

Harefield Gardens

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of rb&hArts, the hospitals' arts programme, we wanted to share key moments in the story of the Harefield Gardens and improvements to biodiversity through the lens of Elam Forrester, resident photographer.



Elam Forrester

Elam Forrester is a filmmaker and photographer from London of Jamaican heritage.

Elam has been working with rb&hArts for the last few years documenting a wide range of projects through film and photography, including the making of the Peace Gardens.

Elam visited Harefield Hospital between May 2020 and April 2022 to document changes on the grounds, interview staff and patients.

www.elamforrester.com

rb&hArts

rb&hArts is the arts programme at our hospitals, offering wide-ranging cultural interventions to improve the hospital experience and wellbeing of patients, families and the local communities.

The programme is charitably funded, with core funding from Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity, with funding from individuals, trusts and foundations.

A patient and staff member enjoying a craft afternoon session making terrariums organised by rb&hArts, thanks to National Lottery Community Award Fund.



History

Harefield Hospital enjoys an incredible amount of green space: 11 hectares within the Harefield Village Conservation Area. It is surrounded by Old Park Wood, well known for its rich biodiversity, and a network of lakes.

A little history

At the turn of the 20th century, Harefield Park belonged to Australian-born Letitia and Charles Billyard-Leake who gifted their estate to treat Anzac (Australian and New Zealand) soldiers during World War I (picture 1 + 2).

It became a Sanatorium in 1921 for the treatment of tuberculosis (TB), which, in the days before vaccines and antibiotics, comprised bed rest with fresh air and sunshine. This explains the 'crossbow' design of the main body of the hospital, with south-facing balconies for patients (picture 3).

Celebrating heritage

New interpretive signage will help you navigate from one garden to the next, all the way to the lakes down from the nurses' accommodation with bites of information on art, heritage, nature and mindfulness for wellbeing.

