



AIR AMBULANCES UK
SUPPORTING AIR AMBLANCE CHARITIES

ISSUE 38 WINTER 2023

airway

The magazine for the air ambulance community



OUR WINNERS!

The industry celebrates at the
AAUK Awards of Excellence

SUITE SUCCESS

How simulation suites are taking
PHEM training to the next level

COLLABORATIVE SPACE

New ideas abound at biggest ever
AAUK Conference

www.airambulancesuk.org

BRITISH HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION



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Guiding Excellence: BHA, a non-profit advocate for the UK's civil helicopter industry, fosters safe, efficient, and eco-conscious rotorcraft operations. We champion industry interests, engage with the public, and inspire future leaders, ensuring a sustainable future for UK aviation

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- Discover the sky-high elegance of BHA's Annual Dinner, a must-attend event every year
- Swing into aviation excellence at BHA's Annual Golf Day, an event that soars higher every year



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From the Chief Executive

I write this in the immediate afterglow of a quite brilliant Annual Conference and Awards of Excellence. We had record numbers in attendance at both events, which made for a hugely rewarding day. I'd like to place on record my gratitude to all the sponsors, exhibitors and supporters who made the effort to attend and also to my team for organising such an outstanding event.

The conference theme was collaboration and this was exemplified by the speakers who were willing to take the time to prepare their fascinating presentations for the benefit of the wider air ambulance community. There were 22 presentations covering an incredibly broad range of topics and I know many people were torn between which sessions to attend. I hope you found sessions that interested you - and I am always interested to hear any ideas for future Conference presentations.

There were also excellent networking opportunities during tea and lunch breaks and a record number of exhibitors to visit. With everyone gathered together, it was also a great opportunity to hold half a dozen other meetings through the day, with HR Leads, Communications teams, Chairs, Fundraisers and more all getting together.

While the feedback on the day was excellent, the team and I would be pleased to hear any further feedback on what you enjoyed or what could be improved for next time. Read more about the Conference on pages 13-14.

In the evening, the Awards of Excellence was memorable for all the right reasons. A wonderful atmosphere saw guests cheering on their friends and colleagues but also celebrating the successes of their respected peers from across the UK. There were truly deserving award winners and some extremely moving moments where the whole room rose as one to salute the bravery of some very special winners. See who took home the trophies on pages 10-12.

There is plenty more in this issue of Airway too, including a feature looking at the use of simulation suites (pp18-19) and a huge range of news from within AAUK and the broader air ambulance sector.

I hope you enjoy this issue - and look out for Airway coming out three times a year in 2024, as we aim to keep you updated and entertained even more frequently!

Have a wonderful Christmas and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.



Simmy Akhtar,
CEO, AAUK

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Forthcoming events

1 May 2024

All Party Parliamentary Group Reception,
House of Commons, Westminster,
London.

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BACK IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER

The brand new All Party Parliamentary Group for Air Ambulances (APPGAA) has had its Inaugural Meeting. Building on considerable success in previous iterations of the Group, this new APPGAA will work on raising awareness and campaigning on policy issues within the air ambulance sector to enhance the delivery of lifesaving pre-hospital care.

Chaired by Robert Courts MP, the APPGAA aims to engage political leaders and policy makers in discussions surrounding key issues that relate to the enhancement of air ambulance charities' lifesaving services. This crucial engagement seeks to raise awareness of the quality of care and effectiveness of air ambulance charities for patients in need of urgent and emergency specialist critical care nationwide.

Simmy Akhtar, Air Ambulances UK CEO, said: "I am delighted to have the support of Members of Parliament as we move forward on key policy issues affecting our air ambulance community. By working in collaboration, we can address national challenges and strive towards ensuring the best possible chance of survival and patient outcome for everyone in need of lifesaving pre-hospital care."

With the backing of government officials and industry experts, the APPGAA is poised to have a positive impact on the air ambulance sector. AAUK looks forward to collaborating with the Group.

Current key issues

The current key policy issues which the APPGAA will be focusing on are:

Access to and engagement about helipads and landing sites

Access to a suitable helipad is crucial to providing lifesaving care in critical situations. Every second counts and access to a helipad at a Major Trauma Centre saves lives by negating the need for a secondary land transfer for patients, for example, from an off-site landing to the Major Trauma Centre.

Increased demand and increased cost

Air ambulance charities continued to provide specialist critical



Left to right (back): Heather Benjamin AAUK Chair, Stephen Metcalfe MP, Robert Courts MP and APPGAA Chair, Simmy Akhtar Air Ambulances UK CEO, Kelly Tolhurst MP. Left to right (front): Scott Mann MP, Wendy Morton MP, Henry Smith MP.

care to patients during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as throughout the current NHS challenges including the repeated public sector staff strikes and the ongoing pressures on land ambulance Trusts.

They have worked tirelessly to safely adapt their services to meet patient needs. Charities are facing an increase in dispatches to patients, together with the reality of being hit with fundraising challenges due to lockdown and the cost-of-living crisis. Alongside this, the charities are not immune to the rise in costs of, for example, fuel and other necessary equipment such as medical monitors.

Safe access to patient data

Providing the highest level of patient care is the key priority for air ambulance charities. It is crucial for charities to have access to patient data once they leave air ambulance care and transfer to NHS services. This data would help air ambulance charities to gain further insight into the full patient pathway and ultimately the patient outcome.

The APPGAA comprises the following MPs:

Robert Courts, Conservative – Chair

Carolyn Harris, Labour – Vice-chair

Pete Wishart, Scottish National Party – Vice-chair

Wendy Morton, Conservative

Rushanara Ali, Labour

Karl McCartney, Conservative

Paul Holmes, Conservative

Gavin Newlands, Scottish National Party

Michael Fabricant, Conservative

Henry Smith, Conservative

Martyn Day, Scottish National Party

Matt Western, Labour

Ruth Cadbury, Labour

Kelly Tolhurst, Conservative

Alberto Costa, Conservative

PRANA MAKES IMPORTANT PROGRESS



In the Spring/Summer 2022 issue of *Airway* we reported on plans for the Pre-hospital Research and Audit Network (PRANA), a digital, cloud-based, pre-hospital critical care registry developed by the Clinical Informatics Research Unit of the University of Southampton. We can now report on the ongoing evolution of the programme, which is moving at pace.

PRANA aims to link data regarding patients' pre-hospital critical care to the existing hospital based national audits of critical care and trauma, including the patient's final outcomes. When operational, PRANA is expected to support improvements in: the understanding of pre-hospital disease, diagnosis and treatments, planning of future pre-hospital services and evaluating the effectiveness of health policy within pre-hospital care.

Significant collaborative work is ongoing with road safety partners to enable linkage of health record data from PRANA to the existing road traffic incident databases. This will provide an integrated source of information from before the moment of road traffic collision to rehabilitation of affected persons back into society - something which has not been achieved before. Building this functional capacity will create new knowledge, enable in-depth analysis, inspire new insights and inform future road safety policy to stop people becoming patients on UK roads.

PRANA is now hosted within NHS England's Wessex sub-national secure data environment, enabling contemporary cyber security and assurance of data infrastructure integrity.

The PRANA team have developed the information sharing agreements to enable data exchange between services and are building and testing digital data and governance links with ambulance services, air ambulances and existing national clinical audits.

Trialling of PRANA's data infrastructure will continue through the winter of 2023/2024 and broader functional capability is anticipated during 2024.

Dr Phil Hyde, the principal investigator for the PRANA programme said: *"The PRANA programme has had wonderful support from stakeholders across the UK who recognise the significant need for an integrated national dataset and registry of pre-hospital critical care. PRANA aims to serve as a national collaborative asset, enabling in-depth analysis of collective data to improve patient care and inform the prevention of disease. We're excited by the potential of this new capability and continue to work hard to achieve full function"*.

