



AIR AMBULANCES UK
SUPPORTING AIR AMBULANCE CHARITIES

ISSUE 36 WINTER 2022

airway

The magazine for the air ambulance community



AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS CROWNED

SMOOTH OPERATORS

Why some charities are taking on
the AOC themselves

THE WILL TO CHANGE

Charities seeing the value
of legacy giving

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From the CEO

Welcome to this issue of Airway, which comes hot on the heels of the successful return of our in-person Annual Conference and Awards of Excellence for the first time since 2019. Anyone who attended either event will know that the appetite for these events is greater than ever and we were delighted to see such large numbers at both the Conference and the Awards.

I was personally very pleased to meet so many of you. The whole day clearly reflected the commitment and highly specialist skills in our air ambulance community - which includes our fantastic volunteers and fundraisers from ages 8 to 99, who we heard about during the Awards. All of us at AAUK are so excited about our 2023 event and planning has already begun.

In this issue of Airway, you can find out a little more about the Annual Conference (pages 16-17) and the Awards of Excellence (pages 10-12) and see plenty of photos that I hope convey a little of what made the day so special.

We also have a feature on Air Operator Certificates (AOC) and how different air ambulance charities take different approaches. The article illustrates just how agile and responsive our sector is, while also clearly demonstrating that each charity is genuinely unique and must always make decisions that enable it to provide the best service possible to its patients within the region. The respect that the article's interviewees have for others' views, while still holding strong views of their own, is reflective of a real sense of collaboration that has grown at speed over the past few years as we have faced the challenges of Covid together - a collaborative spirit which I have witnessed first-hand in many whole-sector meetings convened by AAUK.

Beyond Covid, all charities are now facing head-on the impact of the current economic climate and cost of living crisis. On pages 8-9, we hear about the growing importance of legacy giving. We also have our Patient Stories, Member Spotlight and various news pages.

I hope you enjoy the issue and if there's any particular subject you would like Airway to look at in the future, please do get in touch.

Finally, I wish you a very Happy Christmas and wonderful New Year.



Simmy Akhtar,
CEO, AAUK

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| 7 March 2023 | Air Ambulances Parliamentary Reception, London |
| 8-10 June 2023 | Rotortech UK, Sywell Aerodrome |
| 4-10 September 2023 | Air Ambulance Week |
| 26-27 September 2023 | Helitech, ExCel London |

Contact Details

Email: info@airambulancesuk.org
 Website: www.airambulancesuk.org
 Telephone: +44 (0)1564 339958



Editor -
Nick Campion
info@airambulancesuk.org
07958 695778

Cover photo courtesy of Dan Knott Event Photography.

REGISTERED OFFICE ADDRESS

Association of Air Ambulances (Charity) Ltd., Operating as Air Ambulances UK.
 International House, 126 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3AP.

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Association of Air Ambulances Ltd is a subsidiary of the Association of Air Ambulances (Charity) Ltd and is Incorporated and Registered in England and Wales: Registered Company Number 08341197.

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INNOVATORS INVITED TO APPLY TO NEW AAUK FUND

AAUK air ambulance charity members can now apply to AAUK's Jude Morris Innovation and Development Fund for projects up to £10,000 that contribute to saving even more lives, improving patient outcomes and improving service provision through innovative clinical and operational developments.

The Fund has been made possible thanks to the support of the Jude Morris Racing Foundation. Jude Morris was a talented youth motocross rider who lost his life whilst competing in the British Youth Championship in Duns, Scotland. His family wanted to create a fund in his name that could save lives - and Air Ambulances UK wants to ensure the money raised in Jude's memory will create a legacy in the air ambulance sector.

Jude's father, Mark Morris, said: *"This is a really proud day for us as family and Jude's Foundation; creating a fund in his name that could save lives is something we are very proud of."*

Applicants should make their applications via a form issued by AAUK and their application will be considered by the AAUK Board at their next scheduled Board meeting. Applications are invited within the following areas:

- Emerging technology for PHEM



Jude Morris

- Research which demonstrates an aim to improve patient care
- Training to develop, support and enable new PHEM interventions for air ambulance crews
- Any other innovative developments to support air ambulances to deliver safe and high quality patient care.