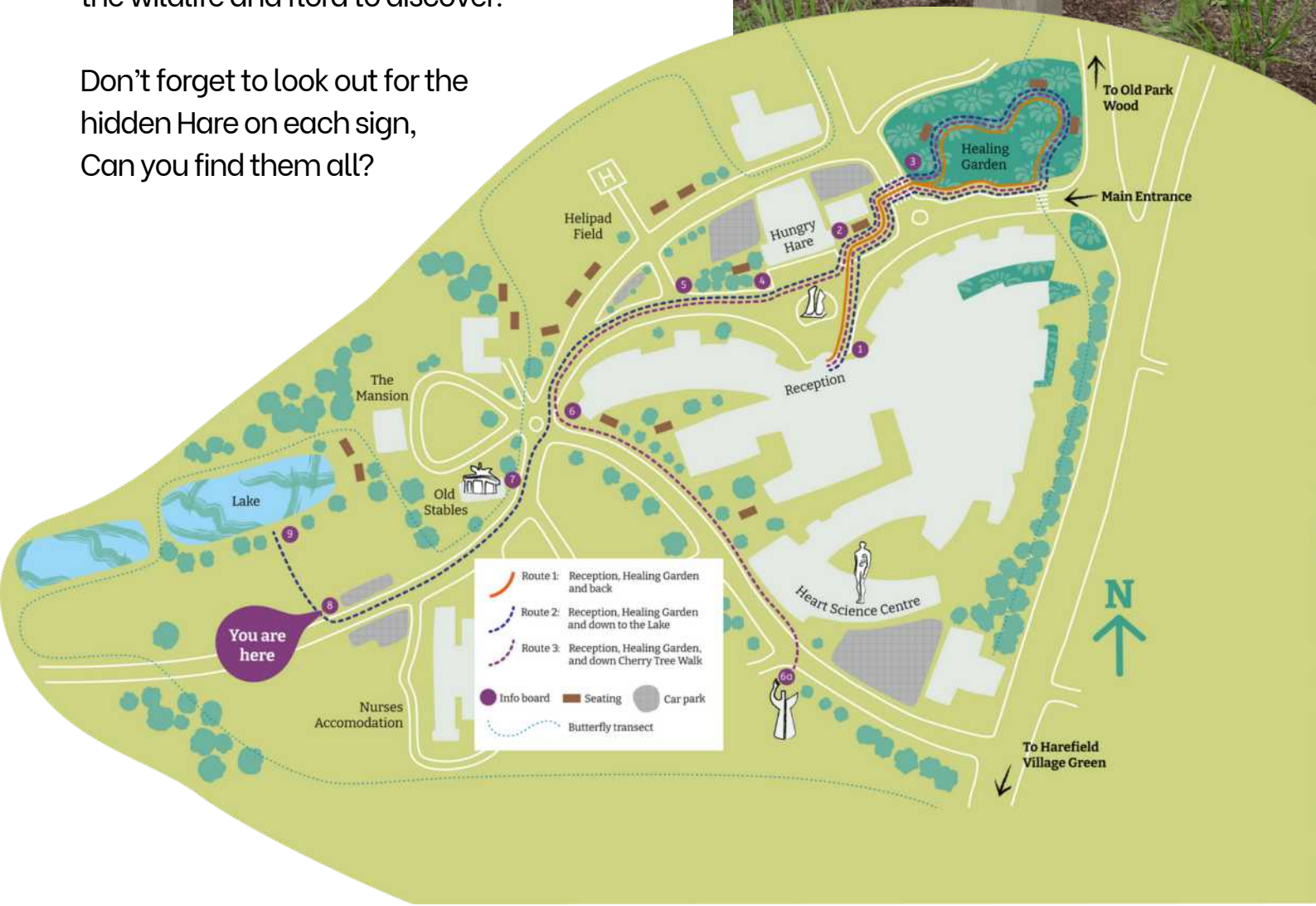


Art, heritage, nature and wellbeing walks

Signed walking routes guide you to explore the beautiful grounds of Harefield Hospital, encouraging exercise and an opportunity to improve your health and wellbeing with fresh air and by connecting with nature.

Three routes designed by rb&hArts with Occupational Therapy staff will take you as far as the stunning lakes. A series of interpretive panels with walking distances to the next sign are dotted along each route offering information interesting art, and heritage of the Hospital. These were uncovered thanks to the **Harefield History Society** and **St Barts Museum and Archives**. It features some of the wildlife and flora to discover.

Don't forget to look out for the hidden Hare on each sign, Can you find them all?



New Gardens

Harefield gardens have been designed to be accessible to all our patients:

The **Healing Garden** is a sanctuary for patients, a place for visitors to spend time with their loved ones and for staff to unwind.

The **Rowan Garden** was created for patients in the high dependency transplant ward, and their visitors.

Both gardens were designed by James Smith of award-winning landscape architects Bowles and Wyer, and built with generous help from Clancy and from Artemis Tree surgeons. Their smooth surface allows easy access for patients on beds and in wheelchairs.

The **Peace Gardens** is a series of interconnected planted beds, which transform the view from patients' windows and Sun Therapy. Specimens originating from Australia and New Zealand commemorate the Hospital's Anzac history. A large-scale ceramic artwork by award winning ceramicist Emily Gardiner adorns the walls.

The Peace Gardens were delivered by Groundwork London with rb&hArts



Making of the gardens

Teams worked together to transform underused grassy patches into luscious gardens.



Rosie Pope (left) and Catherine Perry on the site of the Healing Garden. Details of the Healing garden (right)



The stoney, underused area between Rowan ward and MRI was transformed into the Peace Gardens with planted beds and climbers and art.



Healing Garden

Founded by Rosie Pope OBE and Catherine Perry whose relatives were treated at Harefield, the Healing Garden is a sanctuary for patients and offers a place for visitors, including young children, to spend time with their loved ones, and for staff to take a break. It was tastefully and carefully designed to accommodate patients in Barton chairs and is maintained each week by wonderful volunteers. Early spring, you may have noticed beautiful tulips, that brought early drama to this incredible haven. All 8,000 of them were planted by volunteers to bring joy and beauty to all.