More information about the PRANA programme can be found at www.PRANAnet.org

AAUK FUNDRAISING CONFERENCE MAKES SPARKLING DEBUT

AAUK hosted its first ever Fundraising Conference this summer. Held at the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, the conference saw representatives from 13 air ambulance charities come together to collaborate and learn from peers.

Delegates enthusiastically took part in a speed networking session, making the most of the opportunity to build relationships and share fundraising techniques and listened to 11 speakers on a range of topics.

The Fundraising Conference was organised in response to feedback from colleagues about the need for such a space to collaborate with peers across the UK. Black Bear Creative Ltd sponsored the conference. Given its success, AAUK will be making the Fundraising Conference a regular part of the calendar.

TEN YEARS OF IBTPHEM

In August, the The Intercollegiate Board for Training in Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine (IBTPHEM) welcomed 35 doctor, paramedic and nurse faculty from 16 air ambulance services (in addition to other pre-hospital, critical care and transfer organisations) to the 10th annual National Introductory Course for Training in Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine.

This seven-day residential course delivers operational safety training related to hazard perception, dynamic risk assessment, team resource management and psychosocial wellbeing. The course involves rotation of teams of delegates through 36 simulated, fully immersive operational scenarios as well as practical workshops, interactive lectures and structured debriefs.

Feedback over the past decade has been universally positive. Delegates have described the experience as one of the most formative of their careers. PHEM subspecialty trainees, critical care paramedics, clinical fellows and their hosting air ambulance services have all expressed the view that the course provides delegates with comprehensive exposure to the full range of operational hazards and risks, a higher safety awareness and a fuller appreciation of the principle of dynamic risk assessment. PHEM subspecialty trainees also report that the delivery style, scale and residential nature of the course enables the development of a close peer support group which lasts throughout and beyond their training.



JUDE MORRIS FUND AWARDS FIRST GRANTS

After talented 17 year old motocross rider Jude Morris lost his life in 2021, his family decided to establish the Jude Morris Racing Foundation to continue Jude's legacy and celebrate his life. Working with AAUK, the Foundation donates 20% of all money raised to the Jude Morris Innovation and Development Fund, which helps air ambulance charities to save even more lives.

The first two rounds of awards are already making a difference. East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) was awarded £9,000 to buy 150 single patient use, disposable skin sensors for use with two donated Nellcor Co-pilot Near Infra Red Spectroscopy machines. EAAA are examining the use of this well-established portable medical device, normally used in hospital during cardiac surgery, on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) patients. The study hopes to identify which interventions during standard advanced life support are most beneficial to the patient's brain oxygen levels and may identify better ways of resuscitating people from OHCA. It will add significantly to the understanding of what happens to the brain during OHCA and will be the biggest study of its kind undertaken. The study will take about a year and involve up to 300 patients.

Wales Air Ambulance (WAA) was awarded £9,974 to explore whether pre-hospital CT scanning and treatment would massively shorten the time to revascularisation for stroke patients, both by thrombolysis and mechanical thrombectomy. This would result in a larger proportion of patients having good functional neurological outcomes and reduce inequalities in care for patients in rural or hard to reach areas of the country. WAA modelling will use NHS Wales data on stroke patients over the previous years, and data from medical partners and the ambulance service regarding response times, transit times and asset availability. It will consider air and road platforms for initial response and for ongoing transfer, along



with staff mix onboard the Mobile Stroke Unit (MSU) and will consider dispatch including critical care/HEMS dispatch resources. WAA will also conduct a health economic analysis on the model and aim to develop a strategic case to trial a mobile stroke unit within Wales.

Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex has been awarded £10,000 to undertake a pioneering medical project which will use drones to quickly deliver life-saving defibrillators straight to people in cardiac arrest.

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity has been awarded £4,000 to help buy relevant equipment and develop a bespoke training course to provide the charity's clinicians with advanced pre-hospital ultrasound knowledge and hands-on practical experience that will immediately be used for the benefit of patients.

Thames Valley Air Ambulance is developing and delivering a new training and development course focusing on the complexities of preterm and neonatal emergencies for clinicians working in a prehospital environment; while London's Air Ambulance is resourcing an ECMO machine; and both Magpas Air Ambulance and Great Western Air Ambulance Charity received grants to facilitate their participation in the SWIFT Blood Trial.

All AAUK air ambulance charity members can apply to The Jude Morris Innovation and Development Fund. Applications are welcomed for funding of up to £10,000. To apply, contact info@airambulancesuk.org for an application form.

ARE YOU MONITORING THE DARK WEB?

The Dark Web is a hidden part of the internet and a hub for a variety of activities, both legal and illegal. With the threat of cybercrime a constant concern for the charity sector, AAUK affiliate member Network ROI offers Dark Web Monitoring - a service that provides an essential layer of protection to help safeguard sensitive data.

Why is this important and how can Network ROI help?

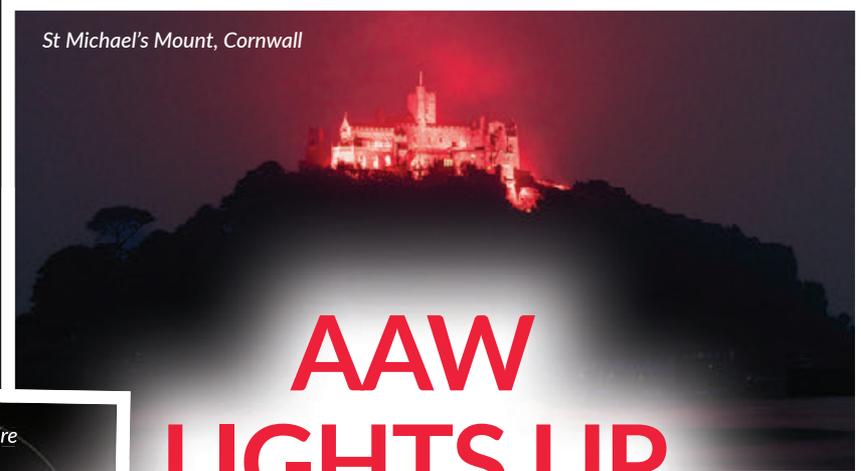
- 1. Data Security:** air ambulance charities handle sensitive information, including medical records, donor details and financial data. Network ROI offers compliance with regulations, demonstrating due diligence in protecting sensitive data, potentially saving your organisation from non-compliance penalties which is crucial when handling large or sensitive personal data.
- 2. Brand Reputation:** charities rely on trust and positive reputation. If malicious actors use the Dark Web to impersonate the charity, solicit fake donations or engage in fraudulent activities, it can damage a charity's reputation and erode trust. Network ROI constantly monitors credentials such as domains, IP addresses and email

addresses to identify potential threats. Network ROI uses this data to provide advice and respond to alerts for clients investing in this service.

- 3. Financial Threats:** hackers can cause financial threat, which includes the sale of fake tickets to charity events, counterfeit merchandise or attempts to divert donations for personal gain. Network ROI offers real-time alerts, which provide instant alerts about compromised credentials in Dark Web markets and data dumps, allowing for proactive action against potential security breaches.
- 4. Cyber Security Threats:** charities are a sector that are susceptible to cyber-attacks, meaning hackers can gain access to all your information. Network ROI offers protection from compromised credentials, meaning you will have increased protection from any risks. If found, actionable steps can be taken to mitigate damage, such as resetting passwords and using a password manager.