Contact emma.carter@airambulancesuk.org for more information.

CHANGE AT THE TOP FOR DSAA



Bill Sivewright and Charles Hackett

A key figure for AAUK, and the AAA before that, Bill Sivewright, has retired as Chief Executive of Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance after ten and a half years, with Charles Hackett joining the charity as the new CEO. Charles has a wealth of experience across both the commercial and charity sectors as well as experience in working with local government. Bill Sivewright reflected: *"When I joined Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance after a full army career, I didn't think then that I would have such a fulfilling and enjoyable decade ahead of me. I certainly didn't appreciate how much professional satisfaction and pleasure being part of this charity would bring. It has been one of those rare privileges to work with people who do so much for society as a whole."*

MBE FOR PATRICK PEAL

Patrick Peal, former Chief Executive of East Anglian Air Ambulance and long-time supporter of AAUK, was awarded an MBE in Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday Honours List. The honour was in recognition of his visionary approach and commitment to both regional and national air ambulance services over the past 21 years.

Patrick helped EAAA to become a fully-fledged helicopter emergency medical service flying 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As CEO, he oversaw the organisation going from 1,700 missions, raising £6.8 million a year to 2,600 missions, raising over £15 million a year.

 Photo courtesy of SCAA.



NEW AAUK COMMITTEE TARGETS ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATION

Following feedback from, and in collaboration with, air ambulance charity members, AAUK has established an Environmental Sustainability Strategic Innovation Committee (ESSIC), which brings together environmental sustainability leads from across the UK. This national forum aims to:

- Create a national environmental sustainability community, connecting peers across the UK
- Enable the regular exchange of information, advice, learnings, ideas, challenges and innovations
- Invite speakers to support the air ambulance sector in their environmental sustainability ambitions
- Identify and discuss short-, medium- and long-term environmental sustainability objectives
- Promote collaboration that targets innovation
- Identify opportunities for national conversations to support the air ambulance community

The committee has already met twice and has set out its initial key environmental priorities. Initial discussions have taken place looking at principles for measuring an organisation's carbon footprint, as well as offsetting, transport, zero landfill, procurement, digital transformation, estates and facilities (including PV panels), communications and publicity.

Members shared where they were on their sustainability journey and what the next steps might be – and how this group can help expedite progress through collaboration. The second meeting heard from guest speakers from the NHS, who addressed the NHS's approach to a wide range of sustainability issues; it is clear that there is a great deal happening in the organisation. GWAAC's CEO Anna Perry also addressed the group on the subject of solar panels.

BADMINTON BOOST FOR AAUK

Badminton Horse Trials, presented by Mars Equestrian, has chosen AAUK as its Charity of the Year for 2023. The prestigious event, held every year on The Duke of Beaufort's estate in South Gloucestershire, attracts top eventers from all over the world, along with tens of thousands of visitors. Next year, it will start a day later than planned to allow for the Coronation of Charles III and the Queen Consort on Saturday 6 May 2023. The event, which comprises dressage, cross country and show jumping disciplines, will run 3-8 May 2023. Jane Tuckwell, Event Director, commented: "Badminton Horse Trials is delighted to welcome on board Air Ambulances UK as their Charity 2023 as it does so much to support equestrian sport and rural communities and we wish them very successful fundraising

throughout the association."

Simmy Akhtar, Air Ambulances UK CEO, said: "We are extremely proud and honoured to be chosen as the

charity of the year for Badminton Horse Trials 2023, presented by Mars Equestrian. We're excited to have the opportunity to showcase the lifesaving work of the UK air ambulance charities who work tirelessly to bring the Emergency Department to the patient, no matter where they are - often including unfortunate riding incidents. We look forward to welcoming and engaging with visitors, participants, supporters and suppliers at our stand during the event."



PRESENTED BY
MARS
 Equestrian

AAUK AND BLUESTEP PARTNER TO OFFER BESPOKE DESIGN AND MERCHANDISE

AAUK has formalised a partnership with design and merchandise agency Bluestep, which will simplify the way air ambulance charities can buy merchandise, as well as ensuring best value and optimal quality.

