

Dear friends and supporters

I am delighted to welcome Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan DCVO, as President of the University of Southampton Gift of Sight Appeal. Dame Mary has supported us for many years and has visited us at the research laboratories in Southampton. Being President of the appeal complements Dame Mary's other interests in ophthalmology, particularly with her long-standing involvement with the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital. I very much look forward to our continuing association.

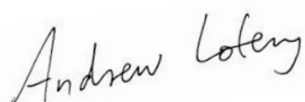


Dame Mary Fagan  
DCVO  
Lord-Lieutenant of  
Hampshire

My message for this issue of our Newsletters follows on from a quote I read recently: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" Matthew 6:22

The metaphor in this quote reminds me how devastating it is to lose your sight. Studies demonstrate that going blind from macular degeneration has the same effect on quality of life as being diagnosed with terminal cancer. Until a few years ago there was nothing we could do to alter this ghastly outcome. Now building on our research, together with that of colleagues, we can offer patients treatment that has a 90% chance of stabilizing their vision and a 30% chance of restoring their sight if they develop "wet" macular degeneration. This is tremendous progress but we still need better treatments and more personalized treatments tailored to individual patients.

We are now combining our genetics research with our clinical research in an effort to find out why some patients respond better to treatment than others. An example of this is a project where we are analysing over 500 genetic variants in 350 wet AMD patients who we have followed for over 12 months to see if their response to treatment varies with their genes. We hope we can identify biological pathways which may lead to fine tuning of treatment for individual patients. Another example is work where we are developing synthetic eye tissue to replace damaged tissue lost in conditions such as macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa. This work earned one of our PhD students, Andrew Treharne, the top prize at a recent gathering of junior research scientists at Parliament. It is wonderful for us to be recognised in this way. It confirms that top scientists value what we are attempting to do and is particularly a great credit to Andrew and Dr Heather Thomson, who has worked closely with him on this project. I am pleased with the progress we are making and I firmly believe active research is the best way to reduce blindness. That is why I am running a triathlon soon to raise more funds for such research. As always thank you for your support of Gift of Sight. Your efforts are making more eyes healthy and that is a good thing.



Andrew Lotery, Professor of Ophthalmology

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

### A HUGE SUCCESS!

Many thanks to Clive and Andy Mansell and Ali Arnold for organising the scooter challenge from Land's End to John O'Groats.

The team left Cornwall at 7:30am on Monday, 28th February and reached their destination at 2:21am on Saturday 5th March. The team scooted night and day in relays and were supported along the way by the Draper Tools mini bus. We would all like to pass our grateful thanks to all the team, sponsors and suppliers of items which were required for the trip.

Clive and Andy are landlords of the Queen Inn, Kingsgate Road, Winchester and the Fulflood Arms, Cheriton Road, Winchester and are kindly fundraising for us for a year. Their JustGiving total so far has almost reached £2,500 and donations may be made in both 'hostelries' in Winchester.

### GIFT OF SIGHT LECTURE 'Beating Blindness'

We were pleased to welcome the Sheriff of Southampton and escort, Councillor Terry Matthews and Mrs Lesley Matthews, to this year's Lecture which was held at Turner Sims on the University Campus. Professor Andrew Lotery, Mr Alex MacLeod, Mr Parwez Hossain and Mr Jay Self all gave a presentation relating to their particular 'speciality' and this was followed by a Q&A session. We would like to thank all our kind supporters who sent donations in lieu of attendance or who contributed on the evening. Your generosity is, as always, very much appreciated and a note has been made to ensure a longer question session at the next Lecture in 2013.

Special thanks to Novartis for sponsoring the event.



### A SAMPLE OF SOME OF OUR RECENT DONATIONS AND GIFTS

£30,000 from Mr Damon de Laszlo and the Trustees of the De Laszlo Foundation under the previous 'matched funding' scheme which doubled the donation.

£5,000 from Barker-Mill Foundation [www.barkermillfoundation.com](http://www.barkermillfoundation.com)

£3,800 from Mr David Simpson and his Challenge Adventure team the Property Pedlars following their Irish Challenge 2010. This took the teams in relay over five hundred miles in three days from Blarney Castle to Dublin via Killarney and Galway. [www.challengeadventurecharities.org.uk](http://www.challengeadventurecharities.org.uk)

£2,000 A further donation from Chichester Lions Club (Total now £9,000)

£2,000 from Mrs Auriel Whitworth who organised a party for a special birthday and invited friends to donate to Gift of Sight

Mrs Dorothy Clarke, a regular sponsor and supporter, kindly added £444 to our Xmas Market income to raise our total to £1000 and Mr Ralph Neale ran the Brighton Half Marathon and raised £398 in a couple of weeks thanks to help from his receptionist!