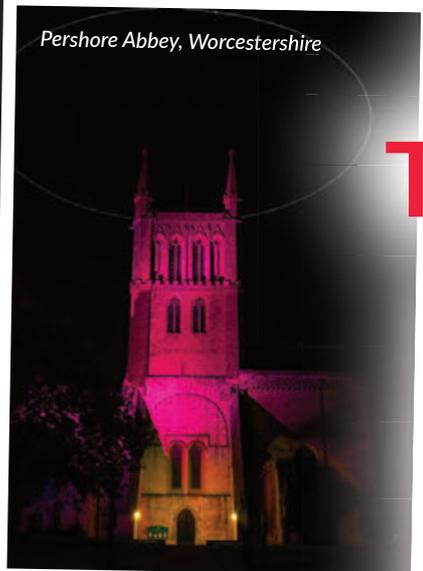
If you are interested in discussing this service further, contact Alan Ramsay, Chief Sales and Marketing Manager by e-mail alan.ramsay@networkroi.co.uk or call 07458 013217.

St Michael's Mount, Cornwall

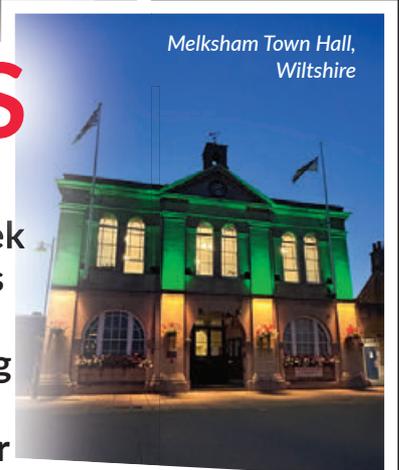


AAW LIGHTS UP THE NATIONS

Pershore Abbey, Worcestershire



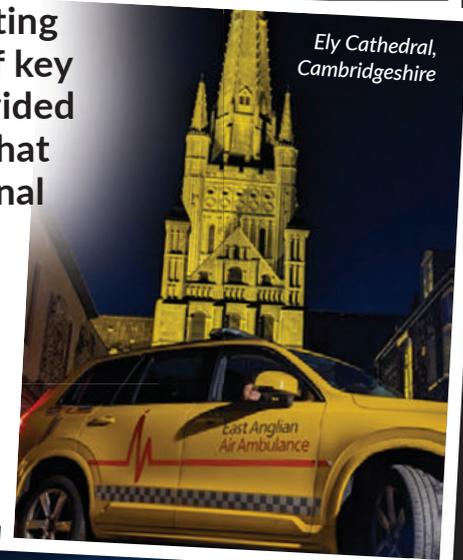
Melksham Town Hall, Wiltshire



In September, Air Ambulance Week saw air ambulance charities across the UK play their part in raising awareness of the sector and raising money for the cause.

While individual charities had their own methods of commemorating the occasion, the lighting up of key buildings and monuments provided many of the striking images that sparked across both traditional and social media.

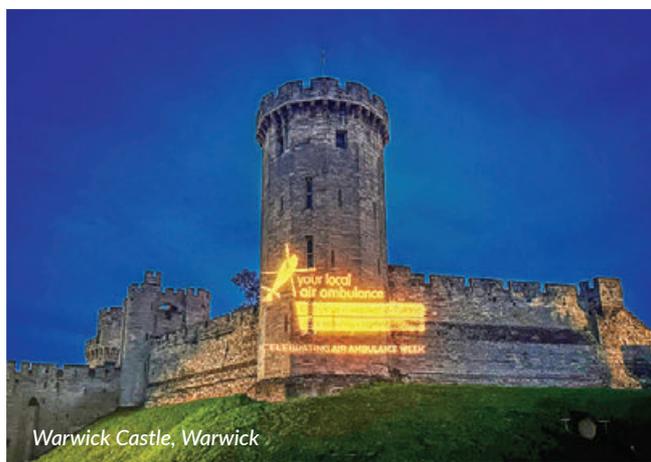
Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire



Air Ambulance Week 2023



AIR AMBULANCE WEEK



Warwick Castle, Warwick



Corfe Castle, Dorset



AAUK ON THE ROAD

As part of its dual ambitions to maximise awareness and income for member charities, and also to represent the air ambulance sector as its membership organisation, AAUK has been keen to attend and participate in as many events as possible, both within the sector and without.

The organisation's work to position itself as a charity partner has been rewarded with several new partnerships. This year, AAUK was particularly delighted to be chosen as charity partner for the world-renowned Badminton Horse Trials and also the Adventure Bike Rider Festival at the Ragley Hall Estate in Warwickshire in June. This was a great opportunity to meet and chat with members of both communities who have much to thank the air ambulance services for and are generous in their fundraising exploits for air ambulance charities.

Within the industry, AAUK represented the sector at RotorTech UK at Sywell Aerodrome in June. RotorTech UK showcases the very best the helicopter industry has to offer. The unique airport setting allowed both exhibitors and visitors to fly directly to the event and was the perfect venue to experience the latest aircraft and supporting products & services up-close. In September, AAUK attended the Emergency Services Show at the NEC, Birmingham. The show provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the latest innovations and solutions from industry leaders.

NEW TRUSTEE JOINS AAUK BOARD

Andrew Hicks joined Air Ambulances UK in May 2023 as an independent trustee. Andrew's other role is Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of nShift, the global leader in parcel delivery management and shipment software. He has spent 15 years holding CFO positions for private equity backed software companies both in the United Kingdom and the United States. He



Andrew Hicks

hopes to bring his financial acumen and digital skills to complement the contributions of the other trustees at AAUK.

FIRST LEARNERS FOR AAUK FUNDRAISING ACADEMY

Air Ambulances UK is partnering with Corndel to deliver The Air Ambulance Fundraising Academy - a new, fully funded opportunity to upskill and develop fundraisers within air ambulance charities in England. AAUK and Corndel have been able to use the apprenticeship levy to deliver the Fundraising Diploma to air ambulance charities for free.

The Fundraising Diploma is a 13-month professional development programme that recognises the critical knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to be a successful fundraiser.

Over 13 months, the programme will enhance learners' skills to effectively plan, manage and deliver successful campaigns of all shapes and sizes, from individual giving to large donors and major gifts, thus significantly increasing charities' return on investment.

Successful learners will receive:

- Corndel Diploma in Fundraising
- Chartered Institute of Fundraising Foundation Certificate in Fundraising
- Level 3 Apprenticeship Certificate in Fundraising

If you would like more information, contact Emma Carter at emma.carter@airambulancesuk.org

SWiFT PROGRESS

With the SWiFT trial having opened almost one year ago, over 200 people (transfusion laboratory staff, air ambulance teams and hospital research teams) have now been trained over a six-month period, with five air ambulance services and 10 receiving hospitals currently open to recruitment.

SWiFT is a multi-centre randomised controlled trial (RCT) of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of pre-hospital whole blood (WB) versus standard care for traumatic haemorrhage. The primary outcome is the proportion of participants who have died (all-cause mortality) or received 10 or more units of blood components in the first 24 hours from study entry. In all, 848 patients will be recruited from 10 air ambulance charities in England.

The methodology is complex, requiring close collaboration between transfusion laboratories, air ambulance services and major trauma centres. Randomised boxes containing the trial intervention

are prepared by transfusion laboratories and supplied to the air ambulance services. When treating patients suffering major trauma requiring a blood transfusion, the team will open the trial box and administer the components according to local transfusion protocols. Patients are enrolled under an emergency waiver of consent, and informed consent is sought as soon as practically possible. Participants are followed up by the major trauma centre research teams. The study includes a within-trial cost-effectiveness analysis and qualitative research to assess the acceptability and implementation of the intervention.

Randomisation, which had not previously been performed by some transfusion laboratories, has been embedded into standard operating procedures.

SWiFT will be the largest RCT in pre-hospital transfusion research in the UK, making use of the unique strengths of the UK air ambulance services and NHS infrastructure. The methodologies used in this trial could encourage further research in pre-hospital settings by developing pathways and collaborations that can help embed transfusion research into standard practice.