Bluestep already works with a number of air ambulance charities but both Bluestep and AAUK saw the opportunity to add significant value to the full membership through a centralised ordering system. With many charities finding fundraising a challenge at the moment, this is an opportunity to procure essential items more efficiently.

This new way of working opens up the opportunity for individual air ambulance charities to group together, through AAUK, to gain more buying power by being able to bulk order staple items at a cheaper unit price.

Bluestep's support to air ambulance charities to date has ranged from supplying branded merchandise, bespoke die-cast helicopters, running apparel and technical

clothing through to design, print and branding. The agency has been working with air ambulance charities for over 10 years, so is experienced in developing solutions and services with the level of care and quality that AAUK members would expect.

Bluestep MD, Ben Skinner, commented: "We are very proud to become an affiliated member and to cement our partnership with Air Ambulances UK. With Bluestep's expertise and the new centralised ordering process, we will be able to help the air ambulance collective in their mission to continue to deliver lifesaving services."



Ben Skinner

Read more on page 22.

AGEAS EMPLOYEES TACKLE WELSH THREE PEAKS



Employees from one of AAUK'S charity partners - and great supporter - Ageas UK have raised over £5,000 after they completed the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge in September. The fifteen 'Ageas Peak Climbers' climbed the three peaks, with a total walking distance of 17 miles and an ascent of 7,657ft - all within 24 hours. The peaks were: Snowdon in the north, Cadair Idris in mid-Wales and Pen y Fan in the south.



Lelde Girnius, who works as a business analyst and is based at Ageas in Bournemouth, said: "When the opportunity arose to take part in the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge, I grabbed it with both hands. Both my parents were doctors, so I feel a personal connection to the cause. I am proud that the money we raise will support those in need and experiencing what could be the most terrifying moments of their life."

AIR AMBULANCE WEEK SUCCESS

With a focus on the critical difference made by air ambulance charities in medical and trauma emergencies, Air Ambulance Week 2022 spread its message far and wide in September.

AAUK devised the branding and key messages for the Week, and charities across the country used this as a platform to spread awareness of their own services, as well as the sector as a whole. It was also another important opportunity to tell people that air ambulance services are charities who almost completely rely on donations.

Air Ambulance Week 2023 will be 4-10 September 2023.



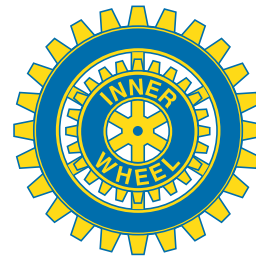
AAUK SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIES FOR PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDALS

When the Platinum Jubilee Medal was announced earlier this year, it was to be awarded to serving frontline members of the emergency services, prison service and armed forces to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. However, air ambulance teams were excluded if they did not hold an NHS contract of employment.

To the delight of the sector, lobbying by AAUK helped to change the Government's mind, and air ambulance teams, including pilots, became eligible for this special award.

Simmy Akhtar, AAUK CEO, said: "We would like to thank all MPs and colleagues who supported us in securing an amendment to the criteria. We are absolutely delighted for our colleagues across the UK."

INNER WHEEL TURNS TO AAUK



Karen Davies, the President of Inner Wheel, the international women's organisation, has chosen AAUK as her charity of the year. She told Airway:

"As a pharmacist, my interests have always been with medical charities. My late husband Alun had worked for Wales Air Ambulance since 2001 until his death in 2018 and I have a great affinity for them, especially when they paid Alun the greatest tribute at his funeral with a helicopter bowing over the coffin. Through Alun, I witnessed the highs and lows of fundraising and have tried to support them when I can.

"When I knew I was to become President, I had no issues to what charity I would choose. The only thing I had to check was that there were air ambulances in every district, and to my relief there were.

"Air ambulance charities have always been well supported by our members. Therefore, I knew that it would be well received.

However, to make it more exciting I wanted to have a challenge – but what?