The 'cherry' on the Harefield 'garden cake' is the cherry tree in the Healing Garden.



Plant list:

- Lavendula munstead
- Rosmarinus officinale
- Sarcococca confusa
- Mahonia soft caress
- Polypodium vulgare
- Sestaria nitida
- Deschampsia 'Gold Tau'
- Astrantia major claret
- Pachysandra terminalis 'Green Carpet'
- Hydrangea paniculate 'Little Lime'
- Liriope muscari 'Munroe white'
- Polystichum aculeatum
- Allium schoenoprasum
- Stachys byzantine
- Libertia grandiflora





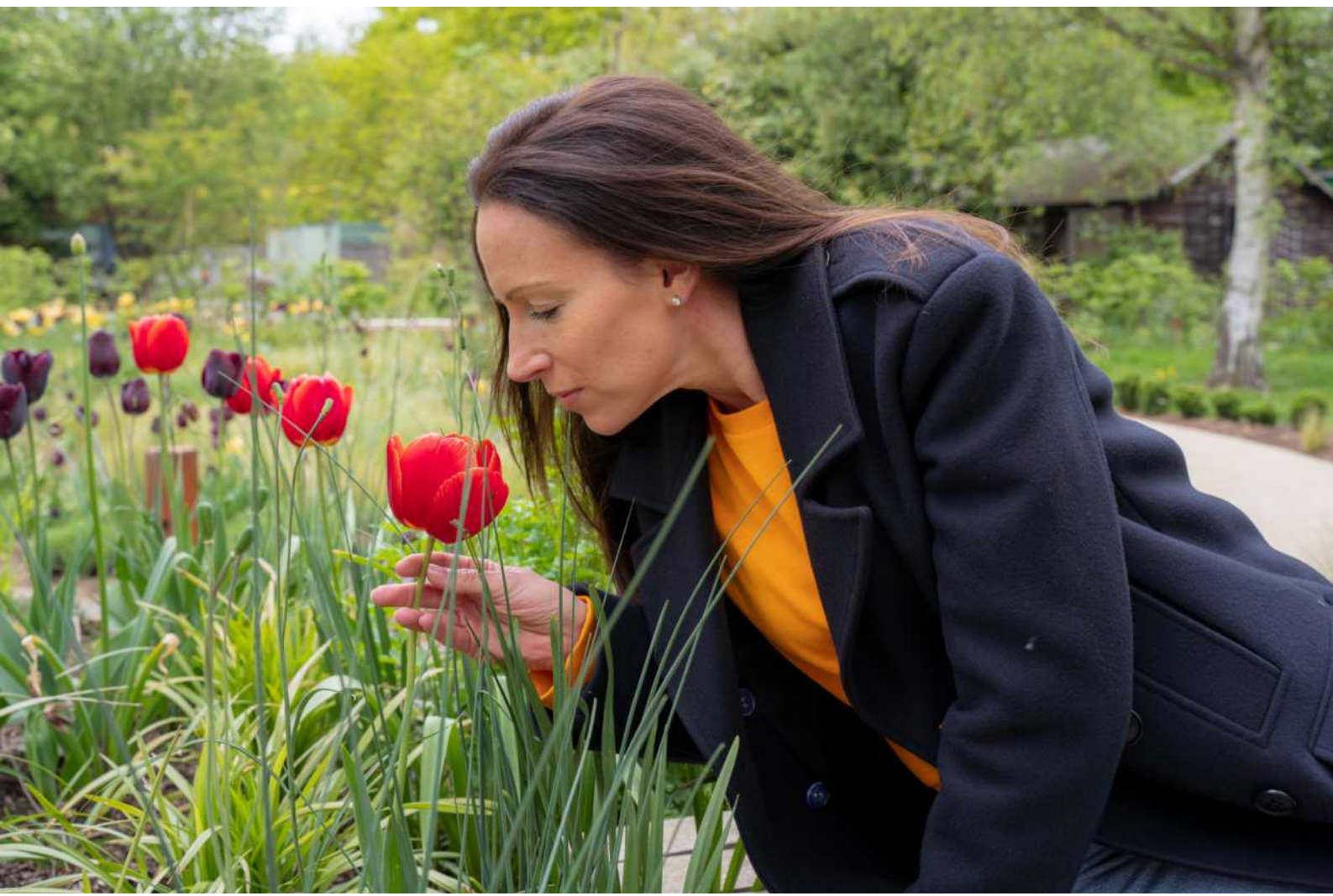
Patients' Stories

Catherine Perry, co-founder

“My dad was at Harefield five years ago. He sadly passed away here but after a year, I wanted to give something back to the hospital. I met with Rosie Pope who had this idea about creating a garden. I thought it sounded amazing. Rosie and I have been working together ever since to fund-raise and design alongside the contractors Bowles & Wyer, to design and build this garden for the patients, staff and visitors.

The garden was designed as a transition through recovery for patients. It’s got a meandering path which is proven to be very beneficial for mental health. You can stroll through, you can circle around this central elliptical space, you can walk through down to the other end. One end of the garden links with the transplant (Rowan) garden, which is for the sicker patients. That’s where they’re wheeled out by the hospital staff to sit in the sun and get the benefit of being outdoors. Then they can transition to the Healing Garden, and you can come through in a wheelchair.

This central raised bed has been designed so that patients can sit on it or on the bare side you can get a wheelchair or hospital bed to smell and feel the planting.”



Patients' Stories

Malcolm T.

“I used to spend as much time as I could outside walking and trying to stay reasonably healthy although I was hooked up to a pump, an IV pump, which was my best friend for nine months while I was at Harefield. And I used to go down to the lakes every day as part of my five mile walking around, enjoying the beautiful scenery and they had some ducks down there and some other wildlife. There was a family of goslings so we used to go down with one of the other patients and feed them almost on a daily basis.