BEING 'REAL'

By Aysha Mendes, Editor, *Journal of Paramedic Practice*

I spent this last weekend in the American city of Nashville, Tennessee and one of the things that really struck me about the people there is just how real they are.

I have grown up in Canada where people are polite and friendly, but sometimes at the expense of being authentic. We are so polite that we know how to say all the 'right' things at all the 'right' times, from sorry, thank you and please, to automatically responding that we're great when asked.

In Nashville, every person I asked how they were doing, including service people, gave me an honest answer, whether they were tired, just okay, or even hungover—and it was refreshing.

We all struggle some days and we most often carry on but to do that behind the façade that we're feeling great requires a whole different level of energy expenditure, and for what? Pretending that we're fine all the time only serves to isolate us and others around us who may begin to believe that they are the only ones who don't feel fine.

In modern-day Western society, we have been conditioned to believe that our very human experience of struggle is something to be ashamed of, that leaning on others is a weakness, and that we need to show others that we're okay, all of the time. We rush back into work before we're ready—we avoid discovering what might be at the root of our problems.

I think it is important that we acknowledge, however, that there is nothing human about being okay all of the time.

In our high-stress society of often unreasonable expectations, it is only natural that we crack under the pressure, at least some of the time. We are not designed to continuously 'go' like a



machine; so in moments when we can't withstand the demands foisted upon us, I hope we can give ourselves grace, and not only normalise, but nurture, our need to rest, renew and seek out support.

I was speaking with my father recently who was emphasising the importance of thinking positively. There is something to be said for optimism, sure—however, the dangerous belief that we need to be positive all the time is perhaps part of how we arrived in this predicament in the first place.

We need to normalise all feelings, whether happiness, sadness or anger, rather than viewing some feelings as 'good' and others as 'bad'. The experience and expression of the entire range of human emotion is necessary for our mental wellbeing—so let's start there.

World Mental Health Day took place on 10 October 2023.

Share your experiences with the JPP at jpp@markallengroup.com and access your subscription discount exclusively for AAUK members at <https://www.magsubscriptions.com/aaa25>

 Image credit: AdobeStock/CineLens/peopleimages.com

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



Hayley McQueen

Always a wonderful evening, this year's Air Ambulance Awards of Excellence was truly exceptional. A record 275 guests came together to celebrate and delight in each other's successes during an evening which typified the collaborative approach of the sector.

Wales Air Ambulance Critical Care Practitioner Josh Eason spoke for many as he reflected: *"The event was amazing, and the atmosphere was wonderful. It was so nice to celebrate all of our colleagues' excellence across all air ambulance charities across the UK and come together as one big team."*

The evening ran smoothly under the warm and empathic host Hayley McQueen, as each and every finalist's incredible contribution was recognised.

The Charity Supporter of the Year winner this year was the Polledri family from Great Western Air Ambulance Charity. Both the family and the audience were moved by their win, which recognised their initiative, The Sam Polledri Foundation, which emerged from the devastating loss of Sam Polledri, a healthy 24-year-old who tragically suffered a cardiac arrest and passed away due to the absence of nearby defibrillators. In response, his family and girlfriend Lisa established the Foundation with Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, aiming to ensure that every part of Bristol is within a three-minute

reach of a defibrillator. They have already raised £65,000, installing ten defibrillators in strategic locations across Bristol, with many more in progress.

The audience was again moved by the presentation of a special award in recognition of the life and work of Wiltshire Air Ambulance's Rob Collingwood, who tragically passed away from cancer at just 42. Rob's widow Hattie and WAA Chief Pilot Matt Wilcock collected the award on behalf of the talented, dedicated and popular Rob, who is sorely missed.

A standing ovation greeted both of these awards, as it did also for both the Chair's Award winner, Cliff Gale from Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, and the Lifetime Achievement winner, Ian Roberts from Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, two popular winners who have helped shape their respective charities and the industry at large.

After the Awards presentations finished, many guests demonstrated a whole new set of skills on the dancefloor as the evening continued in suitably celebratory style.



Campaign of the Year

Sponsored by:
Lottery Fundraising Services



WINNER:
Cornwall Air Ambulance



Charity Staff Member of the Year

Sponsored by:
Charisma Charity Recruitment



WINNER:
Natalie Church, Director of
Operations, Magpas Air Ambulance



Charity Team of the Year

Sponsored by:
Donorfy



WINNER:
Cornwall Air Ambulance

Highly Commended:
Thames Valley
Air Ambulance



**Critical Care Practitioner
of the Year**

Sponsored by:
Zoll



WINNER:
Matt Sawyer from Dorset & Somerset
Air Ambulance

Matt said: "Being shortlisted for these awards, let alone winning, was a surprise for me. Especially as I work alongside colleagues and friends at Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and beyond who do truly amazing things for patients day in and day out. I am incredibly grateful and completely honoured to receive this award and really proud to be part of such a great team. Thank you to everyone who has supported me - this is an award for our incredible team."

Highly Commended:
Steve Chambers,
Magpas Air Ambulance



**Charity Supporter
of the Year**

Sponsored by:
Tower Lotteries



WINNER:
Polledri family, Great Western Air
Ambulance Charity

Highly Commended:
Ali Wade,
London's
Air Ambulance



**Operations Support Staff
of the Year**

Sponsored by:
MSA Safety



WINNER:
Greg Browning, Wales Air Ambulance

Greg said: "I am beyond thrilled. This is first time I have been nominated for an award, let alone won one, and it is undoubtedly one of the proudest moments of my entire career. Knowing that my colleagues were behind the scenes nominating me for this award makes me feel hugely honoured and is something I shall cherish. The entire table erupted when I won, which is still surreal. I am grateful every day for the opportunities EMRTS and Wales Air Ambulance have presented me with, and this is quite simply the icing on the cake."



Innovation of the Year

Sponsored by: Black Bear Creative



WINNER:
Magpas Air Ambulance



Doctor of the Year

Sponsored by: Leonardo



WINNER:
Dr Jake Turner, The Air Ambulance
Service



Special Recognition Award

WINNER:
Rob Collingwood, Wiltshire Air
Ambulance



Young Person of the Year

Sponsored by:
Sloane Helicopters



WINNER:
Molly Harris

Highly Commended:
Madison Crawford,
Northern Ireland
Air Ambulance

Abigail Sperrin,
Magpas
Air Ambulance



Special Incident of the Year

Sponsored by:
Aeroptimo



WINNER:
Wales Air Ambulance

Highly Commended:
Magpas
Air Ambulance



Pilot of the Year

Sponsored by:
Gama Aeroptimo



WINNER:
Captain Russ Myles,
Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance

Russ said: "I'm humbled that just doing my job is seen as worthy of national recognition as it's a real team effort at SCAA – every one of our paramedic crew who takes off to attend who knows what with me each day deserves a share in this."



Trustee of the Year

Sponsored by:
Round Table GB and Ireland



WINNER:
Barney Burgess,
Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex



Lifetime Achievement Award

Sponsored by:
Airbus



WINNER:
Ian Roberts,
Midlands Air Ambulance Charity



Chair's Award

WINNER:
Cliff Gale,
Essex & Herts Air Ambulance



COLLABORATION IN ACTION

The Conference theme of Collaboration was a thread that ran through the day, as over 250 delegates came together to share their learning and seek inspiration during the AAUK Annual Conference.

In a programme packed full of a wide range of presentations, each of the 22 sessions provided thought-provoking ideas, which presenters were willing to share with the collaborative aim of helping others in the sector learn from their experience.

The day began with scene-setting and introductions from AAUK CEO Simmy Akhtar, principal sponsor Gama Aviation's Duncan Daines, and a recorded message from Robert Courts MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Air Ambulances. The keynote speaker was Jon Round, Head of Airspace, Air Traffic Management & Aerodromes at the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Jon soon engaged his audience with his own tale of an extraordinary incident from 1988, when as a young man in the Navy, he flew a Sea King on a



Robert Courts MP

perilous mission in the dead of night and in terrible weather to Barra to rescue a resident in urgent need of hospital treatment.

