

Professor  
Lotery

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I hope you had a good Christmas and New Year. One of the events that marked the start of the Christmas season was a carol concert at Winchester College in aid of the Gift of Sight Appeal. This was a fabulous event and I am very grateful to Dr Philly Sargent and her ladies committee for organizing it. All were agreed that the music was superb. Of course it was for a very good cause and we have now been able to pay for the first two years lease of a new retinal camera. This Christmas the Gift of Sight research team also celebrated publishing over 100 papers in leading medical journals and this productivity emphasizes that your support is helping moving research forward to treat common causes of blindness.

As 2012 starts we welcome Neil O'Flynn to our research group. Neil is a scientist with expertise in viral vectors and gene therapy. His expertise will help us develop better treatments for diseases such as macular degeneration but will also be useful for other diseases such as diabetic retinopathy or retinitis pigmentosa. We are also collaborating with other research groups across the country and indeed the world. Dr Sridhar Govardhan has spent the last six months working with Professor Robert Maclaren and colleagues in Oxford. In March he will be rejoining us as a clinical senior lecturer in ophthalmology. Sridhar has gained further experience in gene therapy after working with Professor Maclaren in Oxford. Sridhar was my first PhD student and it is wonderful to see how he has progressed from a junior doctor to an independent researcher. Sridhar has been supported by the Gift of Sight Appeal throughout his training prior to winning a prestigious Higher Education Funding Council of England senior lectureship.

As well as these great new appointments to our group we look forward to some exciting new clinical trials in 2012. In collaboration with Professor Maclaren in Oxford, a choroideremia gene therapy study has started. This is a rare inherited disorder that causes progressive loss of vision due to degeneration of the choroid and the retina. We are also participating in clinical trials of new treatments for diabetic retinopathy and age related macular degeneration. These are ongoing and the recent funding of the specialized retinal camera in our new clinical trial areas has greatly facilitated this effort. We are also one of the leading centres for an ongoing trial of Avastin and Lucentis. These are two of the main drugs used to treat macular degeneration and the one year results of this major study will also be published in 2012. As 2012 starts it looks certain to be an exciting year for eye research and, most importantly, will work towards advances in treatment.

Thank you as always for your support.



Andrew Lotery MD FRCOphth  
Professor of Ophthalmology  
University of Southampton

**WHEN THE LIGHT FAILS**  
*An extract from a poem by Ian Corrie Hill*

What in the world would I give to see, snow flakes fall on a Christmas tree.  
 But I've no more to give, and money can't buy, a sun rise in Spring, or stars in the sky.  
 Now I see through my memories, they don't fade. Places and people, the tunes they  
 played.  
 These twilight years, dependent on others, a child once again, my hand in my Mother's.

**IN MEMORY**

Thank you for all donations made in memory of friends and relations during 2011

Mr M Absolon	Mrs Mary Beasley	Mr Malcolm Berrow	Mrs F Betteridge
Mr D Boddy	Mr D A Brooks	Mrs Alice Griffin	Mrs Alice Griffiths
Mrs W E Hinton	Mrs D Jarvis	Mr David T Jones	Mr Raymond Marsh
Mr A 'Kim' Mason	Mrs D 'Kit' Mason	Mrs Hermione Pickup	Mr Anthony Rixon
Miss M Slaughter	Mr Thomas Stephens	Mrs V M Wake	Mr Simon Wrixon
Mr J de Vere Woodman		Mr L J Woodling	

**THANK YOU**

**Corhampton Golf Club**

Many thanks to Alex Miller, past Captain of Corhampton Golf Club, for his energetic fundraising. He was ably assisted by the Seniors and Ladies Captains as well as officials and members at the Golf Club. The Pro-Am Golf Tournament which took place in September, with huge help from Hampshire PGA, was kindly sponsored by YourPropertyClub and the final total raised was an amazing £8215. The whole year was full of fun and it was lovely to be so involved. The photograph shows Pete Langrish (Seniors Captain), Alex Miller, Ailsa Walter and Margaret Collins (Ladies Captain) on the presentation night with further cheques received separately. increasing the final total for the year.



**Some of our other gifts**

- Our Winchester 'Pubs' have raised in excess of £5,000 which is amazing!
- Chandlers' Ford Methodist Church Womens Fellowship donated a wonderful £776.58 having supported us as their charity for a year.
- US \$1000 arrived from Universal Pictures on behalf of the director, Rupert Sanders, and the entire cast and crew of the motion picture *Snow White and the Huntsman*.
- Susan Symes, our hugely supportive 'button lady' has now donated over £5,000.
- The Test Way Walk team have raised over £1200
- Professor Andrew Lotery, together with Matt Watts and Kathy Wallis, ran the Great South Run and raised in excess of £4000 - congratulations and thanks to you all.

We have furnished a new Clinical Trials area in Southampton General Hospital, purchased our special camera, supported salaries for research staff and seed funded new research. None of this would be possible without all your donations and generous help. We always make sure that we send our thanks but please accept this acknowledgement as a further heartfelt personal thank you.

