

Dear friends and supporters,

Welcome to our December newsletter. Since our last newsletter two new members have joined our team. These are Jennifer Scott and Charles Pierce. Jennifer is a research technician who is assisting in our stem cell work. Charles is an ophthalmologist who is now embarking on a PhD research degree on age related macular degeneration. One of the things Charles will be studying is why some patients relapse when treated for “wet macular degeneration”. He will be taking blood samples from patients and seeing if measurements of specific proteins taken from a simple blood test can predict when a patient needs further treatment. We hope this work may make it easier to predict who is at risk of relapsing and thus improve treatment outcomes.



This brings me to a question I am often asked – why fund research? I think the answer is simple : to generate better treatments for patients. Both of these new appointments will contribute to this goal. Jennifer’s work is at the basic science stage but in the long term could make a very valuable contribution. Charles’ work will involve patients from an early stage and thus could be clinically relevant more quickly. Both are important and both should create better treatments.

In recognition of our work I was honoured to be listed in November by the Times as one of “Britain’s Top Doctors”. This award emphasises that our work is valued very highly nationally. In turn I hope this gives you confidence that your support is making a difference and leading to better treatments.

Thank you again for all your support of the Gift of Sight Appeal.

With very best wishes at Christmas,



Andrew Lotery, Professor of Ophthalmology

2011—The First Challenge - Sunday 27th February—Saturday 5th March 2011 Land’s End to John O’Groats Scooter Challenge

Clive Mansell, landlord of the Queen Inn, Kingsgate Street, Winchester was impressed by the work being undertaken in our research laboratory. As a regular fundraiser Clive has decided to organise an extreme challenge that will take him, and a team of like-minded people, on a one-off chance to ‘scoot’ from Lands End to John O’Groats. He is looking for team members and the full details of this mad, but extremely brave idea, are given in the ‘flyer’ which is enclosed in this Newsletter.

If you haven’t been on a scooter since your childhood it may be one way of re-living the fun of your past although there is no guarantee that the weather in late February/early March will be in any way reminiscent of ideal ‘scooting’ conditions.

Please make contact with Clive at the earliest opportunity if you would like to be part of this amazing challenge. Any sponsorship may be forwarded to Gift of Sight please but a donation page will be opened through Justgiving and linked to our website.

IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for your kind donations made in memory of the following friends and relatives

Mr C L Croucher	Mr R J Draper	Mrs D Fletcher	Mrs G Fletcher
Mrs I Flooks	Mrs N Green	Mr A Jepson	Mrs V L King
Mrs S Knight	Mrs M S Lee	Mrs M P V Lines	Mr A Page
Mr G Pontin	Mrs G Tolley	Mrs E Topley	Mrs M Turner
Mrs D M Walker	Mr J Ware	Mrs J Whatling	Mr Richard Wight

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thank you to all our regular standing order donors; your help is greatly appreciated. Because of a change in the University Banking System we shall, with your assistance, be transferring payments to a Direct Debit system and letters will be sent out in this respect in the New Year.



Rotary Club of the New Forest

Mr Alan Blair, immediate past President of New Forest Rotary Club, presented a very large and generous cheque for £10,000 to Professor Andrew Lotery and the Gift of Sight Research team. We would like to thank Alan and his fellow Rotarians for their tremendous hard work in raising a fantastic sum which was allocated between ourselves and other Rotary charities. Some of their events included a Charity Golf Match, bag-packing in supermarkets in the busy Christmas rush, with the addition of icy road conditions, organising their annual Sponsored Pony and Cycle ride in the New Forest and events in members own homes. We were delighted to take part in some of the events to lend a helping hand.

Mr Alan Blair presenting the New Forest Rotary Club cheque to Professor Andrew Lotery and members of the research team.
(Picture courtesy of Southern Daily Echo)

Southampton Inner Wheel Christmas Fair

Mrs Greta Paxton, who is a regular supporter of Gift of Sight and is currently President of Southampton Inner Wheel, has chosen us as her Charity of the Year. Fundraising was given a tremendous boost at the end of November with the Christmas Fair which was livened by the attendance of Mrs Pauline Bartlett dressed in her Christmas Tree outfit.

Pauline also joined us in the Southampton Eye Unit on the 8th December and will help Greta with her annual coffee morning and craft sale in 2011. We shall look forward to seeing the next costume!