Jon went on to tackle a range of very current issues with great relevance to the air ambulance sector. This included the safe implementation of helicopter Point-in-Space (PinS) operations; reflections on the Derriford aircraft accident and the subsequent AAIB (Air Accidents Investigations Branch) report; and Electronic Conspicuity, which led into a broader discussion about drones and their impact on aviation.

There was no doubting the sincerity with which Jon offered the conciliatory hand of collaboration and he was determined that the CAA should not be seen only as the regulator but also as someone on your side - an enabler to help aviation develop, mature and prosper.

Breakout sessions before lunch then covered topics as diverse as the SWiFT Blood Trial, academic pre-hospital medicine, the value of saying thank you, managing aircraft contracts, and innovation in raffles. Sarah Atkins and Dr Sarah McNeilly from East Anglian Air Ambulance presented a stimulating session on Reproductive Health in our Sector, which reflected on a process that EAAA has gone through (and continues to go through) where all aspects of reproductive health are considered and changes made to reflect their considerable impact on employees. The charity discovered



Jon Round, CAA



Black Bear Creative



Mhance



Kate Jenkinson, Legacy Voice



Leigh Curtis, KSS



Keith Wilson, HIOWAA



Helen Hughes, Patient Safety Learning



Intelsius



Sterling Lotteries



SES

that although theirs is an open and welcoming workplace where any topic can be discussed, this particular topic and its implications were not. People were dealing with issues like periods, menopause, terminations, miscarriage and more on their own despite the impact often being huge. EAAA has made a host of practical and policy changes but is well aware that, belatedly, this conversation is only just beginning.

Keith Wilson from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance spoke to a packed room about how the charity had entirely changed its approach to fundraising, no longer having any income targets but instead focusing purely on engagement. This change came in the aftermath of Covid, which had left the charity facing many challenges, both internal and external, and was driven by the whole team pulling together to take fundraising in an entirely new direction. The results have been extraordinary and there was clearly great interest in the room from other charities who were fascinated by this bold new approach. The session typified the collaborative theme of the Conference and the willingness of charities to share their ideas for the benefit of all.

Delegates had plenty of opportunity, during breaks for coffee and lunch, to speak to all the exhibitors present, who reported an excellent event where they were able to have fruitful conversations with existing clients and new prospects.

The variety of presentations continued into the afternoon, with sessions including: prehospital resuscitative hysterotomy, management of change, gambling harm, legacy fundraising, and data protection. Simmy Akhtar hosted an interesting discussion with Devon Air Ambulance around safety, where the value of having a just culture, where there was no blame but much learning, was crucial.

Leigh Curtis from Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex gave a fascinating presentation on how drones may be able to play a part in pre-hospital medicine by taking defibrillators to patients quicker than land or air ambulances can reach them. A highly complex aviation picture has not deterred the charity, who continue to test, trial and discuss with the CAA in the hope of making this a reality.

The Conference closed, leaving delegates with much to consider and already looking forward to reconvening in 2024.

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

When retired policeman Dick Berry left his doctor's surgery one morning, things took an unexpected turn for the worse when he crashed his van not more than fifty yards away. Dick's survival was down to teamwork and unbelievably good luck. As former GWAAC Critical Care Doctor, Dr Leon Roberts says, *"Dick lucked out with his chain of survival. On another day, it might not have worked."*

Dick had retired at the age of 50 and was looking forward to a quieter life but it didn't take him long to realise this wasn't for him. Dick missed working with people in his local area, so he took a job with the council as a supervisor looking after parking on the seafront. This soon developed into a managerial role, which he did for 15 years.

It was while he held this position, a fit and active 59 year old man, that Dick suffered a cardiac arrest one morning before work.

Dick has no recollection of the days before or after. So, this story has been based on the recollections of his wife, his GP, Dr Leon Roberts (a Critical Care Doctor with Great Western Air Ambulance Charity at the time), the land paramedics that also attended and bystanders from the day.

Dick was on the seafront before work, feeling unwell, so he popped to his doctor's surgery thinking he could make it back to work on time. He then left the surgery in his van but only made it a little way down the road before crashing into a wall of the house next door. The alarm went up – the ambulance service and GWAAC were summoned, and his doctor and others from the surgery rushed to Dick's aid.



Dick (right) with Paul Middleton, Lions Club

Right place, right time

It was unclear if Dick had suffered a cardiac arrest and then crashed his van or if something else caused the crash and the cardiac arrest followed. One certainty, however, is that Dick was incredibly lucky that his cardiac arrest was quickly identified and that it happened outside his doctor's surgery.

Dick's doctor and the surgery staff pulled Dick out of his van and performed CPR. They also used the surgery's defibrillator to get Dick's heart restarted.

Dick was put into an ambulance as GWAAC landed nearby in Weston's cricket ground. Another stroke of luck was that as Critical Care Doctor, Dr Leon Roberts, and Specialist Paramedic in Critical Care, Mike Page, came out of a gate onto the road, an off-duty paramedic spotted them and gave them a lift to the surgery in his car, saving valuable time.

Dr Leon says: *"Dick's story ticks all the right boxes in the chain of survival of a cardiac arrest patient."* These include:

- Early recognition
- Early CPR
- Early defibrillation
- Post-resuscitation care.

When Leon and Mike reached Dick at 09:31, he was unconscious, but his heart had been restarted and he was breathing (although his breathing was very irregular). Leon said: "Mike and I decided to put Dick to sleep on the road; we put the breathing tube down and intubated him and got him smoothly to the hospital – the Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) – where he went straight up to the heart laboratory."

Dick says: *"GWAAC played an important part in my chain of survival. They gave me drugs that the ambulance paramedics don't carry."* Dick learned this from the paramedics themselves. Years later, when he was back working on the seafront, two first responders came up to Dick and one of them said: *"It's Mr Berry isn't it? I was one of the ambulance crew who came out to you. I can't believe you're still alive!"*

Rewind to that fateful day, and Dick was taken by ambulance, with Leon and Mike at his side, to the BRI because it has a specialist heart department. Within two hours of arrival, Dick had a stent fitted.

Touch and go

Dick spent five days in hospital in an induced coma and it was touch and go if he'd make it because he was also battling pneumonia. The doctors at the BRI didn't think he was going to make it and they tried to prepare Dick's wife, Claire, for the worst. Claire was told that the best outcome would be that Dick would survive but he would have brain damage.

Claire says: *"This period in the hospital was the hardest time – the family named Dick's room 'The Dark Room' because it was a sad and desperate place for a while."*

Dick spent a total of eight days in hospital and six months in recovery at home. Amazingly, he bounced back to his old happy active self. He's a walking miracle in many respects; the



only lasting damage being tinnitus (sometimes a lasting side-effect from the prolonged use of certain drugs in intensive care) and some short-term memory loss. Dick says: *"It's strange. I don't think it's just me aging gracefully, I really do have trouble sometimes remembering something that I did or said thirty minutes ago."*

Dick had six months off work after his cardiac arrest. During this time, he went on a ten-week course (organised by the Heart Institute) for survivors of cardiac arrests. Dick learned what a stent looked like and how the procedure works. He particularly remembers a presentation by a cardiologist who started with an opening line: *"Well gentlemen, (interestingly, it was ten men on the course) you are the fortunate few."*

Something else which made an impression on Dick was a phone call from Dr Leon checking up on his progress. He remembers the call well and describes it as, *"very moving and a nice gesture."*

Dick thinks his speedy recovery might, in part, have been down to the fact that he was generally a fit and healthy man in the run-up to his cardiac arrest. Claire points out that just ten days before, he passed his routine wellness check with flying colours. Dick's outdoorsy job on Weston's seafront kept him active before his cardiac arrest, and after. He also made a concerted effort to get back to fitness with some initial weeks spent walking around the local woods, increasing the distance by a little each day.

