



**NHS
CHARITIES
TOGETHER**

HONOURING HEALTH AND CARE STAFF

75 years of service

Friday 10th March 2023
National Memorial Arboretum



About the National Memorial Arboretum

The National Memorial Arboretum is the Nation's year-round place to remember; it helps people to reflect and to be inspired, providing a space to celebrate lives lived and commemorate lives lost.

Situated at the western end of the National Forest, the 150-acre Arboretum is home to around 25,000 young trees and over 400 memorials. People from all walks of life are represented, with memorials to the Armed Forces, Emergency Services and civilian organisations. The memorials are rich in design and symbolism with stories just waiting to be discovered. The Arboretum is part of the Royal British Legion and since it opened to the public twenty-two years ago, has grown into an inspirational living landscape, freely open to all.

On 11th October 2022, the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, Dean of Westminster, led a special service at Westminster Abbey to honour the bravery and dedication of those who served our country throughout the pandemic, and to remember all who died as a result of COVID-19 in the UK. The Abbey was dressed with trees and saplings which were blessed during the ceremony by representatives from diverse Communities of Faith - these trees are currently being planted at the National Memorial Arboretum in a new Trees of Life Glade that will be dedicated and opened to the public on 21st March 2023. A stately Spaeth Alder tree will sit at the heart of the glade, surrounded by a beautiful seating area, inviting visitors to pause, take a moment and reflect.

Just beyond the new glade lies a further 25-acres of land that have been gifted to the Arboretum by neighbouring quarry operator Tarmac. In collaboration with the National Forest Company, the Arboretum has shared their ambitious plans to transform this additional land into a new living memorial.

thenma.org.uk



Today, on the eve of the third anniversary of the World Health Organisation declaring Covid-19 a global pandemic (10th March 2023), NHS Charities Together is holding this special ceremony to remember those from our health service who tragically lost their lives during Covid-19, and also honour the contribution of health and care staff in the 75th anniversary of the NHS.

Health and social care staff from across the nations are with us today at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, and the service is also being live streamed across the UK for others to join in.

Staff attending include those from ambulance, hospital, mental health, community, social care and primary care services.

ABOUT NHS CHARITIES TOGETHER

NHS Charities Together is the national charity caring for the NHS, supporting a network of over 230 NHS charities to provide extra help in every hospital, health board, ambulance, community, and mental health trust across the UK. To date NHS Charities Together has allocated over £146 million to fund a range of projects supporting NHS charities, staff, patients and volunteers. These include counselling services, helplines, and intensive psychological support for NHS staff, plus training for emergency responders, research into long COVID, and specialist equipment. The charity has also funded over 325 community partnership projects to tackle health inequalities and prevent ill health in the community.

To find out more visit www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk

WELCOME

Dame Ruth May DBE, Chief Nursing Officer for England, introduces live broadcast.

FIELDS OF GOLD

Performed by **Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Choir**

Service led by **Reverend Dr Paul Nash, Mobeen Shairbano** and **Shyam Singh** of the Multi Faith and Belief Chaplaincy Team, Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and **Reverend David Lindo**, chaplain at University Hospitals Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome - **Reverend Dr Paul Nash**

MINUTE'S SILENCE

The bell is rung by Reena Farrington, Call Supervisor, West Midlands Ambulance Service

LITANY: BELIEF FROM ETERNAL LIGHT HOWARD GOODALL

Performed by **Dr. Alex Aldren**, classical tenor

THESE WALLS ARE WITNESSES

KATE FOX ROBINSON

Read by Rachel Carter, Director of Midwifery/Deputy Chief Nurse, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust;
Francis Fernando, Associate Director of Nursing and Quality, North East London NHS Foundation Trust;
Tina Gorman, Divisional Director of Nursing and Therapies, Dental Division, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Just along the way
these walls watch intently
as ordinary, fragile lives
are pushed to the limits
by professions
which once made their hearts sing
now just trying to make ends meet
what with so much dependent on their
every move.
These walls are witness to
slumped shoulders over
half drunk cups of tea
heads in hands
lifted briefly only by
kisses blown through interior windows
from fellow workers,
passing the baton
shift to shift in an endless cycle
of extraordinary intense care.
These dependable walls witness to the
flow of movement,
of repeated footfall,
the rise and fall,
of imperceptible movements
hearts try to hold inside.

