



# Barts Guild News

ISSUE 25

MAY 2025

## Cycling for a diagnosis

*The Guild has awarded a substantial grant towards the cost of an exercise stress echocardiography bicycle. Dr Sanjeev Bhattacharyya, Consultant Cardiologist and Clinical Lead Echocardiography at St Bartholomew's Hospital & University College London Hospital, describes how this new more comfortable machine provides a 'one stop shop' for rapid diagnosis.*

This bicycle will be an integral part of our stress echocardiography service which performs 1,500 - 2,000 studies per year. We are a national centre, leading innovation in stress echocardiography practice in the United Kingdom and organise a range of courses to help other centres develop their own services. Several research fellows have completed higher research degrees centred on clinical applications of stress echocardiography. We are very grateful to Barts Guild for contributing to this purchase, which will enable us to continue to build and expand our service.

Breathlessness and chest pain are very common symptoms. However, diagnosing the cause and identifying the optimal management can be challenging. There are multiple reasons for both, including valve disease, heart failure, coronary artery disease or respiratory pathologies. Stress echocardiography offers a unique method to identify the cause of breathlessness or chest pain. The stress echocardiography bicycle is an upright, fixed bicycle with graded resistance which gradually increases. Patients cycle on the bike until symptomatic with breathlessness or chest pain or until they reach a defined heart rate. Echocardiography to assess a patient's heart valves, heart muscle and blood flow to the heart arteries using ultrasound, is performed



(L-R) Jeanelle, Dr Sanjeev and Mirko with the new bicycle.

Photograph: Hilary Tarr

simultaneously both at rest and during the test. Additional information can be obtained by combining the test with cardiopulmonary exercise testing, where patients breathe through a facemask which measures the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the air they exhale as well as how much air their lungs can take in. This allows us to identify whether a patient's symptoms are due to a primary lung or heart problem.

*Continued on page two.*

## Cycling for a diagnosis cont.

The new bicycle is very ergonomic with adjustable frames and pedals which makes it very comfortable compared to our old equipment, where a proportion of patients were unable to perform the test due to the lack of adjustable features and discomfort. In addition, it integrates seamlessly with our echocardiography and cardiopulmonary exercise test machines, allowing the creation of an integrated report at the end of the test. The test is commonly used in the following situations.

**Coronary Artery Disease:** In patients with narrowed arteries of the heart (coronary artery disease), the resting function of the heart may be normal. However, with exercise, the areas of the heart supplied by the narrowed artery will contract less vigorously. This characteristic change can be seen when comparing the images of the heart obtained at rest and during exercise. Identifying narrowed arteries, after confirmation by an invasive test, will lead to medication and sometimes a stent to improve blood flow and, consequently, patients' symptoms.

**Heart Valve Disease:** Patients with severely narrowed (aortic/mitral stenosis) or leaking heart valves (mitral regurgitation) often notice a slowing down in activity without overt breathlessness. The exercise stress echo allows us to objectively test exercise capacity to determine whether they have symptoms on exertion or are truly asymptomatic. This helps us determine whether a valve intervention such as heart valve surgery would be beneficial.



*Mirko and 'patient' Tim using the new bicycle, with Dr Sanjeev (partially hidden) pointing at the screen.*

*Photographs: Neil Ritson*

Some patients have non-severe valve disease at rest. However, they are symptomatic with breathlessness. There can be dynamic changes in the severity or the haemodynamic impact of valve disease during exercise. Exercise stress echocardiography can quantify changes in valve severity and quantify the haemodynamic impact on the heart both at rest and exercise. This allows us to determine whether a valve replacement or repair surgery would improve their symptoms.

**Heart Muscle Disease:** Patients with thickened heart muscle (hypertrophic cardiomyopathy) can develop partial obstruction to blood flow out of the heart. This can be measured at rest using echocardiography.

*Continued on page three.*



## Cycling for a diagnosis cont.

However, in a proportion of patients there is no obstruction at rest despite the patient being breathless. During exercise stress echocardiography we can measure the degree of obstruction at rest and exercise. Where obstruction during exercise is identified, medical therapies to reduce the degree of obstruction and improve symptoms can be initiated.

Cardiopulmonary stress echocardiography is only performed at a few centres in the UK. We are the only service in North-East and North-Central London. The equipment will allow more patients to access this state of art service. It will also allow us to train more healthcare staff from across the UK to perform cardiopulmonary exercise stress echo and therefore have wider impact and benefit.

