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Art for hearts

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**Pam Hook,
Fundraising Administrator**

Welcome to the latest edition of Pulse. We've lots to share with you, with all the latest on our pioneering research, community grants and you, our supporters.

But first, I wanted to let you know about one of our most enjoyable and ambitious campaigns, the anonymous heART project.

Earlier in the year we asked celebrities, artists and high profile names to donate a unique piece of anonymous A5 artwork. We received some fantastic art. Opening the post became one of the favourite jobs in the office, with everyone gathering around to see the new masterpieces.

All the money we raised allows us to continue funding pioneering medical research projects into the prevention, treatment and cure of heart disease. Read on to learn more about the project.

Also in this issue, take a step inside a Heart Research UK surgical masterclass, follow one of our supporters along the Great Wall of China and meet the man behind the famous Highland McCoo paintings.

We're not like other charities, we never stop you in the street, knock on your door or phone you to ask for money. We simply treat you how we would like to be treated. Everything we achieve is thanks to the generosity and time of our supporters and we don't take that for granted.

We hope you enjoy.

Pam

Here at Heart Research UK we like to spend your money wisely. Sponsorship of Pulse means that we can spend more money on research. If you'd like to hear more about options for sponsorship please contact Isabel at corporate@heartresearch.org.uk

Pulse contributors
(from left to right)
Abigail Twinn
Alexandra Preston
Sam Turner
Daniel Raymond



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hello

Front cover artwork: Steven Brown (stevenbrownart.co.uk)
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Magazine design: Hannah Yates (hannahyates.co.uk)

Leading the way

In our latest grant rounds, we awarded more than £412,000 for Translational Research Project Grants. These grants aim to bridge the gap between laboratory-based scientific research and patient care, to benefit patients as soon as possible. This year, for the first time, we also offered a special regional grant for Scotland and were inundated with applications. After going through rigorous assessment by our reviewers, we awarded over £228,000 for heart disease research at Scottish institutions.



£147,572

Translational Research Grant
‘Pre-habilitation’ in elderly patients undergoing cardiac surgery

Mr Enoch Akowuah
South Tees NHS Hospitals Foundation Trust
24 months

The problem

Nearly 10,000 UK patients over the age of 75 undergo heart surgery every year. The ‘waiting period’ between the decision to have surgery and the actual operation is an opportunity to improve patients’ fitness and health before the operation.

The project

Mr Akowuah and his team have developed a 4-week ‘pre-habilitation’ programme to improve exercise capacity, strength of breathing muscles and ability to balance.

Patients will have either standard care or pre-habilitation before heart surgery. The outcome of heart surgery will be compared in the two groups to see if pre-habilitation benefits patients.

The benefits

The aim is to develop an effective, safe and acceptable programme of pre-habilitation before heart surgery for patients over the age of 75. It is hoped that by improving fitness and health before surgery, pre-habilitation will improve the outcome of surgery.



£149,557

Translational Research Grant
Metal fingerprinting in coronary heart disease for better diagnosis and treatment

Prof Giovanni Mann
King’s College London
24 months

The problem

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is due to a gradual narrowing of the coronary arteries which restricts the blood flow and oxygen supply to the heart muscle. Treatment to restore the blood flow results in higher oxygen levels in the blood supplying the heart muscle and is called ‘reperfusion’.

The project

Metals, such as zinc, calcium, iron, copper and manganese are essential for the health of tissues and cells and changes in the levels of these metals have been linked with CHD.

This project will study cells grown in the lab under different oxygen concentrations to mimic healthy hearts, CHD and reperfusion. They will measure the levels and distribution of metals and map them to different regions in coronary arteries to help us understand the role of metals in heart disease.

The benefits

If successful, the findings may help in the diagnosis and treatment of CHD in the future.



£114,992

Translational Research Grant
Detecting hidden markers to investigate and diagnose diabetic vascular disease

Dr Andrew Smith
University of Leeds
24 months

The problem

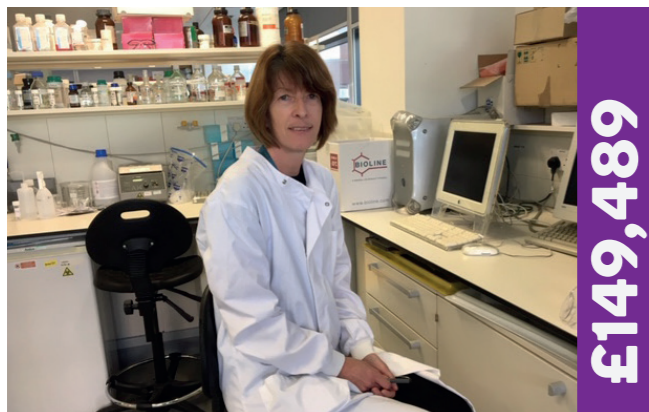
People with diabetes have a higher risk of developing coronary heart disease. Almost 3.7 million people in the UK have been diagnosed with diabetes. Diabetes causes severe damage to blood vessels, with serious consequences such as heart attacks, strokes and loss of limbs.

The project

Cells in blood vessels produce proteins due to diabetes which are released into the bloodstream. This project will use a new technique to collect proteins from cells before they are released and see if they can be used as ‘biomarkers’ to assess when cells have been changed by disease and track changes as disease develops.

The benefits

The aim is for the biomarkers to be used as an early test for pre-diabetes so that progression to a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis can be prevented.



£149,489

New regional Scotland Grant
Investigating the 'cardiotoxic' effects of cobalt in patients with hip replacements



£79,204

New regional Scotland Grant
Stopping cancer patients getting heart disease

Dr Susan Currie
University of Strathclyde
24 months

The problem

There is evidence of a link between hip replacements, where metals such as cobalt are used in the artificial joints, and heart disease. Over time, cobalt accumulates in the heart which can cause damage and lead to heart failure.

The project

The aim is to study the damaging effects of cobalt on heart cells and tissue. The team will study whether there is a link between cobalt exposure and changes in the levels and activity of a particular heart protein which has a central role in regulating heart function.

Blood samples from hip replacement patients will also be studied to determine if this same protein and other related substances can be used as novel 'biomarkers' to assess deterioration of heart cell function.

The benefits

If successful, the findings may help doctors predict whether or when hip replacement patients will develop heart disease, so that progression to heart failure may be prevented.

Prof Robin Plevin
University of Strathclyde
36 months

The problem

Cancer patients who have chemotherapy or X-ray treatment to kill the cancer cells are more prone to getting coronary heart disease (CHD). CHD is usually due to damage and death to cells lining the blood vessels, called endothelial cells.

The project

Professor Plevin and his team have found that if you treat endothelial cells with cancer drugs or X-rays you get a very strong activation of a protein called JNK. They will test whether JNK drives the death of endothelial cells.

Also, when X-rays are fired at cells, those in the surrounding area may die or get damaged. This project will study the role of JNKs in death of cells nearby.