"As a young girl I did a lot of Ballroom and Latin dancing. As our Conference in March 2023 is in Blackpool, the mecca of dance, I began to think of something to do with this – but I wanted to incorporate Wales Air Ambulance somehow into the mix. I looked at the number of missions they had undertaken. This figure is approaching 44,000. I transferred this to minutes and divided by the number of days I am in office. This worked out at 119 minutes. So, there I had it, my challenge would be to dance 2 hours every day of my time in office.

"Our ladies have been very enthusiastic and have donated generously to me and locally. Hopefully, working together with Air Ambulances UK we can promote two excellent causes. As our international theme says, 'Work Wonders.'"

WAITING GAME CRISIS

Aysha Mendes, Editor, Journal of Paramedic Practice, gives the paramedic's view.

Diane has suffered a cardiac arrest and has been waiting close to 10 minutes for an ambulance. Tom had a stroke and has been waiting close to an hour. Sally has fallen and been lying on the floor for four hours after calling 999. Paramedics, Laura and Paul have been supporting June in their ambulance outside hospital for their whole shift, unable to respond to any other calls as they await admission to the emergency department. Belinda has been on a trolley in the corridor of the emergency department for two hours while she awaits a bed, while Phillip remains in hospital despite being well enough to leave because of a lack of local social care. Stories like these have become increasingly prevalent this year.

The health service that has long been a point of national pride is letting down both its patients and its staff. While healthcare staff are doing everything they can for their patients, they are working within a system on the verge of collapse. Handover delays have led ambulance crews to lose 333,000 hours in the last 12 months until July 2022—this is 18 times higher than in 2019–2020 (Huskinson, 2022). In June 2022, 29,317 patients were delayed for 12 hours or more from the decision to admit to admission—this is the highest on record, being 3.5 times more than the number of 12-hour waits recorded for the whole of 2019 with the true number measured from time of arrival at hospital being much higher (Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM), 2022). Worst of all, a review by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) (2021) found that in cases where handover from ambulance to hospital is delayed beyond 60 minutes, 80% of patients are assessed as having potentially experienced avoidable harm, with 10% having experienced severe harm.

So where does this leave clinicians who are working so hard to ensure their patients receive appropriate care in a timely fashion? How do we ensure that our paramedics do not become too demoralised to continue within the ambulance service when they are perhaps needed most? Paramedics are already leaving the ambulance services in droves, as the number of calls has almost doubled since 2010 (GMB Union, 2022). Every paramedic must do what is right for themselves and their families—however, each time one leaves, the load only becomes that much heavier for those who are left behind. The system owes it to them to invest in a long-term plan that's going to ensure that this crisis is a temporary one.

Share your observations and experiences of the current crisis and how it is affecting the air ambulance services by emailing us at jpp@markallengroup.com

Access your JPP subscription discount exclusively for AAA members at: <https://www.magsubscriptions.com/aaa25>

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 Photo Credit Adobe Stock.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY

While parachute jumps, motorcycle rides and mountain climbs might get the column inches when it comes to fundraising, in the background there is a source of revenue that is quietly vital, bringing in up to half an air ambulance charity's income every year: legacies.

It's not an easy subject to broach, so how do charities approach potential legators? Michelle McCracken, Individual Giving & Development Manager at Midlands Air Ambulance, says: "Every charity is more aware than ever, how valuable a gift in a Will can be. This income stream remained consistent while all others came to a halt during the pandemic, which is partly due to the mature age of the 'baby boomer' generation. At Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, we offer a free Will writing service, encouraging supporters to keep us in mind when they are ready to make their Will. Interestingly, events like the start of a new year, the death of a loved one or a marriage break-up will have more impact on an individual's decision to make a Will than National Will week.

"Ensuring our service remains in people's thoughts – whether

that's seeing the helicopters, visiting our shops, our quarterly magazine or word of mouth is vital. That gentle reminder that we need their support can be visible on the smallest of merchandise such as a bookmark and helps maintain our presence. We also know the importance of giving thanks to those who have kindly pledged to support us in their Will and demonstrate what their generosity will enable us to achieve in the future."