*Dr SANJEEV BHATTACHARYYA  
Consultant Cardiologist and  
Clinical Lead Echocardiography at  
St Bartholomew's Hospital &  
University College London Hospital*



Barts Guild has designated this award as the 2025 Lorna Glace Memorial Grant, in memory of our friend who passed away in January 2021. Lorna was a valued Guild volunteer, and was a patient of Barts Heart Centre.



*Photograph: Dr Sanjeev Bhattacharyya*

The old machine (above) provided patients with an uncomfortable experience, whereas the new state-of-the-art bicycle (right) provides greater accessibility and comfort, as well as providing staff with a set of integrated results.



*Photograph: Hilary Tarr*

## Pauline Hirst 1928 - 2024

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Pauline Hirst, a member of the Guild since 1973, died on November 14th 2024 after a short illness.

She lived in Tunbridge Wells in a care and nursing residence for the last 21 months of her life, near her eldest daughter, Susie, having previously lived for 8 years in Devon near her youngest son, Robert.

Otherwise, she had lived in London all her adult life, supporting her husband Geoffrey, a GP, who had qualified as a doctor at St Bartholomew's Hospital after graduating from the University of Cambridge.

Pauline, or fondly known as Paula to many, grew up in Crewe, Cheshire, but had a peripatetic childhood as her father was a senior civil servant and her family had to move in and around England. This meant that Pauline's education was at many different schools, and was further disrupted by the war. She lost her brother Peter in an air accident.

She often said she felt very shy at school, but as a result was extremely supportive to her five children if they ever felt concerned at school.

After leaving Leicester at 16 with her School Certificate she did a pre-nursing course, but then did a secretarial course which meant she could live and work near London.

Pauline met Geoffrey at the age of 20 at her sister's wedding and they married in July 1949 in St Bartholomew the Less.

Following the birth of their first child Susie, who was born at St Bartholomew's, there continued a long family link with the hospital. Her second daughter Juliet studied medicine at Barts and also married in St Bartholomew the Less.

In addition, Pauline had three sons, Andrew, Simon and Robert, and she spent all their childhoods encouraging her children to succeed.



As they grew up Pauline reinforced her links with Barts, first as a volunteer and then she became involved with the Guild, joining as a member in 1973.

She was immediately invited to become a member of the Management Committee. At this time, the Guild was involved in raising money to buy a property to house relatives of patients so they could be near the hospital.

She served on various committees and was elected Chairman of Barts Guild from 1980-1983. In 2013 Pauline was awarded the League of Mercy award for her services to the Guild and was also given the Freedom of the City of London. She also served as a Vice-President of the Guild from 1989 and as Assistant Secretary!

*Continued on page five.*

## Pauline Hirst 1928 - 2024 cont.

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Pauline remained in touch with the Guild when she moved to Plymouth - where she learnt to play Mah Jong! - and is remembered with love and for her very happy and positive disposition with both Guild members and the patients and staff, and is very much missed by all who knew her.

Pauline spent all her life in London carrying out the role of the classic GP's wife. She was fondly known for being very sociable, her love of crosswords, chocolate and always nibbles and a glass of wine before supper.

Her character was defined by being the youngest child, the war years and a great self-sufficiency. She was a very private person, not sentimental in any way, and a huge strength to her family.

She is very much missed by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. They all have many very happy memories to share.

SUSAN RICHARDS  
ANN WICKHAM



## Website & Social Media

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The Guild, working with web partner Pedalo, recently upgraded elements of our website, including a refreshed home page design and improvements to the way News stories are presented and sorted, including a dedicated section covering awarded Grants.

The site also received a security upgrade to bring it into line with the latest UK Government guidelines and some content was refreshed and updated, including the History of the Guild and the addition of a complete list of Patrons, Presidents and Chairmen since our foundation in 1911.

The Guild's presence on social media has changed focus following a recent discussion at Management Committee and alongside our existing Facebook page, we will be using new accounts on Bluesky, Instagram and Threads.

These platforms provide greater content moderation than currently seen on X, formerly Twitter, which results in a less toxic environment and a more enjoyable user experience. We will retain our X account to monitor posts, but it will remain dormant.

### Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/BartsHospitalGuild/>

### Bluesky



<https://bsky.app/profile/bartsguild.bsky.social>

### Instagram



<https://www.instagram.com/bartsguild/>

### Threads



<https://www.threads.net/@bartsguild>

### Website



<https://www.bartsguild.org.uk/>

Please continue to interact with us on Facebook and if you are on Bluesky, Instagram and/or Threads, please follow us to receive updates of Guild news and forthcoming events, and like and share our posts.