The benefits

If successful, this project will help us understand why people who have had cancer treatment have a higher risk of CHD which may lead to the development of new drugs to counteract this.

1954: Married the prettiest girl in Glasgow

1967: Swam the channel

2050: Helped defeat heart disease forever

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Research works.

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giftsinwills@heartresearch.org.uk
heartresearch.org.uk



Educating the experts of tomorrow

Since 2012, Heart Research UK has run a series of masterclasses across the UK, aimed at imparting new skills and knowledge to talented young surgeons, doctors and other healthcare professionals. But what's it like to actually visit one? Dan Raymond dons a gown and finds out.

Standing in a very fetching pair of scrubs in a surgical lab, with a floor to ceiling display case of human specimens on one side and a bank of cloaked cadavers on the other, I realised; this was far from my average Tuesday morning.

I'm at a Heart Research UK masterclass; a unique nationwide programme offering young surgeons expert tuition, guidance and valuable hands-on learning from an internationally renowned faculty, all funded by Heart Research UK.

Today, some of the best and brightest cardiac surgeons from across the UK have come together at the West Midlands Surgical Training Centre (WMSTC) at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire. They're all eager to learn the latest, safest and most innovative techniques in heart surgery.

The 15 surgeons spent the previous day learning, observing and carrying out a complex and highly-specialised procedure on human cadavers.

On today's agenda, minimal access aortic valve and aortic root surgery. In layman's terms (a phrase I found myself needing to use frequently during the course of the day), repairing one of the heart valves and treating aortic aneurysms near the heart through keyhole surgery. Traditionally, this type of open-heart surgery involves cutting through the sternum and opening up the rib-cage. This less invasive technique aims to reduce trauma on the patient and speed up recovery times.

As course director Professor Aung Oo put it: "If you're a patient, you want a smaller hole and a smaller scar." Makes sense to me.

Professor Oo is Professor of Cardiovascular Surgery and Clinical Lead for Aortovascular Surgery at Barts Heart Centre, St Bartholomew's Hospital and has been involved with Heart Research UK masterclasses for over five years.

"I think Heart Research UK has been very forward thinking in wanting to improve heart surgery and improve outcomes for patients",

"I think Heart Research UK has been very forward thinking in wanting to improve heart surgery and improve outcomes for patients".





Image Mr Amir Sepehripour



“These masterclasses are focused on training for UK surgeons for the benefit of UK patients”

Professor Oo tells me.

“One way is through research to support development of new knowledge, but these masterclasses bring what knowledge and skills already exist directly to surgeons.

“It’s a quicker way to get the new technology into practice and allow us to benefit patients a lot sooner. It’s one of the most effective training courses I’ve seen in the UK.”

And it’s this that sees surgeons from across the country clamouring for the limited places. The lab we’re in is buzzing - and not just from the ventilation systems. There’s a tangible feeling of excitement in the air.

I expected to see complex surgical procedures accompanied by an intense, solemn atmosphere, but these surgeons know that this is a rare opportunity and that they’re lucky to be here.

“It’s unique”, said Mr Amir Sepehripour, a Mitral Fellow

at Bart’s Heart Centre who is attending his second Heart Research UK masterclass. “The complexity of what’s done here is a lot higher than previous courses and that’s reflected in the quality of the delegates and the faculty.”

The faculty in question are certainly held in high esteem and some have travelled a long way to attend. Professor Martin Misfeld is based at the Heart Centre Leipzig in Germany, and Professor Tristan Yan has flown over 10,000 miles from the University of Sydney to share his expertise.

“I previously had to go to Leipzig to watch Professor Misfeld operate and would have to go to Sydney to see Professor Yan in action. To have them here is invaluable”, said Mr Sepehripour.

As you’d expect, the attendees made the absolute most of the experts’ time. You could hear a pin drop as Professor Misfeld was demonstrating the first procedure of the day; a minimal access aortic

“Training this cohort of senior trainees and young consultants is only going to promote advancement and innovation. These are very progressive techniques that Heart Research UK masterclasses are teaching here, so you really are benefitting patients.”

valve replacement. All eyes in the room were trained on the small, neat incision he’d made in the body, or at the TV screen above showing a close up view of the inside of the heart.

It may come as a shock, but I’m no surgeon. I’m fairly sure most of what was said over the course of the day went straight over my head. But as an observer, it was fascinating. Like most, I’ve seen footage of surgery before, even of heart surgery. However there is always an element of distance – I’d always been watching an unknown surgeon operate on an unknown patient from an unknown location, most likely whilst sitting in a comfortable chair with a coffee and some shortbread.

This was real and was happening 30cm away from me. Seeing the skill with which Professor Misfeld operated and the complexity of the procedure (at this point he was inserting an artificial valve into the heart) really drove home how remarkable heart surgery is and how far it has come over the years.

However, with new and emerging procedures and technology being developed all the time, how do surgeons that have already completed their training keep up? I posed this question to Professor Oo.

“The only way that most surgeons learn is by going to internationally run courses at large expense, or they may have to go for a six month or year-long fellowship.

“Heart Research UK masterclasses

are a good way for surgeons to get an introduction to a specialty area and to new techniques. It also allows them to interact and form relationships with an internationally renowned faculty.

“These masterclasses are focused on training for UK surgeons for the benefit of UK patients”

Mr Sepehripour agreed.

“Training this cohort of senior trainees and young consultants is only going to promote advancement and innovation. These are very progressive techniques that Heart Research UK masterclasses are teaching here, so you really are benefitting patients.”

If today’s masterclass is anything to go by, cardiac patients in the UK look to be in good hands. The dedication of all these surgeons is clear – to be willing to make a 20,000 mile round trip for a 2 day course is testament to that.

The whole experience was slightly surreal, but I came away with a much deeper respect for how astonishing surgery can be and what an important role it has to play. It was probably just my imagination, but as I left I felt more conscious of my heart beating in my chest.

For more information on Heart Research UK masterclasses, visit heartresearch.org.uk/masterclasses



New Masterclass announced

We like to do things differently and our unique masterclasses do exactly that.

Our masterclasses give clinicians, nurses, physiotherapists and health professionals the opportunity to gain new skills, knowledge and hands-on experience. Using the latest techniques and led by the leading experts in that field, these masterclasses enable us to provide more heart patients from across the UK with the latest developments and advances in care.

We are delighted to announce that we are planning the following Masterclass:

February Masterclass
Minimally Invasive Aortic Valve Replacement Surgery

Date: 14 – 15 February 2019

Location: James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough and Newcastle Surgical Training Centre

Course Director: Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, Mr Enoch Akowuah

Overview: The course will provide unique, hands-on training for cardiac surgeons under the guidance of an expert faculty.

Further masterclasses for 2019 will be announced soon



Gone Fishing with... Paul & Bob

Image Bob Mortimer (left) and Paul Whitehouse (right), BBC/Owl Power/Parisa Taghizadeh

After both undergoing heart procedures, comedians Paul Whitehouse and Bob Mortimer set off on a journey around Britain to catch some fish, share their experiences and enjoy some heart healthy food for the BBC show 'Gone Fishing.'