And here, in the Healing Garden, we used to celebrate on a Saturday night another week in the sun with gin and tonics. Zero of course. But with ice and lemon.

I was very quick to volunteer to do some gardening while I was stuck here. The best, most rewarding part is planting the new flowers. As you can see the beautiful tulips and other plants here are spectacular. It was a wonderful distraction from the mundane, everyday life of being under observation and surgeries and everything else that goes on here. So it was a nice change of scenery to get out and amongst the plants.“



Patients' Stories

Richard G.

“I was told to exercise and walk, the brain kept saying to do it, the body replied “forget it buster“ and resolutely stayed firm in the chair, my body was wasting away to skin and bone and depression was constantly knocking at my heels, threatening to trip me up; it nearly succeeded.

The physio therapists, through sheer determination and smooth talking, convinced the nurses to temporarily disconnect me from the wires and tubes as much as they could and having found a wheelchair transported me into the big outside world.

The feel of the autumn air and cool sun with grass beneath my feet and the rustle of leaves had an almost instant reaction; I was alive. “



'Dreams do come true'

Story by Richard G., patient

Dreams do come true.

He was stood bolt upright on one leg, the other tucked away resting, head held high on a long slender neck. As I approached, he gave a quick look in my direction and decided I was harmless, his gaze returned to the island, transfixed on a tall gray clad steely eyed predator, looking for lunch! The mother goose calmly sat preening herself with their brood of three goslings, huddled down, dozing. Herons have been known to take small birds when hungry and the geese were taking no chances with their brood. One of the goslings moved out of the sun to the reeds, followed by the other two, closely watched by their mother. The male remained bolt upright, eyes fixed on the heron. In a flurry of feathers the heron took flight across the lake on long powerful wings, the goslings scurried deeper into the reeds having been warned by their mother of potential danger. The male watched the heron leave the area and when he considered it safe, he took his family back into the lake to continue their broods training whilst keeping watch for any danger.

