduation earlier this year, I visited Moorfields and was met with such a warm welcome—it felt like where I was most connected to culturally.

Currently, I am an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Nurse at Sengkang General Hospital in Singapore, where I care for critically ill patients. Many of my patients require ventilator support, which can be a scary experience, as they are unable to speak or communicate easily. This can also be incredibly stressful for their families, who may feel helpless seeing their loved ones in such a vulnerable state.

Thank you!

We're so grateful to all our supporters. If you've done something special for us, let us know so we can shout about it here!



Congratulations and a huge thank you to our volunteer June, who volunteers at our shop and was recently presented with an award for an incredible 30 years of service as a Friends of Moorfields volunteer!

"It's such a friendly hospital," says June. "The years have gone by so quickly, because happy years do go past quickly, and I'm quite staggered that it's been that long. I'm so glad I have been able to achieve this."

Many thanks to our dedicated team of tube station fundraisers! Over the course of 2024, between them they have raised a fantastic £2,425.07 towards our vital work at Moorfields, as well as increasing awareness of the services we provide.



Our Valentine's Day bake sale at Moorfields City Road raised £350! Thank you to volunteers and staff for their kind donations of baked goods, and their help on the day!



Thank you to Moorfields Eye Charity who generously contribute towards the funding of our Volunteer Service.



Moorfields Eye Charity



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