Michelle McCracken, MAAC

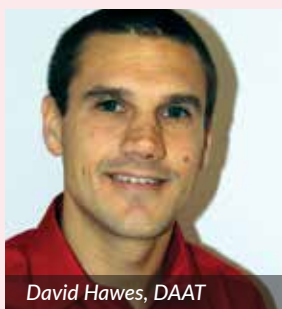




EAAA received a Ferrari Spyder.

David Hawes, Finance Director, Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) agrees: “We look to build the idea of legacy giving into everything we do, even down to making sure we have leaflets in our shops about it and that volunteers mention leaving a legacy gift to us when attending community talks and so on.

Our legacy giving compared to other air ambulance charities is very high – that’s partly down to our demographics and also down to our large shop network, which helps keep our charity in people’s minds. We have a big focus on community fundraising and all of this maintains a regular presence in the area, with plenty of visual impact.”



David Hawes, DAAT

DAAT was particularly glad of its legacy income last year, when it accounted for £6m of its £11.5m. David believes this was an exceptional year and the figure is likely to settle at around £4m. Why the increase? David explains: “A big part of it is that house prices have risen so much, so the size of legacies have grown with them. There doesn’t seem to be a significant change in the proportion of people who leave a legacy but people do seem to be giving to more local charities.”

Indeed, air ambulance charities as a whole have seen a 14% increase in overall giving in recent years.

Lucy Day, Gifts in Wills Manager at East Anglian Air Ambulance, adds: “We never ask people directly for legacies and it’s not my job to convert people who would never leave a charitable donation – but in our publicity and communications, we do ensure that we explain how every gift can make such a huge and lifesaving difference and give examples of that. Legacies from estates do tend to be larger than cash gifts – we probably get around 80% of legacy income from 20% of gifts.”

It’s not just money that is bequeathed either: EAAA was left a magnificent Ferrari Spyder car, while MAAC has been left an estate in Ibiza, model railway sets and cameras.

However the income makes its way to air ambulance charities, legacies will remain a critical source of income but always with an element of uncertainty about them. Put simply, not only is it hard to influence where people choose to leave their money but it’s also impossible to plan when people will die. David Hawes says, “Short-term predictability is a challenge

Legacy giving continues to grow

Gifts in Wills are worth £3 billion a year to UK charities and that figure is growing at around 4.5% a year. The average residual bequest value is around £51,000, while the average pecuniary bequest is around £3,400. It is estimated that UK legacy income will reach £5 billion by 2030.

Speaking at AAUK’s National Conference, fundraising specialists the AAW Partnership said that the rising death rate in the country will contribute to the rise in legacies and the age of the baby boomer generation will ensure this trend continues.

Meanwhile, the latest data from Smeed and Ford, a company that supports and advises charities on legacy giving in the UK, indicates that legacy giving has been continuing to grow during 2022.

There have been 25,311 charitable estates processed by Smeed & Ford so far this year, which is 1,195 more than at the same point in 2021 and a 42% increase on the same time in 2020. Looking at this trajectory, the company estimates that this number could reach 42,000 by the end of the year.

The values of charitable estates have also seen a solid increase, with a current running total of over £12bn compared to £10.6bn at this point in 2021 and £7.8bn in 2020. This could potentially reach £20bn by the end of 2022, which would be the highest number on record for the company.

The AAW Partnership say that the air ambulance sector is one of the few to grow their fundraising income in recent tough years and that is down almost entirely to legacies and lotteries.

“Every charity is more aware than ever, how valuable a gift in a Will can be. This income stream remained consistent while all others came to a halt during the pandemic, which is partly due to the mature age of the ‘baby boomer’ generation.”

Michelle McCracken, MAAC

– and it may be a sign of the times that we are now seeing more contentious legacies, which is perhaps an indication of how stretched people are financially.”

Of course, recent economic turbulence has left air ambulance charities stretched too and they are grateful for every single legacy they receive.

WINNERS CROWNED AT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

This was the evening when the air ambulance sector was able to come together again at last, after three long years away due to Covid, to celebrate the wonderful people and teams that make our community so special.