Pauline and Greta

Rotary Test Way Walk

We had a top team of walkers this year and hope to have raised almost £3000. The final figure, including Gift Aid, will be advised in the next Newsletter when payment has been received from the Rotary Club of Romsey Test. Many thanks to all who walked and to all very kind sponsors.

Cake Sales

Staff at Southampton Eye Unit have been very generous with their time and have been holding cake sales to raise funds. This Newsletter gives us an ideal opportunity to thank the nursing staff, secretaries, and volunteers for their help with baking and selling and to all the kind people who have given support in coming to the sales.

Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market Charity Stall

Magical! Thanks to Jackie Davies for staying to 'man' the stall and to all the other volunteers who kindly gave up their time to sell our goods. We raised £556 and must also thank the very kind helpers who made Christmas decorations and items for us to sell. I hope those of you who came to support us on the day enjoyed the rest of the Christmas Market, including the ice, snow and atmosphere.



Jackie Davies (r) and Ailsa



Prof Lotery, Wendy Cope, Dame Mary Fagan, Prof Winston, Capt. Christopher Fagan, Canon Roger Job, Mrs Lovell and Mr Alan Lovell

Christmas Carol Concert 13th December 2010

The Christmas Carol Concert, which was organised by Dr Philly Sargent and the Gift of Sight Events Committee, took place in Winchester College Chapel on the above date. We were delighted to be joined by Dame Mary Fagan, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and Mr Alan Lovell, the High Sheriff of Hampshire. The musical programme was organised by Nick Wilks, Master of Music at Winchester College, together with Philly and John Sargent and was a wonderfully emotional start to the Christmas period.

Wendy Cope, a prize winning poet and Winchester resident, started the evening with readings which were followed by congregational Carols and talks by Professor Lord Winston and Professor Andrew Lotery. Music was provided by Vox Cordis UK and included many stirring solos, both vocal and instrumental.

Canon Roger Job was wonderful in undertaking the role of 'MC' and kept the evening flowing with no effort at all. The venue was very atmospheric and most of the programme was played with the lights switched off in the nave and the audience read their programmes by torch light to help them understand the difficulty of living with impaired or reduced vision.

Very many thanks to Philly and her ladies who did such an amazing job of filling the Chapel and bringing awareness of the Gift of Sight Appeal to many more people. It was a wonderful evening.

WORKING WITH US

Jennifer Scott

Jennifer is a Biology graduate of the University of Southampton and has joined the Vision Research team as a technician. We are delighted to announce that Jennifer's salary is being funded by Gift of Sight and Fight Against Blindness. The majority of Jennifer's work will be with Dr Heather Thomson and Andrew Treharne (Chemistry Department, University of Southampton) who are culturing cells on polymers which will lead to our goal of growing retinal cells for implantation.



Jennifer Scott



Dr Charles Pierce

Charles Pierce

Charles is working as a Research Registrar, having started his PhD in August 2010. Charles is from a clinical background, having worked in Eye Departments at some regional hospitals. His research is looking at the genetic factors and different proteins that influence AMD in terms of how it develops and responds to treatment.

LEGACIES

Professor Lotery, the research team and patients who benefit from our research would like to thank those of you who have kindly made provision for a legacy to Gift of Sight in your Will.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 2011**
DIARY DATES
27th February - 5th March
15th April
7th May 2011
- Clive Mansell and his team leave Land's End to commence their scooter challenge to John O'Groats. Team members are required and details are given in the enclosed 'flyer' if you are brave enough to take up the challenge. Please telephone Clive at the earliest opportunity if you would like to take part.
- Gift of Sight stall outside the Main Entrance, Southampton General Hospital. 2.00pm—4.00pm to raise funds to help with research and equipment. Please let Ailsa know if you would like to help in any way.
- Rotary Horse & Cycle Ride at Burley in the New Forest.

To be arranged Gift of Sight Lecture. Full details will be sent in the New Year

We have many fundraising and social dates in our diary and thoroughly enjoy coming along to enjoy events that are organised to raise funds on our behalf. Thank you to all Clubs and Societies who have taken us on as their Charity of the Year.

Grateful thanks to Dr H Gaston who has very kindly agreed to deliver Milk Bottle tops from Sainsburys, Shirley to the Recycling Centre. Thanks also to all collectors although the income is low at present we're hoping it will go up!

Income from recycling of computer ink cartridges and mobile phones is rising and proving to be a good source of income.

Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive Gift of Sight Newsletters

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