## Christmas Carol Concert

Dr Philly Sargent and her team organised a second fantastic Christmas Concert which took place in Winchester College Chapel on the 12 December 2011. We were delighted to be joined by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan, The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Southampton and Lady Montagu. The music, provided by Aurum Vocale, was beautiful and very moving. The actor Timothy West read *'The Three Wise Men'* by Alan Coren and Dame Harriet Walter provided additional humour with her reading from *'Shirley Valentine'* by Willie Russell. Our thanks are extended to all who helped and took part for making the event such a magical evening.

Final figures indicate a huge input to Gift of Sight of £42,000 as a result of the evening. Thanks to all husbands who acted as Ushers, the Winchester College team and, of course, Canon Roger Job for taking on the task of linking the Concert with his quiet and entertaining style.

Support from coffee mornings, being designated 'Charity of the Year' and help from Groups, Clubs and Societies is always gratefully received. Leaflets, collection pots and any additional help required if organising events to raise funds will be provided. We have a Ball this year. If you are thinking of organising a special celebration you may like to join us at our event. Prizes for our raffle or auction are always a great help.

## Our research

### Neil O'Flynn

Neil studied for a BSc in Biochemistry and Pharmacology at the University of Southampton and then worked for the drug discovery division of a pharmaceutical company in Southampton prior to obtaining a PhD in Molecular Virology at the University of Reading.

### Neil's Project

Patients with treatable 'wet' Age-related Macular Degeneration currently undergo monthly ocular injections that suppress the condition and this is, of course, onerous to both the patient and the NHS so a more prolonged and effective treatment represents an attractive target.

Neil's project will be to discover whether or not he can use a viral vector to treat the disease. The virus he will be using is called 'adeno-associated virus' which is known to be present in the majority of the worldwide population yet has no known states of human disease associated with it. Viral vectors represent an attractive mechanism for gene delivery as they can be engineered to make cells express therapeutic products for sustained periods of time. Although viruses are usually associated with causing diseases and not treating them, generic methods can be used to completely disable the ability of viruses to replicate, yet allow them to retain their evolutionary-evolved ability to penetrate and transport cargo into cells. This would be an opportunity to try to formulate a longer lasting treatment.

Neil's goal and hope for this project is that he can provide results and evidence that adeno-associated viruses can drive expression of therapeutic products that effectively combat 'wet' AMD. This could, in turn, eventually lead to clinical trials and ultimately a more effective treatment regime for the condition.

We are delighted that Neil is joining us and we have committed to fund his salary for the two years that he will spend with us in our research laboratories. We wish him luck with his work and would like to confirm that we are delighted to support his project and will follow his work with great interest.



Neil O'Flynn

## LEGACIES and DIRECT DEBITS

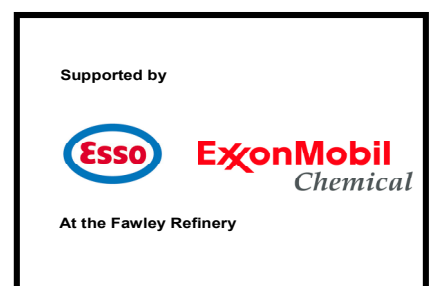
We are very grateful for the reassurance when regular sums are paid by direct debit into our funds. This means that we are able to plan our future with an amount in mind and legacies really do move certain projects forward at a faster pace. Thank you to all our regular donors and potential legacy donors.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 2012  
19 January MAYOR'S QUIZ NIGHT in the Solent Suite, Southampton Guildhall at 7.00pm. Teams of four. Tickets priced at £12 per person to include a curry. Please enter a team and support us on what promises to be an entertaining evening.
- 30 March MAYOR'S CHARITY Jazz Concert Central Hall, Southampton. £10 per ticket. Tickets from the Mayor's office. Tel: 023 8083 2434.
- 31 March MAYOR'S CHARITY Barn Dance 7.30pm - 11pm at the Crosfield Hall, Romsey, SO51 8GL. £15 per ticket to include dancing and supper. A bar will be provided by a local hostelry. To apply for tickets please call or email Ailsa using the contact details below. We would like to raise as much as we can for the Mayor so please come along and support us.
- 27 April MAYOR'S CHARITY BALL at Southampton Guildhall. Band 'Rufus Stone' and tickets priced at £ 45 per person. Tickets available from the Mayor's office as above.
- 12 May Rotary New Forest Horse & Cycle Ride from Burley Park. Please register on line at [www.horseandcycle](http://www.horseandcycle) or to download an entrance form. If you do not have a computer and would like to join in please phone Ailsa who will send a copy. It's a fabulous family day out and a good chance to fundraise for Gift of Sight. 75% of sponsorship to us and 25% to Rotary charities.
- 23 June GIFT OF SIGHT BALL at the Legacy Botley Grange Hotel. £50 per ticket (£450 per table of ten) to include a three course meal and half a bottle of wine. Dress code : Black tie. Special room rates will be available for guests wishing to stay the night. We shall be grateful for any gifts or prizes in order to maximise our fundraising.  
Tickets will not be issued until May 2012 but if you would like to reserve a table or some tickets please contact Ailsa using the details below. Booking forms will be sent when tickets are requested.

**Many thanks to ExxonMobil at the Fawley Refinery for very kindly sponsoring our Newsletters for a further year and for their ongoing interest and support.**

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