Lasting effects

While Dick lives with some relatively minor side effects and can remember nothing of the day, it's Claire that has flashbacks. She remembers the knock at the front door very well. Someone from the surgery drove up to her house to tell her that her husband had just suffered a heart attack and a cardiac arrest and was being taken to the BRI by ambulance.

This shock was closely followed by another when she opened the door to a second knock, this time to a police officer. Claire thought, *"he's come to tell me Dick has died."* But luckily, he'd come to say they were assigning Claire with a liaison officer – someone to stay with her at the hospital. With Claire's wellbeing in mind, that same liaison officer also checked in on Claire a week later.

Dick counts himself as one of the lucky ones – not only did

he luck out with the chain of events that saved his life but he is blessed with a hugely positive outlook. He thinks his positivity is down to his appreciation of, *"my incredible good luck"* and the fact that, *"I don't dwell on it."*

Dick thinks that another contributing factor to how well he has dealt with it all is the fact that he feels quite relaxed in a hospital environment: *"I spent a lot of time as a boy in hospital for my psoriasis so am not fazed by the clinical environment."*

He even speaks of his tinnitus as of an old friend, *"In some strange way,"* Dick reflects, *"It's almost comforting – like a little reminder that I'm still here, living and breathing."*

Dick says: *"When I had my cardiac arrest, I had one grandchild. It's pretty amazing to be standing here now, nine years after my cardiac arrest, and to have the pleasure of six grandchildren."*

Now that Dick has properly retired, he spends his time running around after his grandchildren, going on long walks and doing aqua-aerobics five times a week with Claire. The pair also give a lot of time to the Weston-super-Mare Lions Club. And there's much to look forward to including a much-awaited trip-of-a lifetime coming up in January – a three-month trip to New Zealand and Australia.

"From my doctor and the surgery staff to Dr Leon and SPCC Mike, to the ambulance paramedics... as Dr Leon said, 'it all came together,' and I feel very blessed. I've also been amazed by the work of the Heart Institute – they've been very supportive of Claire and the family."

Dick recently visited the GWAAC airbase and admits that having gone through six months of rehab, he hadn't really thought to get in touch with GWAAC, other than to support the charity by doing their lottery. It was only when he joined the WSM Lions Club and was looking for a charity to benefit from the Mud Master Event that he was organising, that he resurrected links with GWAAC.

Even though it was nine years ago, Leon remembers Dick particularly well because he was his first patient as a signed-off solo Critical Care Doctor. Leon recalls, *"It was a memorable first day; Dick's incident was followed immediately by a call-out to another cardiac arrest. It felt like an induction of fire."*

"It's fantastic to know that all the training and supervision provided by GWAAC came together on my first shift as a signed-off Critical Care Doctor with GWAAC. We were able to provide a level of care, on top of the early intervention provided by bystanders, that had a positive outcome for Dick."

CARDIAC ARREST AT 28

Belper project manager Nick Forsyth has always been sporty, playing hockey for his local team and enjoying games of five-a-side football with his work colleagues.

At 28 years old, he was healthy and physically fit until he developed chest pains and collapsed at the side of the pitch during a weekly five-a-side match on 17 January 2019.

“One of the people I work with is a trained first aider and I’m told that they started doing CPR on me. There was also a defibrillator at the leisure centre which was used on me,” says Nick.

Both a land ambulance and the Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance (DLRAA) attended DW Sports in Derby in response to a 999 call.

Nick had suffered a heart attack which led to a cardiac arrest. He subsequently found out that he had an obstruction in his left anterior artery causing a clot to form which stopped the blood flow to his heart. The air ambulance clinicians had to stabilise Nick as his heart had been re-started. He was still critically unwell; they needed to support his vital systems and get him to a hospital with a specialist cardiology department to fix the obstruction in the blood flow around his heart.

He was anaesthetised and put onto a ventilator, enabling the doctor to optimise his blood pressure and oxygenation and help with the stress on his heart and brain function. The air ambulance doctor accompanied Nick on the land ambulance to Royal Derby Hospital where he was fitted with a stent. After just over a week, he was well enough to go home.

Since then, Nick’s interests and hobbies still mainly revolve around sport, playing hockey and cycling (taken up since his heart attack), and he enjoys watching a lot of sport including football, rugby, and cricket. Nick is now back to full health and enjoying his new family life. He got married in July 2021, and in October 2022 he and his wife welcomed their first child, Harry. They are both loving life as parents.

“I’ll always be incredibly grateful for the help that I received



from the air ambulance and feel incredibly impressed that all the stops were pulled out to help me. It’s given me an appreciation of the additional medical services the air ambulance provides over and above the normal ambulance service. I had always assumed that it was just a way of getting patients to the hospital faster, rather than also providing additional care,” says Nick.

“I also hope my story inspires anybody who doesn’t know how to do CPR to find out. I am living proof that lives can be saved by CPR and defibrillators – and everybody should know how to use both,” he says.

DLRAA Doctor and Clinical Lead, Matthew Wyse explains: *“The best chance of survival for a cardiac arrest relies on a chain of survival that involves dialling 999 for help, good CPR, using a defibrillator to shock the heart and excellent critical care to support the patient until they recover. The team from DLRAA have a role to play at every step in the chain of survival but especially in providing exceptional critical care at the scene of an incident – just like we did for Nick.”*

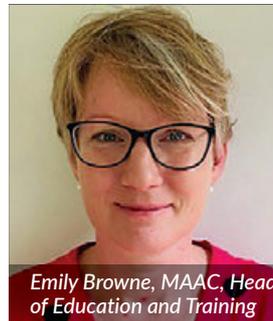


SUITE SUCCESS

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity opened its new simulation suite this summer and is now one of a handful of air ambulance charities to have access to such a facility. They are a major investment for any charity – but are they worth it?

“Yes,” says MAAC Head of Education and Training, Emily Browne. *“The new immersive simulation and training suite is enabling our clinicians to train and prepare for any situation they might face in a very lifelike, yet controlled, environment. Our clinicians cannot train in these environments on a day-to-day basis but the simulation suite means our clinical staff are prepared and able to manage complex patient needs in different, stressful, demanding environments.”*

The simulation suite, which is supported by The Kildare Trust, is a fully interactive room that uses virtual reality and real-world content to create a diverse range of situations that can be specific to the pre-hospital environment. This means that one minute crews could be in a simulated situation in a loud, dark, hot nightclub attending a stabbing patient, practising controlling catastrophic bleeding; and the next minute, they could be finessing their CPR skills



Emily Browne, MAAC, Head of Education and Training

immersed on a serene, sunny golf course.

However, the suite is only as good as the design of each simulation, says Emily: *“The design of the simulation is critical. You can have the greatest equipment in the world but the wrong design will mean it’s useless. The starting point must always be: who am I educating*

and what am I trying to achieve? Simulation is different from skills training: it is not role play and pretence, it is simulating very real situations. It is only the learners in the room, who quickly forget the cameras are there and are soon responding as if it’s a real situation. That’s where the learning happens. The simulation unfolds in real time and no-one steps in. If someone makes an error, we find out if they correct it and, if so, how? Stopping them and telling them what to do wouldn’t be learning. But, of course, the debrief is critical.”

The simulation suite is great for, among other things, practising low frequency, high risk skills so certain processes become ingrained before ever seeing the job in real life. By using exactly the same kit in the simulator as PHEM operatives have on the road or in the air adds further reality and utility.