We caught up with Paul and Bob to discuss the show, how their lives have changed since their procedures and how they stay healthy on the road.

Where's the best place you've fished together?

Paul & Bob: The Derbyshire Wye. It was so beautiful and the massive cows who walked casually across the stream where we were fishing is one of the moments in the series which we won't ever forget. It was magical!

What's been your prize catch?

B: I think that has to be the barbel we caught on the Hertfordshire Wye - it was an incredible moment. The fish was so big and so powerful, it was really special to catch it. We didn't think we were going to get one but at the very end of the day we both caught. It was so exciting - and quite scary for me.

What are the best and worst things about filming Gone Fishing?

P: Bob and Bob! He just can't keep quiet and his fishing etiquette leaves a lot to be desired. He's always thumping up and down the riverbanks disturbing the fish I'm trying to catch!

B: Staying in such varied and beautiful accommodation is great, the worst thing is having to share it with Paul.

How do you both know each other?

B: Paul came to see Big Night Out at the Albany Empire with Charlie Higson. There was an instant rapport between us all. We all came through and climbed up the comedy ladder at the same time.

We shaped and shared an era of comedy and that has always bonded us together.

What are your stories with heart disease?

P: I've had stents fitted and Bob had a triple bypass operation. We're always arguing about who was the bravest and who is the fittest now!

How have your lives changed since your diagnoses?

B: It has really improved, I have so much more energy and I sleep more. I feel so much better all round. I do need to do more exercise though - and I'm working on that.

P: I do exercise a lot more now, I'm very regimented about it. I'm always very conscious of keeping my heart healthy and listening to the advice I'm given.

What's your favourite healthy heart recipe?

B: It's probably my Tuna Melanie, which is tuna cooked with marmalade and tinned potatoes. Even better when cooked on a small stove on the riverbank and shared with Paul of course.

P: I'm a big fan of tinned potatoes... especially when cooked by Bob on a riverbank.

What's the best piece of advice you were given following your diagnosis?

P: Do your rehabilitation exercises, it's transformed my life. It's allowed me to become vigorous once again!

B: The most important thing I did after my surgery was to stop smoking. My surgeon also told me not to sleep on my side for as long as possible. The main issue after surgery is the scar not healing properly, so not sleeping on my side was really important.

How did 'Gone Fishing' come about?

B: After my surgery, Paul called me and invited me to go fishing with him. It was a way of getting back to life really. I'd been a bit down and was just staying at home, but I

went out fishing with Paul and loved it. A little while later we realised it could make a lovely television show because it is so real and not created simply for the cameras.

How do you stay heart healthy on the road?

P&B: We admit it's tricky but we try our best to eat healthy - there's always heart healthy snacks to hand. The challenge is to reach for an apple when it's right next to a bag of jelly babies! But we always have it in the back of our minds to eat as healthy as possible. Breakfast is the easiest - the crew are not around every morning and we usually have porridge or yoghurt and fruit, so at least we get off to a healthy start!

What part does research play in the treatment of heart disease?

P&B: We both owe our lives to the research which has been done and continues. We are both so grateful to everyone involved.

**Lisa Clark,
Executive Producer,
Entertainment &
Comedy Television
Production, BBC**

What response have you had to the discussions of heart disease on the show?

We've had a lot of response, much more than we actually anticipated. It's ranged from people being inspired to get a heart check up to people who've had an operation and have been inspired to continue on their road to recovery. It seems to have touched so many people and we are all really thrilled with that.

To think we might have helped people as we made our show is really very heart-warming indeed.

Season 2 of Gone Fishing will be out in 2019.



**Thank you for raising
over £43,000 to help us
take on heart disease**

The
anonymous
heART
project

The anonymous heART project: Art for hearts

The dust has finally settled from the anonymous heART project, Heart Research UK's most ambitious fundraiser of the year. 467 pieces of unique artwork from 266 contributors and nine exclusive auction pieces all went under the hammer, raising over £43,000 for our pioneering medical research.

When the anonymous heART project was first envisioned, no-one at Heart Research UK could have imagined how far it would go and how much engagement we would receive from the artistic community.

The premise was a fairly simple one – hundreds of pieces of art on A5 postcards, created by a host of international celebrities, artists, designers and creative Heart Research UK supporters.

The pieces would then all be auctioned on eBay, with the artist of each piece hidden until it landed on the winning bidder's doorstep.

Requests were sent out, pencils, pens and paintbrushes were wielded, and the postcards started to flood in.

'Anonymous heART' fever gripped the Heart Research UK office. Every visit from the postman brought a raft of new artwork and gathering round to see what masterpieces



Image The anonymous heART project exhibition

had been delivered, and by whom, quickly became a highlight of the day.

We received stunning original pieces from internationally renowned artists including Steven Brown, Ashley Jackson and Ralph Steadman. Fun and quirky designs from a raft of celebrities, including Simon Pegg, Jo Brand and Martin Clunes landed on our doorstep, with even Theresa May, Nicola Sturgeon and David Cameron taking time out from dancing and Brexit for some art therapy.

Before long, 467 pieces of art were photographed and uploaded, before being released unto the world on 2 November. Again, the office was hooked and, with the Heart Research UK eBay shop open on all our screens, the constant clicking of the refresh key echoed around the office as the total climbed ever higher.

All the artwork, along with nine larger pieces donated by artists from around the world, was bubble-wrapped to within an inch of its life for a journey down the M1 to a private view and auction at London's Kings Place.

Guests of the international law firm Walker Morris, the sponsors of the anonymous heART project, joined with Heart Research UK supporters for the evening, which saw all the pieces out on display.

The guessing games began, with everyone trying to match the pieces of art to the famous names. Some were easier than others. 'You are indispensable' by international musician Nick Cave was a simple spot, even without his signature on the front.

The keen artistic eye could easily pick out Ralph Steadman's trio of pieces and the one-of-a-kind 'Hearty McCoo' by renowned artist Steven Brown was instantly recognisable.

It was Steven's piece that topped our online auction, selling for a whopping £975. Steven also kindly

donated a No1 limited edition artist's proof of 'Wee Ben McCoo' for auction at the event. A full scale bidding war soon broke out amongst attendees, with the hammer finally coming down at £1500.

Also up for sale were pieces by Jonas Jödicke, Deborah Azzopardi, Rob Ryan, Steve MacLeod, Chrissie Richards, Joe Webb, Euan Roberts and Kai & Sunny. All in all, the pieces on the night fetched over £5000.

As well as the pieces created by celebrities and artists, artwork from Heart Research UK staff and supporters fetched a very respectable fee. Designs from Heart Research UK office staff raised over £600, with special mentions to Grants Administrator Sally and Legacies Officer Abi, whose pieces each raised over £100.

"We've never had such a response to a fundraising campaign."

The project took off on Twitter and was seen by over 8m people around the world, including one Canadian boy who wanted to do his bit to help.