Continued overleaf

Just along the way
these walls, though still full of photos,
are witness to
a new found emptiness within
echoes of memories
beds that no one is coming home to
hands left unheld
the soft heads to plant kisses upon
gone now
the space silent
full only of absences
These walls expand around
loneliness that will not be contained.

Just along the way
these walls are thick with grief
sorrow rolls down the pale yellow paint
pain reverberates through every single streak
These walls are saturated, breaking open
from the inside out
These walls hold the horrors of the world
witness to the darkness
listener to the howling, wrenching cries
hearing the most devastating things in the world
And the most beautiful
love that is poured out
in words, in tears, in kisses on cold foreheads
in dreams lying shattered
shards of glass under tender feet
They tread softly here
take shaky, sweaty hands
lead them where they do not want to go
And as the mourners leave
these walls feel exhausted faces pressed
against the coolness of their paint
trying to absorb their distress
heads resting briefly,
before rising again to meet other lives waiting
to be walked inside these walls.

TESTIMONIAL

Karen Bonner, Chief Nurse and Director for Infection Prevention and Control; Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

LACRYMOSA: DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP HOWARD GOODALL FROM ETERNAL LIGHT

Performed by **Dr. Alex Aldren**, classical tenor

TESTIMONIAL

Karina Graham, Paramedic, West Midlands Ambulance Service

WREATH LAYING

Accompanied by Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Choir performing Bridge Over Troubled Water

Twelve wreaths will now be laid by staff representing the different caring professions, patients, those disproportionately affected by Covid, the devolved nations, volunteers and to reflect on global loss.

These will be laid by:

Jackie Allen, Chairperson, North Wales Community Health Council

Martin Black, Non-Executive Director, NHS Tayside, NHS Scotland

Lord Nigel Crisp KCB, Patron, NHS Charities Together

Prof Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE, Chief Midwifery Officer for England, NHS England

Karolina Gerlich, Chief Executive, Care Workers' Charity

Prof Anthony Marsh, Chief Executive WMAS, National lead for Ambulance service, NHS England

Dame Ruth May DBE, Chief Nursing Officer for England, NHS England

Dr Habib Naqvi MBE, Chief Executive of NHS Race and Health Observatory, NHS England

Judith Paget, Chief Executive, NHS Wales

Prof Vic Rayner OBE, Chief Executive, National Care Forum

Niall Westhead, Volunteer, Kent & Canterbury Hospital

Dr Gordon Wood, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

TESTIMONIAL

Max Oosman, Community Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

READING – HOPE DAVID BUCK

Read by **Adam Aston**, Paramedic, West Midlands Ambulance Service

Something compels me
makes me say,
“Yes.”

“Yes,” to purpose,
to being.
“Yes,” to life.

And where there is life,
they say,
there is hope.

Despite all
there is
life here.

Life in doing,
listening, caring,
alongside, with

And in knowing
good will happen
because it can.

And like a thing of beauty
it is a captivating thing,
this hope,

That compels me,
makes me say,
“Yes.”

DEDICATION

Heidi Thomas OBE, writer and screenwriter

CLOSE

Reverend Dr Paul Nash

Thank you to everyone who has joined us to be part of this moment of reflection, to thank the whole healthcare workforce, to honour and acknowledge just what it takes to do the job they do.

We hope we have done you justice, to acknowledge the current pressures and the losses that you and others have faced. You are busier than ever, yet you continue to put patients before yourselves, you are more tired than ever, but you keep on going despite the exhaustion you feel. We won't forget your commitment and the sacrifices that you and colleagues have made - over the last 75 years and that you continue to make every day.

We have heard of the great support colleagues give each other and we celebrate this togetherness - the mutual support and strength from colleagues, and the moments of friendship and hope that can come from this. We can be confident that we will continue to be affirmed and sustained by this ongoing multi-faceted support. The support from those you care for and a grateful public, even when you might feel that you have been forgotten.

We haven't forgotten, we won't forget, and we celebrate all that you stand for. Thank you for being there for all of us.

LEAN ON ME

Performed by Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Choir

HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

To find out more about our work to help the NHS go further, visit www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk



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