Over 250 guests enjoyed an excellent dinner at the Edgbaston Stadium venue, and showed their support for each and every award winner. Lenny Brown, from main sponsor Airbus, introduced the evening before Sky Sports' Hayley McQueen and former Olympic athlete Derek Redmond took the reins. They introduced guests to the nominees for the awards before award sponsors opened the gold envelope to reveal the winner.

The first award was for Young Person of the Year, which set the tone for the evening as the crowd showed their vocal appreciation for all five nominated young people, including the beaming winner, Ellie Smyth. The final two awards of the evening saw two giants in the field recognised: Patrick Peal receiving the Chair's Award and Nigel Hare receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award.

It was evident from the delight with which each of the 14 winners took their award that although no-one in this sector goes out looking for awards, sometimes it's nice when those awards find you.

Lifetime Achievement Award 2022

SPONSORED BY



**Nigel Hare,
Devon Air Ambulance**



Young Person of the Year 2022 Ellie Smyth, Air Ambulance Northern Ireland



Highly Commended:

Jack Jinkerson,
East Anglian Air Ambulance

Bradley Staples,
Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance

Alfie Lowther,
Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

Cory Pygott,
Wales Air Ambulance



Charity Team of the Year 2022

SPONSORED BY



Devon Air Ambulance



Innovation of the Year 2022

SPONSORED BY



Essex & Herts Air Ambulance



Charity Volunteer of the Year 2022

SPONSORED BY



Colin King,
Air Ambulance Northern Ireland



Highly Commended:
Pino Gianniti,
Great Western Air Ambulance Charity



"Congratulations to our 2022 Awards of Excellence winners. It has been wonderful to read and hear about all of the nominees and their fantastic contributions. All the nominees in all categories, those shortlisted, and the winners are all part of one community which works together to be there for their local communities at their time of need. A huge thank you to all staff, volunteers and supporters in our innovative lifesaving community."

Simmy Akhtar, Air Ambulances UK CEO

Breaking Barriers Award 2022

SPONSORED BY

AIRBUS

Great Western Air Ambulance Charity



Campaign of the Year 2022

SPONSORED BY



Devon Air Ambulance



Doctor of the Year 2022

SPONSORED BY



Ian Mew,
Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance

**Chair's Award 2022**

Patrick Peal



"I am honoured and humbled to have received this award. This recognition reflects the immense teamwork and dedication of those that make EAAA great and is testament to those who I have worked alongside over the last 20 years, both at EAAA and across the entire industry. Above all, I am just immensely proud that the work we're doing as HEMS is making a life-changing impact across the UK."

Patrick Peal

Critical Care Practitioner of the Year 2022

SPONSORED BY



Lee Hilton,
Devon Air Ambulance



Highly Commended:
Pete Appleby,
Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance

**Special Incident of the Year 2022**

SPONSORED BY



Cornwall Air Ambulance

**Pilot of the Year 2022**

SPONSORED BY



Matthew Wood,
Midlands Air Ambulance

**Charity Staff Member of the Year 2022**

Sarita Taneja,
Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex



Highly Commended:
Joe Hughes,
Great Western Air Ambulance Charity

**Operations Support Staff of the Year 2022**

Wayne Busby,
Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance



Highly Commended:
Christine Henry,
London's Air Ambulance



 Photos supplied by Dan Knott Event Photography.

BACK WITH A BANG

If anyone was unsure whether the air ambulance community was ready to return to an in-person conference, they would have had their answer at 10am on 14 November.

Around 250 delegates packed into the main conference hall of Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham to see the keynote speaker Stephen Balmer-Walters kick things off with a talk on leadership and being your authentic self.

Stephen spoke about some of the key elements of being an effective leader, including:

- Inspiring people – make people feel good at, and about, their work so they come to work because they want to, not because they have to.
- Nurturing people – offering unique support to every individual to develop in their role and as a person.
- Vulnerability – the more people get to know about you, the more opportunity for connection there is, and the more people will understand why you do what you do, why you work as you work.
- Influence – using your emotional intelligence to influence the business at every level.
- Time – an authentic leader gives time. Reassess your schedule and learn to delegate, so you can focus your time in the right place.
- Environment – create a safer place for people to be able to be genuine and share with each other.
- Culture – what does the organisation stand for? Can everyone be authentic within the organisation? If not, how can you make it so they can?