14 year old Jay Mellor heard about the 'anonymous heART project' over in Winnipeg, Canada. Jay, who is autistic, has a love of computers and created his digital artwork 'Mr Anonymous Heart' for our online auction.

'Mr Anonymous Heart' went on to sell for £50. We caught up with Karen Mellor, Jay's mother, to get his reaction.

"When Jay was younger he was non-verbal. Art became a way for him to express himself as speech can be difficult. This is the first time he has ever done something like this on his own. He is so happy that he received 17 bids and that his work was included in the fundraiser.

"We are so happy that Jay had a chance to participate and help out with the cause."



Image Mr Anonymous Heart by Jay Mellor

When the virtual hammer came down on the online auction, all 467 pieces had sold for a total of £37,598.60. Not even the impending task of packaging and posting almost 500 pieces of expensive artwork could dampen our excitement.

Barbara Harpham, Heart Research UK's Chief Executive said: "We have never had such a response to a fundraising campaign. Artists and celebrities from all over the world donated artwork and the online auction was flooded with bidders until the last second.

"From the comments we've had, supporters really enjoyed the thrill of winning their chosen pieces and there is certainly enthusiasm to have this as a regular event. Next time, it will be even bigger and better and pay for even more pioneering heart research."

The anonymous heART project was truly a labour of love; the culmination of months of hard work and hundreds of generous donations. We raised a fantastic amount of money and we couldn't have done it without the help and support of all of our contributing artists, our dedicated staff and volunteers and all those who supported the exhibition. To all of you, thank you.

To view a full collection of the artwork and artists, visit heartresearch.org.uk/anonymous-heart-project

Here are the top ten pieces from the anonymous heART project eBay auction



**Steven Brown
Hearty McCoo,
£975**



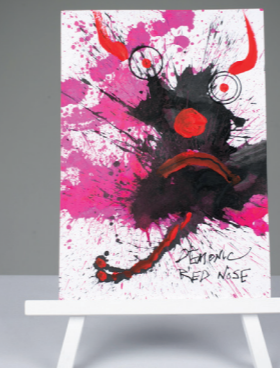
**Nick Cave – You are indispensable,
£860**



**Ralph Steadman – Red Whizz,
£670**



**Magnus Gjoen – Amoris Laetitia
(the joy of love), £552**



**Ralph Steadman – Demonic Red Nose,
£525**



**Chris Alton – This wil look really good
in the downstairs toilet, £510**



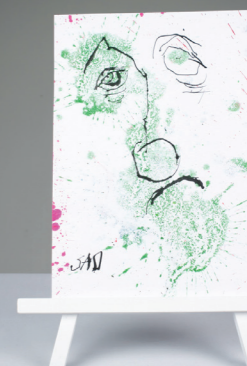
**David Cameron – Untitled,
£500**



**Justine Smith – Give, Love,
£500**



**Ray Richardson – Sell your mother,
£438**



**Ralph Steadman – Sad,
£385**

Help tomorrow's hearts, today



Image Imogen and mum Vicky

Imogen Tankard was just six months old when she had to undergo emergency heart surgery.

Vicky, Imogen's mother, remembers how distressing it was and how tense she felt as she waited for the seven hour operation to end.

"I didn't know whether she would survive. I sat praying the entire time that she would pull through."

After the operation Imogen was put on a life support machine. Thankfully, she did pull through and has made a full recovery. Every Christmas since has been a time for gratitude.

Today, Imogen is seven years old and she has so much energy.

"Everyone says they would never have known what she's been through", says Vicky. "Research saved Imogen's life".

What is Heart Research UK doing for children like Imogen?

When a child needs heart surgery it is important to understand the structure and function of their heart.

Cardiovascular magnetic resonance (CMR) is recognised as one of the best methods for imaging children with heart disease but it takes a long time to perform, needs an expert to do the scanning and is very costly.

Also, due to the long scanning time and because it can be a distressing experience for young children, in many cases a general anaesthetic must be used.

Heart Research UK is supporting research to develop a new imaging technique which aims to reduce scanning time to just five minutes. This would dramatically reduce the cost and patient discomfort, allowing doctors to decide on the best treatments so that more children can benefit.

This Christmas, Imogen is looking forward to making new memories with her family.

How are you remembering your loved ones this Christmas?

Christmas is a time when we not only look forward to spending time with our loved ones but remember fondly those who are no longer around. Making a donation in their memory at Christmas is a wonderful tribute to their lives and has a lasting impact on our research. Your donations go on to help people like Imogen by funding research into the prevention, treatment and cure of heart disease.

This year, a donation in memory of a loved one can give people with heart disease, like Imogen, the gift of new memories.



Image Imogen Tankard

Our thanks to everyone who has left a gift in their Will to Heart Research UK and to those who have remembered their loved ones through donations in their memory.

Ann Hall • Audrey Athersmith
Beryl Kathleen Alboni
Christine Herbert • David Donald
David Neale • Diana Courtiour
Diane Knight • Dominic Kelly
Doris Shaw • Elizabeth McDine
Elsie Goble • Frances Robson
G I Marsh • Gillian Lawton
Glenis Tudor • Grahame Hardy
Gwilym Williams • James Whaley
Janet Clifford • Jasper Davies
Jeffrey Williamson • Joan Parker
Joan Ward • John Ivor Roscoe
Joyce King • Kenneth Cade
Kenneth Dockerty • Leonora Noble
Margaret Dale • Margaret Jarrett
Margaret Monk • Margary O'Neil
Martyn Shaw • Mary Terry
Michael James Mannion
Mr Marshall • Muriel Benfield
Muriel Spear • Olive Copland
Pam Richardson • Patricia Hardy
Patricia Lilian Moorhouse
Peter Mann • Richard James Evans
Roy Brown • Roy Durston
Susan Bayada • Sylvia Atkins
Thomas Hatton
Walter Alwyn Roberts

Run to the beat of your own drum

For people with a heart condition, exercise is often not as straightforward as putting on a pair of trainers and heading out for a quick run. While avoiding physical exertion altogether may seem like the simple answer, the importance of activity for people managing a heart condition is in many ways even greater – and the benefits can be life changing. With the right help, it is possible to plan an exercise regime that gives maximum benefits whilst minimising any risk.

The positive impact of exercise on physical and mental health is well-documented, but the benefits for cardiac patients can be even more significant, as it can delay or prevent disease progression and reduce risk factors.

Robert Bird is a cardiac exercise specialist who has been working with people who are managing heart conditions for 20 years. Rob, who studied with the British Association of Cardiac Rehabilitation, runs his own wellness centre in Hertfordshire, as well as working with a cardiac rehab patients group in Enfield. He is passionate about helping people with heart conditions find a way to exercise that is appropriate and safe for them – what he calls an exercise ‘prescription’ for life.

“Every client is different and people living with heart conditions have many factors to consider. It is especially important to give cardiac patients a personalised approach to an exercise programme”, said Rob.