**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF YOU WHO SUPPORT US AND SEND GIFTS.**

**If space allowed we would like to list you all individually.**



Team photo at John O'Groats 5th March 2011

### ANDREW TREHARNE STRIKES GOLD!

On 14 March 2011 Andrew Treharne, one of Professor Lotery's PhD students, struck gold at a competition in the House of Commons for the excellence of his scientific research. Andrew presented his research to more than one hundred politicians and a panel of expert judges. The presentation won the gold Roscoe medal for best chemistry poster and the Westminster medal for best overall poster. Andrew's project is a joint collaboration between ourselves and the University of Southampton Chemistry Department and he has created a polymer 'scaffold' as a substance upon which stem cells are cultivated for rebuilding damaged retinal tissue. His work was judged against 59 other participants. Professor Brian Cox, TV star physicist and member of the judges panel, said that "part of the remit for us as judges was to look at not only excellent science - all four finalists were outstanding - but also someone who could communicate very clearly. That was the difference for the winner, a fascinating blend of surface chemistry, biology and communication."



Professor Brian Cox and other judges presenting the Westminster Medal to Andrew Treharne

Andrew said "I was really honoured to win the chemistry gold award and then go on to win the overall prize, especially in the International Year for Chemistry. Being able to present at the House of Commons was a great opportunity to showcase research in the UK, especially in chemistry, and demonstrate to MPs and ministers how important that research is." We would like to add our voices to all the kind supporters who have already written to congratulate Andrew on his huge success. We are also very touched that he has written a cheque for 10% of his award to Gift of Sight as a 'thank you' for our initial financial input to his research project.

### DR SAM KHANDADIA

#### 'Role of Complement Factor H (CFH) mutations in liver and eye disease'

We gave details of Sam's PhD project in June 2009. The liver is the main source of a protein called CFH which helps to ensure inflammation in the body does not go out of control. Because a mutation in the CFH gene is strongly associated with Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) Sam has recruited 232 patients who have undergone liver transplantation at least five years ago. He is researching whether liver transplantation has any effect on AMD through any change in the complement genes and complement protein production. This involves identifying whether AMD is related to the state of the complement genes of the original liver (recipient) or new liver (donor).



Dr Sam Khandadia

Sam is still in the process of obtaining tissue samples from the liver donors so that he can analyse them and he will, eventually, have DNA samples from both the old and the new livers to complete his thesis which is due early next year. In the meantime Sam is presenting his preliminary data at a large conference in the USA (ARVO) in May this year. Professor Lotery and Sam have reviewed all the retinal photographs taken from these patients and determined whether they have macular degeneration or not. The next step will be to see how the risk of AMD correlates with the genes in the donor livers. This is a very novel project and as such it has generated a great deal of interest at this meeting. We wish Sam every success both at the conference and with completing his very thorough and detailed research and look forward to learning his final results.

## LEGACIES

Professor Lotery, the research team and patients who benefit from our research would like to thank those of you have kindly made provision for a legacy to Gift of Sight in your Will. This very personal way of helping us is greatly appreciated.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DIARY DATES 7 May	New Forest Rotary Club Horse & Cycle Ride at Burley in the New Forest. Full details included in the enclosed insert.
15 May	Salisbury Fast Twitch Triathlon. Professor Lotery has signed up to raise funds again this year. Please see insert.
12 June	Rotary Club of Hythe & Waterside sponsored walk through Beaulieu. Please see insert.
19 June	Plant sale, teas, raffle and birds of prey. Brambridge, Eastleigh SO50 6HS. 2.30pm - 5.00pm. £2.50 entrance fee. Full details from Ailsa on 023 8059 9073 or e-mail as below.
26 June	'Jazz on the Farm' at Minstead from 6.00pm - 9.00pm. Bubbly on arrival, please bring a picnic and enjoy the jazz. £15 per ticket. For full details please telephone Juliette on 023 8028 2735.
12 September	Hants PGA Order of Merit Event. Pro-Am Golf tournament at Corhampton Golf Club. Entry fee £180 per team - all players must have active handicaps. Closing date for entries 31 July 2011. Full details given on insert. Kindly sponsored by  <b>YourpropertyClub</b> <small>*Building your portfolio from 0 to 10 properties!</small>
9 October	Rotary Romsey Test - Test Way Walk. Heather Thomson (Research) and Ailsa will walk the full distance this year and it would be great to have a large team again. Full details will be given in the next Newsletter.
30 October	Great South Run. Professor Andrew Lotery on his second sporting challenge of the year, joined by Matt Watts who works as a Press Officer at Southampton General Hospital.
23 June 2012	Gift of Sight Ball

**Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive our Newsletters**

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