Stephen Balmer-Walters

Stephen then invited questions from the audience, which included an opportunity to reflect on the very limited diversity in some aspects of the community and how it was time to take some positive steps to address this.



📷 Photos supplied by Dan Knott Event Photography.



Lucy Gower



Ian Mew



Phil Hyde



Tobin Aldrich



Andy Enyon



Imogen Ward



Alex Gregg

High quality speakers

A series of outstanding speakers then took over in breakout rooms, delivering presentations to large, enthusiastic and engaged audiences. Presentations included AAW Partnership's Tobin Aldrich and Imogen Ward, who took a fascinating look at fundraising trends as a whole and within our sector, drawing out some key figures and insights that should help charities as they target their efforts in months and years to come.

Another individual looking at making changes that will benefit the sector long into the future is Dr Phil Hyde, who spoke about the Pre-Hospital Research and Audit Network (PRANA) project, which aims to improve the collection and use of data in pre-hospital care. A huge project with a long list of collaborators, it has the potential to be a genuinely ground-breaking and life-saving development.

There were 13 further sessions across a wide range of topics, along with meetings for Fundraising Directors, Finance Directors, and Chairs. The afternoon keynote came from Gemma Howlett from the University of Cumbria, who spoke about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). She made an excellent presentation full of evidence and ideas and made a very convincing case for air ambulance charities to take EDI seriously; the fact that the audience in attendance was only a fraction of those at the Conference demonstrated how far we have to go.



Simmy Akhtar



Gemma Howlett



Dr Neal Durge



Tim Bunting



Gill Jolly



SMOOTH OPERATORS

Every operator of an aircraft in the UK must have an Air Operator Certificate (AOC) from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The AOC is only granted when an organisation can demonstrate that they conform to all requirements, which cover personnel, assets, safety and more. For most of the history of the UK air ambulance community, the AOC has been held by a specialist operator to whom charities subcontract for their aircraft, maintenance and pilots.

Then a few charities started to wonder if there was a better way – and a handful concluded that there was. Here are the reflections of some of those pioneers and also an air ambulance charity which has chosen to resolutely stay within the existing model – as, in fact, the vast majority of air ambulance charities still do.

Wiltshire Air Ambulance



Giorgio Bendoni

Giorgio Bendoni, Director of Aviation, explains: “Our journey to being an AOC holder was circumstantial – our operator at the time was struggling to make the contract work and we had to explore our options. Had we found the right operator relationship at that time, we’d probably have gone with that; there was no overwhelming need to change.

As it was, we first explored and then completed asset ownership, then thought about taking some operations in house, such as hiring pilots. But then the operator suddenly went bust so we were left with an aircraft but no operator. We couldn’t find a suitable operator at a reasonable budget – and that’s when we became serious about becoming an operator.

“There is a risk when a charity becomes the operator because the boundaries of your risk profile change dramatically. You’re bringing into the charity a very expensive asset and the operation of it. The Board of Trustees have to understand what they’re getting into and have to have some understanding of aviation – and that was the number one issue for me when we looked at it; it’s a real cultural shift. Suddenly you have a £5million asset in the hangar and you’re entirely responsible for it.

“Fortunately we had the right people in place to make it happen – including my own long experience in the field and this helped. When I came to the UK in 2003, it would have been difficult for a charity to think about going solo because there was just not enough experience in the ranks – but now there are people with a great deal of experience and that changes things.

“It’s not for everyone of course. For many charities, contracting out works perfectly – so why change?

“It’s not easy to measure success against a hypothetical alternative scenario but the financials give a good indication, with a saving of around £450-500,000 per year compared to going with another operator. But the financials alone are not a good enough reason to make the change. What is great though is how it now feels that everyone in the organisation has a fundamental personal stake in what we do – it’s been a really galvanising process culturally. It’s also an additional tool for fundraising as we have complete control over how the aircraft or pilots or paramedics are used for fundraising events.