Rob believes that the large gap between the medical profession and the exercise industry needs to be narrowed. His Lifestyle Medicine Centre provides support, education and motivation for cardiac patients looking to begin a physical activity programme.

“Just some of the factors I take into account with clients are the nature and stage of their heart

condition, current fitness levels, orthopaedic concerns, pharmacology, personal goals and readiness for change”, explained Rob.

Whilst exercise for heart patients clearly involves proceeding with caution, a key skill that Rob teaches clients is how to effectively ‘self-monitor’ in order to keep activity safe and enjoyable.

“I am now much stronger mentally and physically and my confidence has returned too.”

“Obviously heart patients must be aware of the dangers of excessive exercise at high intensities and must build their fitness levels gradually, but they can learn how to manage a programme that works for them.

“Regular, safe participation has so many benefits, including improved mood and quality of life.”

Over the years, Rob has worked with cardiac clients who have no experience of regular exercise to develop confidence and experience positive results. Ex-fireman Jim Downes, 66, started working with Rob in 2016 after suffering a silent heart attack.

“I had been at work all day and went to bed feeling fine. I thought my biggest issue was a pain I had in my knee from an old ski injury”, said Jim

“In the middle of the night I must have got up to use the bathroom and ended

up unconscious on the floor – our dog actually woke my wife up to alert her to what had happened. I was rushed to hospital and had a cardiac arrest in the ambulance on the way there.”

Jim, who had always suffered from low blood pressure, had a stent fitted immediately and a pacemaker a week later.

Things got more challenging health-wise for Jim in the following year, so it was recommended that he have a double-bypass and an aortic valve replacement.

“I felt very weak and breathless and lacking in confidence after what I had been through. Mentally I was at a low point, but I knew there was a good chance that exercise could help me”, explained Jim.

“I had never been a gym-goer, even though my work as a fire-fighter and roofer meant I was generally active. But six weeks after the operation I decided that it was time to start exercising properly in order to give myself the best chance of a healthier, longer life.”

Jim has never looked back and is certainly an advocate for the benefits of exercise for people with a heart condition.

“I feel generally fitter and healthier since I started training with Rob, which I now do three times a week, along with playing golf twice a week.

“I am now much stronger mentally and physically and my confidence has returned too.”

Jim’s advice for newcomers to exercise? “Get a professional trainer who is experienced in cardiac health matters and go for it!”



Congenital Heart Disease Physical Activity Toolkit



Left to right: Southampton Hospital Team: Lynda Tellett, Adult Congenital Heart Clinical Specialist Nurse, Louisa Nielsen, Cardiothoracic and Adult Congenital Heart Physiotherapy Specialist, Melanie Finch, Adult Congenital Heart Clinical Specialist Nurse, Jane Lewis, Adult Congenital Heart Clinical Specialist Nurse

Heart Research UK has been working with a team of cardiac specialists and academics over the last 5 years to develop our Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Physical Activity Toolkits. These Toolkits contain information about how to stay safe when exercising with a heart condition, signs and symptoms to look out for and lifestyle information such as healthy eating and learning to drive with a heart condition. We have recently launched a new Toolkit for adult patients; the last Toolkit in a now full set of resources for congenital heart patients aged 5 and up.

These resources also include a personalised ‘Exercise Prescription’ form, completed by the patient’s cardiac specialist. These forms can be given to schools and clubs and give the patient themselves confidence in the type and intensity of activity recommended for their specific heart condition.

Dr Graham Stuart, Consultant Cardiologist at Bristol Heart Institute, said: “There is overwhelming evidence that regular exercise is an effective way to improve quality of life in patients with congenital heart disease. Yet exercise is rarely prescribed by clinicians and many patients do not take advantage of this inexpensive and effective intervention.

“These booklets are a really helpful and easy to read information source for cardiologists and patients alike. Heart Research UK is to be congratulated on supporting the congenital heart community in this way”.

You can follow the project on twitter **@CHDToolkit** and view the resources online at heartresearch.org.uk/chd

Healthy Heart Check: Emerald Group

For many years, Heart Research UK has been working with Emerald Group. Last year, they nominated us as their charity partner and raised an unprecedented £60,000 with a whole host of activities, including the Three Peaks Challenge, half marathons and even a sponsored head shave.

This year, Emerald is focusing on the heart health of their employees and Heart Research UK is helping them to achieve this ambition. As part of their health and wellbeing week, our Healthy Heart Consultants provided health checks for Emerald employees, calculating their body mass index (BMI) and taking blood pressure and cholesterol readings.

These measurements allow for a 'heart age' to be calculated, before lifestyle changes can be suggested to improve their heart health.

Melissa Fojt, Social Responsibility Manager at Emerald Group said: "We are putting a lot of time and commitment into improving the health and wellbeing of our staff. There are lots of regular activities we are now running during the working day to encourage everyone to get up from their desks and move a little more.

"By investing and looking after our staff, we reap the benefits as a business too."

Sarah Mirfin, Heart Research UK's Healthy Heart Consultant, said "Our healthy heart checks are a great way for people to get an insight into their current health status. For some, results confirm they are on the right track to leading a healthy lifestyle and for others, seeing their numbers and receiving a GP referral letter is a real wakeup call that they need to look after their health and make some positive changes. They are the lucky ones to find they can do something about it now.

"By investing and looking after our staff, we reap the benefits as a business too."

"Emerald are in a great place, they provide flexible working hours, fruit baskets in the office, a lunch time running club and lots of other initiatives. They are flying the flag for healthy workplaces and we are really keen to see others follow their lead."



What happens at a Healthy Heart Check?

Using a validated QRISK®2 assessment tool, a healthy heart check is a 20 minute private consultation with one of our healthy heart consultants. They take a blood sample to measure cholesterol, measure your blood pressure, take your height and weight, calculate your Body Mass Index, measure your waist and advise you on the healthiest weight for your height and build.

The rest of the consultation is about your daily habits around eating, drinking, smoking and activity levels culminating in tailored advice on how to reduce the age of your heart.



Healthy Heart Mark

Prioritise your employees' hearts with wellbeing at work

Heart Research UK's Healthy Heart Mark works with organisations to improve employee health and wellbeing across our four health and wellbeing zones:

- healthy eating
- physical activity
- mental wellbeing
- organisational support

You can benefit from:

- improved health and wellbeing of your workforce
- development of a positive, healthy culture that recognises the importance of your workforce's health and wellbeing
- increased productivity, increased employee engagement and morale

Our expert team will work with you to create a package to meet your organisational needs



Want to understand more about the health of your office?

Get in touch with our Healthy Hearts Team to see how they can support your office.
healthyheart@heartresearch.org.uk

Contact us to find out more about the Healthy Heart Mark and change the health of your organisation for the better

Call: 0113 2347474 or email: healthyheart@heartresearch.org.uk



Supporting communities to live healthier, happier, longer lives

The Conservation Volunteers

Scotland

Through our charity partnership with Subway®, we fund Healthy Heart Grants across the UK to inspire and motivate communities to live healthier, happier and longer lives.