PHIL MOSS



## Christmas Cheer!

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Volunteers, Management Committee members and friends got together in Maggie's Centre at Barts on December 17th 2024 to celebrate Christmas.

This was the first time in some years that the party had been held on the Barts campus. The venue, suggested by Chairman Steve Edmondson, was certainly a change for the better. Guests could chat and laugh together away from the background hubbub of a noisy pub. We enjoyed a tempting cold buffet and plentiful supply of wine, beer and soft drinks, and it is safe to say that a good time was had by all.

Thanks to Andy Haddon and Steve Bench for organising a perfect Christmas Party.



*Chairman Steve Edmondson's Christmas Address*



*L-R: Jenny, Claire, Patrick, Ann.*



*L-R: Rita, Sylvia, Russel.*



## Christmas Cheer!

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*Hilary and Steve.*



*L-R: Jenny, Russel, Ros.*



*L-R: Sylvia, Rita, Pat.*



*L-R: Monique, Danny, Russel.*

*Photographs: Bob Cooper*

## Maggie's at Barts

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The Maggie's Centre at St Bartholomew's Hospital provides a wide range of support and activities for people living with cancer and their loved ones. Visitors can enjoy exercise including Yoga, Tai Chi and joining in with walking groups.

There are support groups at the centre and online. Benefit advice is available as are complimentary Therapies and bereavement support.

Maggie's is situated next to the North Wing at Barts in an imaginatively designed modern building.



*Photograph courtesy of Maggie's*

<https://www.maggies.org/our-centres/maggies-barts/>

## Visiting the North Wing at Barts

Towards the end of January, Guild volunteers who work in the Shop and take the Trolley round the wards were delighted to have the opportunity to visit the Great Hall and view the ongoing restoration work.

Will Palin, Barts Heritage's Chief Executive hosted an excited group from the Guild and during the tours, Will explained the various stages of the multi-million pound 'Sharing Historic Barts' renovation project that will secure the future of the Hospital's North Wing.

Repair and restoration of the 302-year-old building has been made possible by a grant of £5.3m from The National Heritage Lottery Fund, plus donations from the City of London's Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund and the charity sector, including the Guild, and donations from individuals and families.

Guild volunteers saw the amazing restoration of the magnificent chandelier that hangs above the Hogarth stair, learned about the intricate work that's been undertaken offsite on the Charter Window and ascended the levels of scaffolding inside the Great Hall to get a close-up view of the refurbished ceiling.

During the three months since our visit, work has continued apace and we were delighted to recently receive some photographs from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the principal funding partner of the project (see page nine).

Our thanks to Will and his team for the opportunity to visit the work before it's completed this summer. When the building reopens, the public will, for the first time, have the opportunity to tour the Grade I listed North Wing and see for themselves the splendid Great Hall and Hogarth stair in all its glory.

JAN O'NEILL



*Guild volunteers high up inside the Great Hall.*



*(L-R): Jackie, Antoinette, Lorraine, and Mandy, with Will in the middle of the group.*



*(L-R): Anna, Danny, Steve, Monique, Russel, and Yan, with Will centre, this time in an orange hi-vis.*

*Photographs: Bob Cooper*

*Continued on page nine.*



## Visiting the North Wing at Barts cont.



Careful cleaning has revealed the original gold plate on the Hogarth chandelier.



Will explaining the restoration of Hogarth's Pool of Bethesda.

## Recent Images of the North Wing Restoration



Carla Markland, Senior Art Conservator at Paine and Stewart, meticulously restoring artwork in the Great Hall.



Megan Buchanan-Smith, Art Conservator, working on restoration of the Hogarth stair as part of her internship.



These recent images of the North Wing are courtesy of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, whose support enables the heritage skills of these experts to ensure the preservation of our cultural treasures for future generations.

Photographs: Dave Parry

## ESC EACVI Conference - Berlin, December 2024

I had the privilege of attending the 2024 European Society of Cardiology (ESC) European Association of Cardiovascular Imaging (EACVI) conference in Berlin last December. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Barts Guild for their generous grant, which made it possible for me to attend this event and showcase the work undertaken at Barts Heart Centre.