I carried on with my walk round the lakes, accompanied by bird song to see if the horses were out grazing in the paddock on the far side, they were, a beautiful black stallion and a painted pony. At the top of the lakes is a small bench, ideally positioned to view the full expanse of the twin lakes. A chance to bide a while longer, watching the ever expanding fountain ripples disappear into the lakeside vegetation, moorhens diving for food and the dorsal fins of carp cutting a way through the water surface, at odds with the ripples. Peaceful and tranquil, the only sounds were that of nature going about its business, mayflies darted hither and thither on gossamer wings, insects scurrying about in the vegetation, a light warm breeze in the treetops and reeds rustling. A time to contemplate and forget my own problems, at least I wasn't on a predators lunch menu, not in England and certainly not in the grounds of Harefield Hospital.

The lakes are a natural feature in what was originally an 18th century country estate. The mansion house still stands, clad in a plastic overcoat to protect it and keep it dry, flanked by its two coach houses surmounted with stone eagles ready for flight but don't try telling the time by the clocks; they are purely decorative paintings!



The last residents were Australians and gave the estate over for the rehabilitation of injured members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs) at the outbreak of the First World War.

The house was transformed from a fully furnished home to a fully functional hospital in one week by three Australian nurses and a sister. Casualties were far greater than anticipated and huts were erected in the grounds as additional wards. The hospital proved very successful and only a hundred or so were lost who now reside in the local cemetery with the War Grave memorial.

The hospital still maintain links with the ANZACs to this very day.



My short walk back to reality took me past the coach houses, helipad and car parks to the canteen and main reception. Traffic noise was starting to permeate the brain, cars and ambulances coming and going, dropping off and picking up patients and staff. Before going back to my cream painted cell I crossed the road outside the wards for a wander in the newly landscaped healing garden with its wheelchair friendly meandering path, planted borders, raised bed and willow weaved hares scampering about the borders. Just back over the road, directly outside the main transplant ward is another newly landscaped garden which is both wheelchair and bed friendly with planted borders and flowing ornamental grasses, ferns and lavender amongst the flowers and shrubs. Pure natural beauty.

Looking through the ward window now it is very industrial, with an outlook over the roof of the theatres and intensive care, complete with air conditioning units and power supply generators. The gentle hum they create can be melodious when mixed with the bass sound of traffic; reality once more!

The surgeons, doctors, nurses and support staff at Harefield perform truly extraordinary work. Anyone with a Chronic illness has just one real dream; to live a “normal” life again. Harefield Hospital, accompanied and cosseted by Mother Nature, really do make dreams come true.

Peace Gardens

rb&hArts worked with Groundwork London and the teams at Harefield Hospital to transform barren spaces into lush sensory gardens, so patients can enjoy the beauty of nature in all its glory from their window and beds. The garden has been designed as a reflection on the ANZAC heritage, and plants are drought resistant for low maintenance. Volunteers learnt to care for these plants thanks a year-long residency with a community gardener.

“Harefield and Royal Brompton hospitals have a great history of patients spending time outside for rehabilitation and therapy. The Peace Gardens is part of that legacy.” Karen Janody

“The space is lovely – tranquil and full of colour, with a good variety of planting to attract the eye.” Staff



Plant list Anzac Triangle

Griselinia Littoralis 'Lillian Grace'
Griselinia Littoralis Variegata
Haloragis erecta 'Wellington Bronze'
Hebe odora 'New Zealand Gold'
Veronica New Zealand Gold
Hebe ochracea 'James Stirling' Shrubby
Hellebros x hybridus sp. Lantern Rose
Hydrangea paniculata
Kolkwitzia amabilis
Leptospermum scoparium 'Kiwi'
Lophomyrtus 'Red Dragon' New Zealand
'Little Star' New Zealand
Phormium 'Golden Ray' New Zealand



Patients' Stories

Eve

Eve, CF patient at Harefield Hospital, planted a tree for the Queen's Jubilee in 2022.