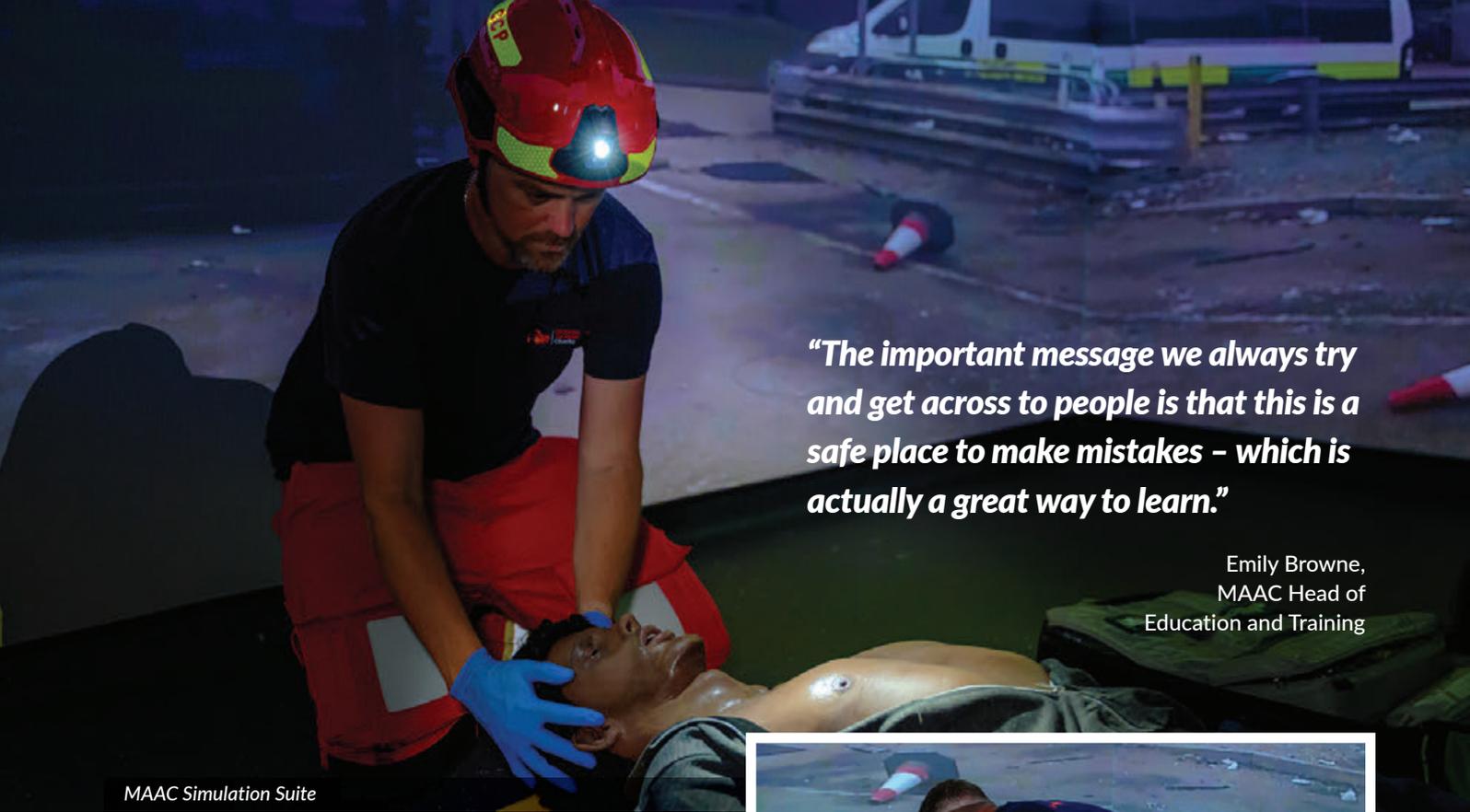
Wiltshire Air Ambulance has had its simulation suite since 2018 and Specialist Critical Care Paramedic Adam Khan,



WAA Simulation Suite



WAA Simulation Suite



“The important message we always try and get across to people is that this is a safe place to make mistakes – which is actually a great way to learn.”

Emily Browne,
MAAC Head of
Education and Training

MAAC Simulation Suite

who also runs the suite, says it is an incredibly valuable tool: *“It’s so useful that we can one minute be transported to Salisbury Plain, the next to Marlborough Downs, then to a shopping centre... basically anywhere we might be called to. Then we can change the lighting and temperature to replicate an environment as closely as possible.*

“I think its value is different for different people. For more experienced members of staff, the projections are less important than the equipment they’re using, while for new staff it might be the ability to be completely immersed in all kinds of situations they’ve never come across before. I also can’t overstate its value in helping new colleagues to learn and understand the kit and what it’s like to arrive on scene – it gives them so much confidence because some processes become second nature before they ever approach a similar situation in real life.

“One time it really comes into its own is in a multi-professional simulation, where people not used to the world of PHEM can have direct exposure to a very foreign situation.

“The important message we always try and get across to people is that this is a safe place to make mistakes – which is actually a great way to learn. There are no terrible consequences to making a mistake in this environment and we always ensure the conversation afterwards is constructive, respectful and understanding of the pressure participants feel in the simulation suite. Experience tells me that making a mistake is a fantastic way to get something to stick in your mind so you can avoid it next time.”



Adam Khan, WAA

Wiltshire Air Ambulance use the suite most days, exploring different clinical topics, new practices and different



MAAC Simulation Suite

environments. It’s also incredibly useful for what might seem like minor elements of the process but are actually critical; for example, if a new drug comes out or a new piece of equipment, you can simulate countless different scenarios to work out when that drug or equipment needs to be in the bag and where it is best kept to expedite treatment.

Simulations are also informed by morbidity and mortality in previous jobs, as clinicians seek out the learning points. They can try different approaches to a job they’ve been to - or colleagues who didn’t attend can see how they would have fared in the situation. The simulation can also run through a whole job from initial flight to hospital handover. It’s an incredibly rich learning environment.

MAAC’s Emily Browne says that the IRIS simulation authoring tool is a valuable part of the process, allowing you to write simulation scenarios and prompting you to make it as effective as it can be. It also means different organisations can share best practice in simulation writing to create a real pool of knowledge that can be used and tailored by individual organisations.

It’s clear that simulation suites can add huge value to any air ambulance charity. *“Sometimes when external colleagues come in to use it,” says Adam, “it’s a great reminder of just how lucky we are to have it. Ambulance service and other blue light service colleagues say it’s absolutely incredible what you can do with it – and it really is.”*

WAA REVEALS NEW AIRCRAFT AND NEW LOOK



The Wales Air Ambulance Charity has unveiled its new aircraft, which has been named by the people of Wales, and its new Rapid Response Vehicles. In 2022, the Charity underwent a rebrand and now the public has been able to get a glimpse of a new aircraft which carries the new design.

During the summer, the charity's supporters were given the opportunity to name the helicopter through an online vote. The clear winner was G-LOYW, which means bright or shining in Welsh.

Earlier this year, Wales Air Ambulance announced that Gama Aviation Plc had won the bid for a seven-year aviation contract, which covers the operation and maintenance of a primary fleet of four Airbus H145 helicopters. Currently the service has three H145 helicopters and one H135 helicopter.

The Charity is also updating its fleet of rapid response vehicles, with the recent introduction of two Volvo XC90s. The new branding was introduced onto these vehicles alongside the aircraft.

Both the aircraft and rapid response vehicles maintain their strong Welsh identity, with a bold red colour and distinctive green dragon's tail that matches the Charity's new logo. Dr Sue Barnes, Wales Air Ambulance Chief Executive, said: "Whenever we survey our supporters, the Charity's strong Welsh identity is always highlighted as a source of pride. It's important that the passion for our nation is visible through the vehicles that we use, both in terms of their design and the Welsh language registrations for our helicopters."