At the conference, I had the opportunity to present a recent case study of a novel treatment approach for obstructive hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). My presentation focused on the use of left ventricular pacing to relieve obstructive gradients in a patient suffering from this condition, following diagnosis by echocardiography (echo). For those that may be unfamiliar, echo is a non-invasive diagnostic tool that uses sound waves to create detailed images of the heart, enabling us to assess heart structure, function, and blood flow. It is a cornerstone in diagnosing conditions like HCM, where obstructive gradients in the left ventricle can significantly impair cardiac output and impact quality of life.

In this case, we measured pressures in the heart during a pacemaker implant to determine the best way to set the pacemaker up. We found that pacing from the left ventricle was able to alter the timing of the heart muscle contraction to reduce the obstructive gradient. The early symptomatic improvement in the patient was good and has been maintained at 1-year after the procedure.

This technique has been pioneered by Professor Mohiddin and Dr Dhinoja at Barts, with a recent publication of the first randomised controlled trial in this group showing promising results in patients with few treatment options available should medicines fail to relieve their symptoms.

Attending the conference and sharing the case study findings with an international audience was incredibly rewarding.



*Will Davies delivers his case study to the conference.*

The exposure to high-level research, as well as the opportunity to engage with leading experts in the field, will have a lasting impact on both my professional development and the care I provide to my patients. Knowledge gained from the event will undoubtedly influence my future work, particularly in optimising pacing techniques for the treatment of obstructive HCM, as well as refining my echocardiography skills.

Moreover, after attending the conference I plan to disseminate the knowledge garnered to my colleagues via a team talk which I have planned, to ensure these innovative techniques are shared across our institution.

Once again, I give my deepest thanks to Barts Guild for their support in making this experience possible. I am excited to return to my work with renewed enthusiasm, equipped with new tools and ideas to improve patient care and further our mission of advancing heart health.

**WILL DAVIES**  
*Cardiac Physiologist, Barts Heart Centre*



## Hi there, Charlie!

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Andrew Elliot-Smith, who will be remembered by Guild members from his student and junior doctor days, recently became a father.

Here he is proudly showing off his son Charlie Thomas Elliot-Smith, who arrived on April 9th, 2025, weighing in at 3.36kg.

Welcome Charlie and warm congratulations to the new family from everyone at the Guild.



## Sharing Historic Barts - Update

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The 'Sharing Historic Barts' restoration project at the historic North Wing has now entered its final phase as we race towards our opening date of October 6th, 2025.

With the 300-year-old Welsh slates back in place on the roof and the leadwork virtually complete, the temporary roof is now ready to be dismantled. Later this month, we will be lifting off the large scaffolding trusses by crane, and the removal of the remaining scaffolding will follow in June.

Visitors to the Square will soon be able to enjoy the beautifully cleaned stonework, our repaired and repainted windows and the dial of the famous clock, newly gleaming and (hopefully) working!

Inside, our specialist conservators have completed works to the Hogarth paintings, and

to the ceiling and walls of the Great Hall. All trace of damage and decay to the plasterwork has vanished under the brushes of our decorators – and the battered donor panels have been lovingly healed.

With repairs to the historic woodwork now done, the oak panelling and doors are being refinished and polished.

The west chimneypiece will return from the workshop in June, and the finishing of the floor in July will mark the end of the internal works.

Members of the Guild will be particularly pleased (and relieved) to know that the restored Charter Window is now back in place and awaiting its unveiling.

*Continued on page twelve.*

## Sharing Historic Barts - Update cont.

On reopening, the Charter Window – and indeed all the historic details in the Hall and Staircase – will be brought to life for visitors with new information ‘paddles’ and a portable multi-media guide available on entry. Elegant bespoke benches will provide a place for visitors to rest and take in the revived glories of the spectacular interiors.

Alongside the works to the building our engagement team have been busy running a programme of activities with hospital patients and staff – exploring ways in which the history

and art of the North Wing can inspire creativity and calm the mind.

Activities have included poetry workshops, art sessions and walking tours. These activities will continue and accelerate once the North Wing reopens so, please do keep an eye on the Barts Heritage website for announcements and book your places early!

*WILL PALIN  
Chief Executive,  
Barts Heritage*

<https://bartsheritage.org.uk/>



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### DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

#### BARTS VIEW DAY

**Wednesday May 14th, 2025**

**11am - 3pm**



Please join us in the Square at Barts to mingle with staff and learn about the Hospital.

### BARTS GUILD NEWS

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