“When you're in hospital you spend a lot of time inside and often the room's quite warm. They can be quite small so you can feel a little bit trapped; especially at the moment with restrictions with COVID. So just having a space where you can be in nature, relax and unwind and just have some fresh air into those lungs is so important. And for mental health as well, just getting out for a leg-stretch or just some fresh air makes such a difference.

That was a big thing for me when I was in intensive care, getting out for the sunshine therapy, just being in the fresh air and out of the room, just for the change of scene, is so important. It's a nice soothing area to sit and just listen to the birds and see all the different colours on the leaves. It's a lovely space. I think that's been brilliantly done.”



Caroline Chinando, Sister in Charge, Transplant Ward

“Green spaces are really good to boost patients’ morale, giving them exercise. ... They like to make it as a goal. ‘Yesterday, I went just to that seat. Tomorrow, I want to try to the next seat and. In a week’s time, I want to do the whole walk’. That is actually quite helpful.

For them to sit out there and talk to their relatives or even to go out with us will bring them quite a lot of joy, peace, calmness, a different environment... different from your four walls.

You can see how the plants are coming out, or look at the artwork. You can start talking about that, just because you’ve made it outside. Maybe, you know, patient start having relationships with each other. They go out, sit here, and talk about transplantation. I’ve never been on that journey, I don’t know what it’s like to be on the other side, but for them to see somebody else who either will go through or has already gone through is totally a game changer.”



Sun Therapy

10 min of daylight can positively affect the mood, and quality of sleep for patients.

As part of the new **Intensive Care Unit**, patients have access to large windows for each cubicle and a veranda fitted with oxygen points.

Patients can be taken outside in their beds to see views of sensory bushes and trees. Friends and families can join patients outdoors anywhere on site for a moment of beauty, calm and reflection.

“The first time, I just remember going outside and fresh air, you know, smelling the trees and just hearing birds.

It was just such a surreal moment after spending what felt such a long time indoors. I used to look at the weather forecast in the mornings to try and plan going outside. “Right, can I have sunshine therapy today?”

On one occasion, I went outside, connected up to the oxygen and I fell asleep, and it was just such a nice feeling. It was really, really good.”

Paul S., patient



Patients' Stories Paul S.



“During the time I was in ICU (90 days), it was my birthday. All the nurses actually decorated the area with a banner saying Happy Birthday. They took me out. My parents and my partner were here. All the staff turned up with a birthday cake and sung happy birthday for me, which was fantastic. Though I couldn’t eat – nil by mouth, and they had this big, massive chocolate cake! It was so nice to see all the staff that generally look after you day by day just making that effort, just made you feel so special. It was a moment. It really was.”





Wellbeing

“It’s been really nice to see staff outside in the green spaces, particularly in the gardens and the front of the hospital, just having their breaks there, just having some chats... sometimes just sitting there by themselves.

Particularly when we work in hospitals indoors, it can really have an impact on our minds, our physical, our mental health. And there’s something about being outside, being in nature that’s really helpful in getting some clarity.

We find our minds are always so busy thinking about our work, things that we have to do in our busy work life. So just being able to get outside, go and sit somewhere, find some space, be amongst nature... we find that it’s really helpful in quietening our busy minds, helping us clear our thoughts... giving us a chance to just breathe and just being outside is really really helpful for our well-being. “

Dr Sheetal Patel



ITU Garden

The Intensive Care Nurses' Courtyard is a colourful garden with flower beds and shrubs surrounding a mature copper beech tree.

Championed by ITU clinical engineer, Harriet Roussouw with her sister Josie, the garden, where clinical teams can nurture their flower beds during their breaks, leading to a yearly competition!

“Even for 5 minutes, to escape a stressful environment or situation, very therapeutic“.





“During COVID, it was a real comfort to be able to stand outside having taken off PPE to cool off and feel the fresh air. During the first wave, I remember staff coming from the unit, the NIC from the PD room and a couple who were due to start their nights and we sat together outside while one of our consultants started weeding one of the planter. A strange mix of being 'normal' whilst being a physical eye of the storm which we could come back to at any time.”
Staff anonymous

Art & wellbeing



Patients' Stories

Katie H.

rb&hArts support patients' wellbeing through artistic activities, ranging from painting to pottery. Arts facilitator Rosie Watters has been leading 121 and group sessions on the transplant ward for long-stay patients.