We have recently awarded six new Heart Research UK and Subway® Healthy Heart Grants. Here is what they are aiming to achieve:

SCOTLAND

Ayr United Football Academy (£7,000)

Aimed at children aged 10-12 across 10 of the most deprived and remote primary schools in South Ayrshire, 'Pump it up' will combine educational workshops with football to inspire a healthy heart lifestyle.

Children will learn how hard the heart works to pump blood around the body and why moving more and eating healthily is important. They will take home skills cards to learn different ways of keeping active at home, design their own snack bars and create a healthy packed lunch. A multi-school league table will track progress and reward star players with a trip to an Ayr United FC football game.

The Conservation Volunteers (£8,000)

This heart-focused intervention programme will integrate outdoor activities into cardiac rehabilitation. Engaging those within NHS Ayrshire who've suffered a heart related incident, '5 Ways Well' brings those with heart conditions into nature to help rehabilitate their bodies and minds and instil healthy heart behaviours.

Taking the approach of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' model, cardiac outpatients will connect with the community, be active in the outdoors, take notice of local green spaces, keep learning new skills and give back to the community. This project gives those who are in recovery the tools and resilience to stay one beat ahead of heart disease.

CARLTON

Centre of the Cell (£9,000)

Centre of the Cell is a science education centre which delivers interactive 'Pod' shows where schools, families and community groups play games, watch videos, use microscopes, observe human organs and learn about science in an engaging way. This grant will pay for the programming and installation of the life and death of a human heart affected by coronary heart disease.

Previously funded by Heart Research UK, this project will now be able to extend its reach to schools in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney, allowing school children aged nine to eleven to learn how to keep their hearts healthy.

ANGLIA

Peterborough Environment City Trust (£10,000)

'Growing healthier communities' will really get down to the roots of coronary heart disease, tackling low levels of physical activity and deprivation linked reductions in life expectancy for those living in the Central and Park wards of Peterborough. Residents will plant healthy, affordable ingredients in communal spaces and learn cooking skills.

This project will work alongside local volunteers and health agencies in central Peterborough to provide opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating and community integration amongst hard to reach adults of Asian ethnicity. The project will engage with local BME communities through local mosques and schools, using their own language and cultural understanding to bring public health guidelines to life in a practical, accessible and sustainable way.

MERIDIAN

HOOP Bognor Regis (£9,000)

HOOP UK (Helping Overcome Obesity Problems) in Bognor Regis will see members of the community whose physical and mental health are affected by obesity take part in a six week 'Healthy Hearts Programme'.

Fully funded and specially adapted bikes will help to integrate socially isolated people and promote a more active lifestyle. Participants will take part in a cycling workshop and weekly cycle ride, with a qualified ride leader.

A six week healthy eating and cookery course will give participants new skills and help them understand the link between food and a healthy lifestyle.

The project will also focus on mindfulness, empowering participants to change their lifestyles in a healthy and sustainable manner.

GRANADA

Blackpool FC Community Trust (BFCCT) (£10,000)

'woMENTUM' aims to create a Healthy Heart culture amongst women in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. The project will incorporate fun and accessible forms of football with workshops on the impact of healthy diets and lifestyle choices.

Through the first 'Football Fans In Training' (FFIT) programme for women, BFCCT hopes to break down gender barriers to sport and get women back in the game.

The number of people living in Blackpool who meet the recommendations for physical activity are in the lowest percentile in England. This project hopes to see women smashing these records, not letting their postcode determine their health outcome.

In partnership with:



Planes, trains and automobiles: trekking the UK to see the impact of our Healthy Heart Grants

Sarah Mirfin, Heart Research UK's Healthy Heart Coordinator, has been busy awarding, observing and checking the heart health of grant beneficiaries across the UK. Here Sarah tells us how the Heart Research UK and Subway® Healthy Heart Grant is helping to build healthier, happier, longer lives across the UK.

My role as a Healthy Heart Coordinator is to ensure we are actively promoting a healthy heart lifestyle. One of the ways we do this is through our Healthy Heart Grants. This year, we've awarded £125,000 worth of grants. It's really important to get out and see the impact of the projects, even if that means jumping on a train, plane or, to my horror, trying to drive an automatic car...



Errigal Ciaran GAC (Northern Ireland)

In 2017, a survey conducted by GP Dr Aifric Shields showed that two out of three adults in rural County Tyrone were at a high risk of coronary heart disease.

Thanks to 'Operation Transformation', funded by our Healthy Heart Grants, Errigal Ciaran Gaelic Athletic Club were able to offer a range of activities to get over 300 people in the community involved in regular and sustained physical activity.

When we were asked if we could support their end of project celebration by offering health checks to locals, we jumped on the next flight over.

From 6-11pm, we worked with local GPs to give checks to a never-ending stream of locals aged 19-75. It was fabulous to be able to offer such comprehensive outcomes so quickly. We're thrilled to have been able to provide these health services and I hope this heart healthy culture continues to grow in this beautiful part of Northern Ireland.



The Feel Good Women's Group (Scotland)

The Feel Good Women's Group offers women in Govanhill, the most ethnically diverse part of Scotland, free fitness classes followed

by healthy group lunches and nutritional support to take home and implement.

Earlier this year I visited to provide Healthy Heart Checks. Using a validated QRISK@2 assessment tool, these 20 minute consultations consisted of taking blood cholesterol levels, blood pressure, measuring waist circumference, calculating BMI and asking a variety of lifestyle and medical questions.

I was thrilled to see more women achieving a healthy waistline, better blood pressure, improved cholesterol and increased intensity and duration of physical activity. Nearly all the women were achieving their 5-a-day and regularly cooking fresh heart healthy meals.

Impact isn't always easy to quantify, but the positive change this project has made on individual lives and the surrounding community was clear to see.



Home-Start Colchester (Anglia region)

Home-Start is cooking up a storm with their Recipe4Health project, providing healthy cookery classes and sporting activities for primary school children from deprived areas across Colchester and Tendring.

When I arrived, I could see children chopping away and making fresh pasta. They were making a heart healthy dish with the help of a qualified chef for their Recipe4Health book.

To my surprise, these 4-11 year olds had only met three days ago but were already good friends and team-mates. They were whizzing

up Halloween smoothies, creating pumpkin muffins and daring each other to try an unknown fruit - lychees disguised as gory eyeballs.

We all sat together to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Project leader Shelley Henderson commented: "I have been amazed that children who normally wouldn't feel comfortable trying new foods or socialising have eaten everything and sat round together, chatting like family."



Ravenscliffe Community Association (Yorkshire)

Finally, I took a short drive to East Bradford to see how the 'Hearty Beats Programmes' are going. A new addition to the project, the 'Hearty Cook and Eats' sessions have just started following a successful few weeks of exercise and behavioural coaching.