MAAC MOVES IN

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's clinicians and charity staff have moved into its new combined airbase and headquarters facility. The charity says this centre of clinical excellence will future-proof its service for years to come. The new facility houses the charity's head office, airbase and clinical operations and community education zone. It is also home to a state-of-the-art training simulation suite.



Hanna Sebright, chief executive of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, said: "Our new airbase and headquarters is a significant milestone in our charity's 32-year history and is critical to us achieving our mission to provide patients of the Midlands with outstanding pre-hospital care and lifesaving intervention today and into the future. We are delighted that our clinicians and non-clinical staff are now able to work out of the same building, as one team, in this wonderful new facility."

TRAINING PAYS OFF

The importance of Wiltshire Air Ambulance's Emergency Awareness Training programme has been demonstrated after 11-year-old Maxi Bastable came to the rescue of his choking grandfather. Maxi was taught lifesaving skills by the charity at his school, Westonbirt Prep in Tetbury, last year.

The training became a real-life scenario for Maxi when his grandfather Francis was eating a Murray Mint at home and started choking. The youngster calmly took control of the situation and delivered an abdominal thrust on his grandfather to successfully dislodge the sweet.

Wiltshire Air Ambulance emergency awareness training instructor Andrew Robinson said: "This is exactly why the charity began the programme four years ago and we have so far delivered the training to more than 20,000 children across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas."

NEWS IN BRIEF

In the bag

GWAAC is using new bespoke kit bags, thanks to the HELP Appeal. These third generation kit bags were two years in the making and contain a series of pouches with everything required for a task in one place. This modular approach makes it easy to use and saves time both on scene and during replenishment, ultimately improving the way GWAAC cares for its patients.



Parrish preaches

TV presenter and former motorcycle star Steve Parrish has become an ambassador for AAUK. He will use his position, experience and commitment to advocate for air ambulances and help people to understand their vital role.

Double celebration

While Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) has been celebrating 25 years of operation this year, its CEO, Jane Gurney, has been there for the majority of its 22,700 missions as she has reached a remarkable 20 years with the charity. Beginning as Business Development manager in 2003, Jane was appointed CEO in 2009 and has overseen momentous changes and great success.

GWAAC'S new recruit

Tim Ross-Smith has joined Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) as its new Operations Officer. Tim is the line manager for the Advanced Practitioners and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care; he is responsible for their welfare and making sure they stay up to date with training and appraisals. He is also jointly responsible for the day-to-day running of the airbase.

The Air Ambulance Service

TAAS is celebrating three landmarks, with the Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance celebrating 20 years of service; Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance celebrating 15 years; and it is the 10-year anniversary of the Children's Air Ambulance.

Do you have any news you'd like to share in Airway? Then email info@airambulancesuk.org to be considered for the next issue.





CASTLE'S IN THE SKY

Castle Air Ltd, a prominent name in the aviation industry, thanks to its helicopter operations, charter services, maintenance and aircraft management, is making a move into the HEMS market. Building on its first contract in the sector with Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust, it is now offering itself as a viable alternative to existing players.

What began as a modest helicopter commercial operation in the south west of England has since grown into one of the United Kingdom's leading onshore helicopter operators. Castle Air began in Cornwall, with the company's original site located in Liskeard. Over time, the company expanded its presence, establishing additional sites such as the Biggin Hill location in London and a training academy at Gloucester Airport in Staverton. These strategic locations enable Castle Air to serve a range of customers and services.

Castle Air became widely recognised when the company was selected by the BBC to provide helicopters for the popular 'Treasure Hunt' series hosted by Anneka Rice. This pivotal moment propelled the company forward and established its reputation as a premier provider of aerial media support. Castle Air has been an essential contributor to numerous feature films, commercials and TV programmes, offering highly-regarded aerial cinematography services.

At the heart of Castle Air's services lies its expertise in Agusta Westland – now Leonardo – helicopters. The AW109 helicopter has been a cornerstone of the company's VIP charter operations for many years, gaining a reputation for its outstanding performance and comfort. In more recent years the fleet has expanded to include the Leonardo AW139 and



CASTLE AIR
 — AVIATION GROUP —

AW169 aircraft and also the Airbus H145.

In 2021, Castle Air secured a contract with the Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust (CAAT) to provide comprehensive AW169 Part 145 maintenance, CAMO (Continuous Airworthiness Management Organisation), and AOC (Air Operator Certificate) services. To ensure continuous air ambulance support, Castle Air also made available a HEMS-fit AW109SP as a relief helicopter, providing support during maintenance or AOG (Aircraft On Ground) events. In the same year, Castle Air began supporting Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance (LNAA). These critical support charities sought alternative solutions that would allow them to exercise greater control over their air ambulance operations.

Castle Air offered a viable alternative to the conventional turnkey solutions, making them the preferred choice for these organisations. The entry into the HEMS and air ambulance market signifies the company's dedication to addressing the specific needs of charitable organisations, where every mission counts. This company's vision is to specialise in tailored solutions for air ambulance charities, extending the same level of excellence and commitment that has been their hallmark for over 40 years.

For more information, go to www.castleair.co.uk



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AAUK SEALS TWO IMPORTANT NEW PARTNERSHIPS

AAUK heads into the new year celebrating two important new corporate partnerships. Both Kwik Fit, the UK's leading automotive servicing and repair company, and Briggs Equipment, the Asset Management and Engineering Services company, have chosen AAUK as their national charity partner.

Through Air Ambulances UK, Kwik Fit and Briggs Equipment will raise funds for all 21 regional air ambulance charities, as well as help increase local and national awareness of the organisations and their missions.



Kwik Fit's customers are able to make donations to AAUK in more than 600 Kwik Fit centres across the country, as well as when making a purchase online at kwik-fit.com. Kwik Fit staff will be carrying out a range of fundraising activities over the coming year, supporting the national campaign as well as the local air ambulance charity which serves their own community.

Mark Slade, managing director of Kwik Fit, said: "The air ambulance charities across the UK provide essential support on a daily basis, helping improve patients' chances of survival by providing life-saving pre-hospital care. We have seen the positive impact which Kwik Fit employees, industry partners and customers can have in supporting national causes and we look forward to making a major contribution to the UK's air ambulance network."

In recent years Kwik Fit charity partnerships have raised over £1.6 million for national charities including Prostate Cancer UK, Children with Cancer UK and the Disaster Emergency Committee's Ukraine Humanitarian and Turkey-



Teddy, the Air Ambulances UK mascot, joined the Kwik Fit Borehamwood team to mark the new charity partnership.

Syria Earthquake Appeals, as well as a range of local causes.

Simmy Akhtar, CEO of Air Ambulances UK, said "We are delighted and very grateful to have been chosen by Kwik Fit to be its national charity partner. Across the UK air ambulance charities are carrying out over 100 missions every day and with each mission costing, on average, nearly £4,000, so the national support from Kwik Fit will make a significant difference to the capabilities of all the air ambulance charities and help save even more lives."

Employees at Briggs Equipment were behind the decision to make AAUK the company's charity partner for 2024. Through the majority vote in favour of AAUK, employees displayed their collective appreciation and acknowledgment of the exceptional work air ambulance charities do.

Briggs Equipment say they are not just about providing quality service and products but also believe in giving back to the community and contributing to society in meaningful ways – and the partnership with AAUK is a testament to their commitment.

The company is pledging a minimum of £50,000 to be raised for AAUK in the coming year and says their people are devoted to raising the vital funds. Briggs Equipment employees are enthusiastic about this partnership and are gearing up for a year filled with volunteering and fundraising events, such as quizzes, marathons, car washes, and many more activities to help raise funds.

Janet Noble, Head of Group Engineering Services Support, said: "We look forward to a fruitful partnership and a successful year of fundraising and awareness building throughout 2024 with Air Ambulances UK."





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