Katie took part while she was waiting for a heart transplant. When sessions started, she had spent 6 months at Harefield, receiving hardly any visits due to COVID-19 restrictions and the complex medical care she needed.

The weekly sessions were the most interesting part of her week. "They are "a relief from sitting in my room and a great way of socialising as well as learning new skills". The 'Cubism session "put a feeling of great joy in me."



Katie, patient, enjoys a craft session with rb&hArts facilitator Rosie making a cubist portrait.



Adrian Garratt, comedy violinist

Adrian has been visiting Harefield Hospital since 2002, 20 years ago, thanks to Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity and more recently, the Hamsters' Club.

“In wards like Rowan, I’ll get to know people over a period of weeks or months. Those initial interactions can sometimes be an absolute delight and a real joy when the surprise element is at the strongest. Some people will end that interaction just going ‘Wow I can’t believe this has just happened to me’ and that’s lovely, that’s really lovely.

It affords the patients – and the staff – a little window into another world. It’s the opportunity to experience something that you can’t otherwise experience. It is a distraction. For the patients, it also affords them time to potentially offload to somebody who isn’t anything to do with their life, so a real blank canvas of a listener which I think is very valuable. To have somebody who is neither of those things has great value. And also obviously this treat of LIVE music.



Emily Gardiner, ceramic artist

Emily Gardiner an award winning artist and sculptor based in Brighton, UK

“When transplant patients were consulted on what the view out of their bedroom window should be, they asked for plants and sculptures with colours reminiscent of the Mediterranean. Emily Gardiner was chosen by patients and staff as her vision combined ceramic art, colour and nature.

Gardiner’s ceramic pieces are inspired by the colours and warmth of the Mediterranean, focussing on the deep blues and turquoises evocative of the sea and the vibrant yellows and oranges of the sun. The pieces are all hand made, starting as hand carved plaster models, which were used to create plaster moulds. Each individual piece was then press-moulded with clay and fired with layered slips and blended glazes to give depth of colour.

The intention is to provide patients and their families, staff and visitors with a colourful, positive and uplifting visual experience. Something to enjoy, lift the spirits and allow the mind to wander. “





Biodiversity

A recent survey mapped 11 hectares of habitat and identified 7 types, of which the most extensive was species-poor grassland (54%) and broadleaved woodland (26%). Other habitats included species-poor amenity grassland such as lawns (9%), two lakes (4%) and some scrub (4%). We can do better.

By cutting the grass 3 times a year only, we can significantly increase the habitats and nutrients for wildlife, which a healthy planet depends on. You may notice areas mowed less often around the lakes. This helps slow the rapid ecological decline we're seeing. Why not contribute by cutting out pesticides, peat and mowing less?

Record Wildlife

Would you like to help record the wildlife that exists on site? Please share what you see with us as we are monitoring the effect of the changes we make. A team is currently monitoring butterflies and moths so contact sustainability@rbht.nhs.uk for more info.



Harefield Hospital is situated within **Harefield Village Conservation Area.**

This designation protects all trees with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) greater than 75mm.

If you care for trees, why not adopt one to water in frequent periods of drought.



The lakes

The lakes area is rich with wildlife, closely linked to the Old Park Wood nature reserve, an ancient woodland designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, it is no surprise that wildlife wanders onto Harefield Hospital.

From bees to deer, wild animals of all sizes come to the lakes to restore. Plants thrive here too. Hidden within the woodland, a yew tree, with symbolism associated with death, spirituality and regeneration quietly protects this little haven of peace.



Get involved

Volunteer with us

Nurturing gardens is not only satisfying, it is good for our health and wellbeing. Did you know that soil contains an anti-depressant? It is the *M. Vaccae* bacteria. No wonder gardening is so beneficial.