The healthy eating workshop was a little like 'Ready Steady Cook', with a variety of vibrant ingredients on each table and simple instructions on how to cook up healthy meals. Each dish turned out great, showing that with just a little increased confidence and skills you can't really go wrong with cooking healthily on a budget.

After a few interactive group discussions it was clear the group had learnt how to make simple swaps for a healthier lifestyle. We wanted to measure the success of the project so we agreed to do 20 free health checks for all involved.

To find out more about the Heart Research UK and Subway® Healthy Heart Grants, please visit heartresearch.org.uk/healthy-hearts

Brick in the Wall:

A tribute to my brother

By Vikki Renoldi-King



Image Vikki (left) and sister-in-law Nikki

I decided to take on this challenge for Heart Research UK after walking a couple of marathons in memory of my brother Julian, who died in June 2014 from an aortic dissection. After he died, I started to walk everywhere and listen to songs that he had sent me over the years.

“You have not lived if you have not been to the Great Wall.”
My phenomenal charity trek along this giant winding dragon of a structure for Heart Research UK made me realise how true this Chinese saying is.

Walking helped me to deal with my grief as it allowed me time to cry and be alone. I often felt signs around me, such as flickering lights from street lamps telling me he was still around in spirit. I never believed in stuff like that before but, since confronting the death of a loved one, I’ve changed in many ways.

I kept seeing the Great Wall of China trek appear on Heart Research UK’s website and something inside me made me sign up.

What struck me most was the final part of the challenge - placing a brick in the Wall with a note for Julian. Everything seemed to connect.

Originally, I registered alone but, when I announced it to my family, my sister-in-law Nikki said that she would join me, much to my husband’s relief.

After a year of fundraising and training, we were ready to complete the challenge. Though I knew it would be hard, I was determined to do something to make Julian proud of me and to raise money to help others.

The overnight flight to Beijing was long and we both suffered from jet lag. This didn’t prevent us from taking part in the warm up walk at our first stop in Pinggu. The aches and pains in my muscles made me wish I’d participated in more uphill

training beforehand.

Later that evening we had the chance to relax and meet the rest of the group for dinner. Already we had made some very good friends that I know will be part of my life forever.

Day three was a so called ‘warm-up’ trek! For me it was the most difficult day of all, as it was my first encounter with the constant up and down terrain. Five days of endless steps awaited us.

We arrived in Huangyuan feeling energetic but after just a few minutes, I realised it wasn’t going to be easy. The sky was misty and the air felt cool but my body was hot and sticky from sweat. My walking poles quickly became my best friends.

We ended our trek at the military barracks after climbing hundreds of steep steps to the tower. I collapsed at the top but was cheered on by the group, who always served to keep my spirits up. A walk through the market and lunch in a local restaurant afforded us a little time for relaxation.

Day four was tough, with eight hours of trekking. I found this day the most spiritual; the views were breath-taking. It was by far my favourite day of the trip.

The Great Wall had a totally different feel to the previous day. We trekked the original parts of the wall that link Gubeikou, Jinshanling and Simatai. Ruined towers peeked out in the distance, with collapsed parts of the Wall and dirt tracks at their bases.

We were off the tourist trails now, so we were mostly alone. I played my music to keep me going and I was overwhelmed with the whole experience, becoming quite emotional.

I told Nikki that earlier I had a flashback of the day that Julian passed away. She immediately interrupted me, saying that she had the same flashback, of us standing at the foot of his hospital bed crying

together. We had both shared the same moment at the same point along this ancient wall.

We journeyed on and covered twenty-seven watchtowers over old brick steps. The sun was shining, my music was playing and I felt amazing. We ventured down from the wall to the valley to trek through remote villages and farms. Finally, we re-joined the Wall to trek through the last eight watchtowers to Jinshanling.

“We made incredible memories and met truly inspirational people. I’ll cherish these moments, be forever grateful for the life I live and for the supportive family I have.”

I started day five believing that it was impossible for me to carry on. I was aching all over. My heart was aching to see my husband and children back at home but something magical happened to encourage me to continue.

My phone was playing a compilation that I hadn’t listened to for a while. As I took my first step on the Wall, the song switched over to ‘Fix You’ by Coldplay - the song we played at Julian’s funeral.

I felt he was with me at this point guiding me on to one of the most beautiful parts of the Great Wall.

Although it was an extremely tough day with countless ascents and descents, the view of the Great Wall disappearing over the mountains ahead of me will remain in my mind

forever. I thought of all the people in the world battling illnesses every day and it gave me the strength and determination to carry on.

After climbing 1000 steps up to the Wall and trekking 11 watchtowers we stopped to look up at the ‘Heavenly Ladder.’ It was close to a 45 degree angle with 460 more steps to go, but we felt stronger than ever.

That evening we wrote our notes to be placed in the brick in the wall at Badaling the following day - our final mission.



Image Placing a note in the Wall

On Friday 26 October, one month before Julian’s birthday, Nikki and I placed a brick in the Great Wall of China for him. Our notes will remain in the cement forever, as he will remain in our hearts forever. We made incredible memories and met truly inspirational people. I’ll cherish these moments, be forever grateful for the life I live and for the supportive family I have. My brother lives on in our hearts and I hope that by completing this challenge, we have helped the hearts of others.

Vikki’s trek raised over £8000 for Heart Research UK. To learn more about taking on your own international challenge, visit heartresearch.org.uk/challenges



Image Vikki on the Great Wall of China

A big thank you to all of our fantastic fundraisers



**Bob Moodler,
Dina Patel and
Team Subway**
Snowdonia
Challenge

Newmarket Freemasons – Fundraising Event

Joanne and Kevin Price – Garden Party

Prince of Wales pub, Reading –
Fundraising Event

Julan Shah - Olympic Triathlon

David Smith-Vicary and team –
Edinburgh to Southend Cycle

Sarah Walton - Ladybower
50 mile ultra Marathon



Parag Gohil
Climbed Mount
Snowdon



Jaxon Moore-Green

Yorkshire Children of Courage
Awards Fundraiser (0-12 years)

Deborah Allum - Race Across
Scotland 214 miles Ultra GB

Kinga Bogdanowicz - Gung Ho 5K

Rebecca Ella – Leeds Half marathon

Hazel Forrest – Church Coffee Morning

Steven Goode – Fundraising Dinner

Rebecca Harnett – Charity Cricket Match

Jasmine Mameen – End of
Ramadam Celebrations



Team Lasagne
Tough Mudder



**Georgia
Mahoney and
Lucy Broderick**
Chichester half
marathon



Mark Kelmanson
'Swim the
Channel
challenge'

**Captain Phil McBrown and
Ladies Captain Mari Brooks
from Langley Park Golf Club**

'Charity of the Year' and Bike
ride in Ashdown Forest



See who's helping us take on heart disease

There is nothing more exciting for a Heart Research UK corporate fundraiser than connecting with businesses with shared values and a passion for caring about the heart.

We are so thrilled to have the support of a varied group of organisations who support us in equally varied ways.