You can learn how to nurture nature, gain skills in gardening, maintenance, and how to use plants and herbs for wellbeing.

No experience or commitment is necessary. You can drop in any time.

Gardening workshops happen every Thursday lunchtime from 11 – 3pm. Meet outside the Pavillion.

Mindfulness activity

To honor nature, we invite you to sit on a bench or on the grass.

Do put technology away for a few minutes. Listen to the movements and sounds around you.

Close your eyes and let your senses do the rest. Notice the breeze on your skin, the murmur of water, the ripples on the surface of the lake, the journey of a bird, bee or butterfly.

Pick a cloud and enjoy watching its course.

Record wildlife

We monitor butterflies each week. Join us.



Healthy ecosystem

In 2020, Harefield Hospital was gifted 400 tree saplings by the Woodland Trust. The trees included hawthorn, wild cherry, silver birch, hazel, rowan and dogwood, all species natives to the UK. Non-native trees need more water, leading to water shortages, and can bring disease to local ecosystems.

“It’s good for environment, provide shelter for animals and shade and serenity for humans. The act itself is fulfilling and therapeutic for myself. Given opportunity I would plant more.”
Staff green champion

“I loved the idea of leaving something as a ‘legacy’ for time to come. I did this with my nephew to encourage him to learn about the world around him, the importance of trees and as a special something we can come back and visit together. A very special day.”
Staff green champion



Julia and Ahmed were some of 88 staff members who planted the 400 native tree saplings in 2020.



Eve planted a tree for the Queen's Jubilee
“It's been great to be involved in the Queen's
Jubilee and planting the tree. Really exciting.
Hopefully it'll be the start of a beautiful tree.
It's been great to be part of it.”

Eve



You said

rb&hArts carried out a survey of the green improvements at Harefield Hospital amongst patients and staff in long-stay wards (transplant and Critical Care Unit). 60 people responded 14 of whom are patients, and 38 are staff. 73% were female, 23% male and 4% in other categories.

Levels of satisfaction with the greenery at Harefield Hospital is high:



5.53 Average Rating

Amongst other benefits, you shared that the gardens and green spaces :

- help patients feel better (95%),
- promote wellbeing (92%), reducing stress (82%)
- improve habitats for wildlife (77%)
- improve staff satisfaction at work (68%).

43% of respondents use the outdoor spaces once a day (16) or more (10), and this climbs to 60% if we include 3 or more times per week (11).

More than half of you enjoy the Healing Garden (55%), the Helipad to see the horses and the lakes (37% respectively). Future improvements requested improved information and signage to the lakes, and a map, all which rb&hArts is currently designing.

Comments include:

“The **garden** spaces there have made a really positive change to the **environment**.”

“The lakes are excellent for **wildlife** and the healing garden is great for thinking/**unwinding**.”

“**Patients** are always commenting on how **lovely** the hospital gardens are.”

“It surrounds us with natural **beauty** and can lighten the **mood**.”

Proximity is important and I can only go so far with my **physio**.”

“Theres always something new to **see**. I make a point to walk in the garden before I start my day.”

Thank you

Commissioned by *rb&hArts*

Photography by Elam Forrester

Curated by Karen Janody, Arts Manager and biodiversity lead

with support from Paul Brookes, Annabelle Bond, Bradley Crathern, Ashi Firouzi, Saira Gregory, Riz Khan, Karen McKelvie, Catherine Perry, Keir Philip, Rosie Pope, Samantha Queen, Harriet and Josie Rossouw, Rosie Watters and the Harefield History Society (RIP Loraine Piercy).

Supported by

The Harefield gardens have been delivered thanks to the generosity and practical help from many amazing individuals and organisations.



They have been funded by donations from former patients, families and friends of patients, the Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charities, Harefield Hospital, HS2 CEF, the Heathrow Community Trust, the Mayor of London Greener City Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund, Harefield Transplant Club, Hillingdon Council, Tesco Bags of Help, and local businesses.



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