From sponsorship to staff exercise challenges, seasonal fundraising campaigns and one-off events, there's always something exciting going on.

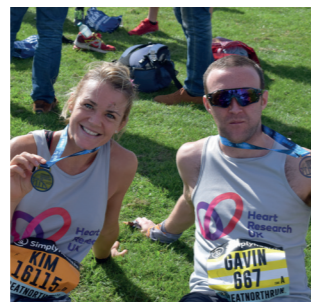
We build partnerships which are bespoke and mutually beneficial. We've had an action packed few months full of corporate activity. Here's a round-up of what has been happening from some of our partners.

If you are a business owner, or work for a business of any size which could benefit from partnering with us, you can find our more info at heartresearch.org.uk/companies or contact us on corporate@heartresearch.org.uk



for aisha

Baby and toddler food company 'for aisha' are donating 10% of their profits to fund our Helping Little Hearts projects, researching the treatment and diagnosis of congenital heart disease. Together, we are helping to educate parents about good eating habits for children. Look out for our logo on for aisha products in supermarkets across the country.



Caravan Guard

Halifax-based insurance company Caravan Guard raised almost £15,000 this year, with staff running for Heart Research UK in the Great North Run. Caravan Guard also make a £1 donation to Heart Research UK for each paperless policy purchased by their customers. We've been partnered with Caravan Guard for the last ten years and each year they blow us away with their generosity.



adi Group

Heart Research UK Midlands hit a hole in one with their annual charity golf day, sponsored by engineering firm adi Group. 12 teams competed for the Nick Bill memorial trophy, donated by John Bill, a patron of Heart Research UK in memory of his son Nick. Along with a charity raffle and auction, the event raised £5300 for local projects, with adi FE coming in as the winning team.



Walker Morris

National law firm Walker Morris were the proud sponsors of the anonymous heART project, with a private viewing of all the artwork at Kings Place, London this was the perfect opportunity for Walker Morris to entertain and network with guests. Together we achieved regional and national press including The Sunday Times and the Evening Standard as well as reaching over 8m people on Twitter.



Heart Research UK partners with a wide range of companies, delivering clear business benefits for them and funding for cutting-edge medical research and education.

When Heart Research UK was founded in 1967, more than 70% of heart attacks in the UK were fatal. Today at least 70% of people survive – we know research works and helps to keep those we love around for longer.

There are a number of ways that your company can support Heart Research UK, from charity of the year to volunteering, cause related marketing to fundraising. We can work with you on an engaging and rewarding package that is fit for your needs.

Don't just take our word for it

"One of the best things about working with Heart Research UK is how flexible and accommodating they've been with us. We've built up mutual benefits raising funds for them and they carry out health checks with our staff. As a company it's really important we give back and they help us do that."

Laura Wilby,
Associate Director, Caravan Guard

Take on heart disease with us

Contact Isabel at Heart Research UK today to discuss how your company can play its part in improving everyone's heart health on corporate@heartresearch.org.uk or tel: 0113 234 7474



10 questions with... Steven Brown

“When I was younger, my mum told me to just be myself. That’s all I ever try to be, myself. No pretensions - what you see is what you get!”



Image Steven with a sculpture of 'Lizzie McCoo'

Why are you involved with Heart Research UK?

It’s well known that I’ve survived two heart attacks. I wanted to see if there was anything I could do to help other people affected in a similar way. Recovery after a heart attack can be very lonely, it has implications on your mental, emotional and physical health. It’s a long journey and good support really helps.

What is your biggest achievement to date – personal or professional?

This year, Steven Brown Art won the Scottish Retail Business Award at the Scottish Business Awards. The journey I’ve been on with my amazing family, and all our staff, has been a crazy, wonderful rollercoaster and I was so proud.

If you were in charge of Heart Research UK for a day, what would you do?

I’d try and do even more to raise awareness of heart disease and the implications for people and their families. I’d try and help to provide even more support for the people who need it.

What’s on your bucket list?

I’d definitely travel more, to far-flung places like Japan and Alaska. My love of wildlife is well known, and I’d also love to swim with dolphins and see whales at close quarters. My favourite animals are elephants and so I’d love to interact with some. That would be amazing.

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever been given?

When I was younger, my mum told me to just be myself. That’s all I ever try to be, myself. No pretensions - what you see is what you get! I’m the same way with everyone I meet.

What are your top tips for a heart healthy lifestyle?

I must admit, I don’t always eat as well and exercise as much as I should, and that’s really important. What I have learned is to enjoy every moment of life, and manage stress. It’s really important to manage stress well – it’s just as important as the physical changes you need to make.

What film or song pulls at your heartstrings?

I’m a huge music fan - it’s always playing when I’m painting. My favourite song is Michael Jackson’s ‘You Are Not Alone’. It meant a lot to me when I was at my lowest point.

Given a chance, who (alive or dead), would you like to sit down and have a heart to heart with?

John Lennon. He fascinates me. He was a complicated character, but so direct. He was such an inspirational figure through his music, his lyrics and his message for world peace.

Who is your role model and why?

Gordon Ramsay! He has so much passion for what he does and he transfers it to all the people he works with. There’s just no mucking about with him, he tells it like it is, and he gets things done!

We finish the interview and you step outside the office and find a lottery ticket that ends up winning £10 million. What would you do?

It might be a surprise, but I’d give it all away - once I made sure my family was taken care of, of course! I don’t really care about money! Life is about enjoying the moment, and all the people in it.

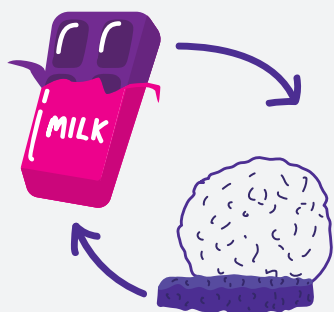


Swap **that** snack

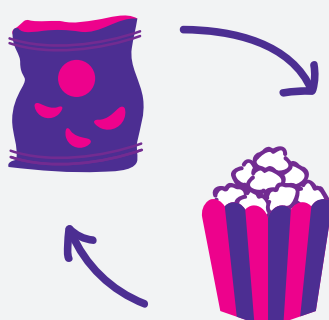
Swapping is an easy way to eat better while still enjoying the foods you like.

You'd be amazed how many extra calories you can save by giving our back page challenge a go.

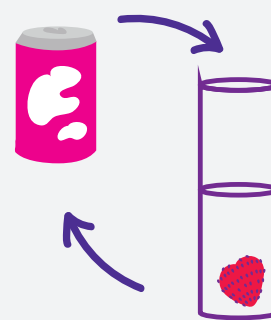
Take a picture and let us know how you are getting on using **#HRUKchallenge**



Instead of milk chocolate
try **dark chocolate**
rice cakes



Instead of crisps
try **plain popcorn**
with added **spices**
or **cinnamon**



Instead of fizzy sugary drinks
try **water flavoured**
with **mint or fruit**



Follow us **@heartresearchuk** and get involved