“It will be interesting to see where the sector goes with it. The landscape is changing: there used to be very few operators and now there are new ones coming in, with six operating at the moment. There are five charities with their own AOC – so that’s 11 different players already, and in theory a charity operator could operate an aircraft for another charity. One consideration, though, would be the bigger airframes such as the AW169 – they are very complex machines with a lot of technology which might mitigate against taking the AOC in-house.”



Devon Air Ambulance

Heléna Holt, CEO, says: "For us, it was a change in circumstances that prompted the decision: Devon & Cornwall Police Air Unit were operating our aircraft from the same base as theirs and that worked well – but then police aviation was nationalised with the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and it became clear that NPAS would not operate our aircraft.

"So we had a choice of going back to an operator or taking it on ourselves. With the knowledge and experience we had of our operations, we felt that returning to an operator would be a backward step and we liked the idea of being able to exercise more control over our operations and to be able to always be driven only by doing what was best for our patients. The pilots were TUPE'd to us, so we had good relationships there already and knew their capabilities and were confident of importing all the other skills we needed.

"When we applied for an AOC in 2014, there was no template for the process so even the CAA were learning as we went along. We also had a tight deadline of a maximum of nine months because that's when the change to NPAS would take place. We worked incredibly hard to develop our own operations manual, which needed considerable change from the police spec in order to make it fit for purpose for us.

"One of the important differences for us is being able to ensure we are always available. Operators have the same ambition of course but the reality is that they have many organisations to focus on across the country.

"We also like that we are not paying into another organisation's profits – although the cost saving to us is minimal as the AOC brings in new costs as well as negating existing ones. The increase in accountability means we are absolutely meticulous in ensuring we deliver to the very maximum effect, so this adds cost of course.

"I don't accept the argument that subcontracting to an operator



Heléna Holt

is a protection in case something goes wrong. Yes, the buck most certainly stops with us now – but as far as the public is concerned, the charity is entirely responsible for everything that happens anyway, whether another company operates the aircraft or not. It's our name on it, our colours, our brand. However, in practical terms, we do now have to do certain things that we wouldn't have before, such as run an annual emergency response plan exercise.

"For the broader team, the change created a real sense of ownership and was the catalyst to the team developing a greater understanding of the business we're in and the detail behind what we do.

"Our sector has really grown up a lot over the last few years and we're seeing a lot more collaboration in all kinds of ways despite all the different models, geographies and demographics – we're all so much more connected now and learning from each other's experiences. Organisations have very open minds and they will do what is right for their organisation at any given moment – so there are always likely to be a variety of different operating models depending on a range of variables – and that's as it should be."



Thames Valley Air Ambulance

Amanda McLean, CEO, says: "Four years ago, we became an independent healthcare provider, which meant we were able to make changes to the service more quickly and with more freedom – and we wanted to do the same when it came to aviation too."

"Now all our pilots are employed by us, wearing the Thames Valley Air Ambulance uniform – they really are officially part of the team. As such, they can take part in our wider team training programme and external events supporting our fundraising activities. There will be a financial advantage but that didn't drive the decision."

"We have also taken the decision to stop flying at night. It was the right thing to start night flying when we did but that was a decision made when we were operating in a very different way and without Critical Care Response Vehicles. Having reviewed our

vehicles, patients, geography and safety, we can see that we can now get to patients quicker in the car when it's dark. Had we been under a contract with an external operator, this decision would have created a huge amount of extra work, extra cost and long negotiations. We'll keep the decision under review of course, and if the clinical need is to restart night flying, then that's what we'll do."

"The sector is certainly changing but what's become crystal clear is that one size doesn't fit all. What all air ambulance charities have in common right now is an appetite to be more agile but there are many different ways to achieve that, depending on your community, geography, size, the aircraft, the ambulance service, the hospitals and so on. Everyone has to make the decisions that are right for them."



Anna Perry



Great Western Air Ambulance Charity

Anna Perry, Chief Executive, comments: "I would be surprised if any air ambulance charity set up with their own AOC, and after that it's about having a compelling reason to change. We've been with Bond/Babcock from the start and there's just never been a push factor to make us want to change a successful model."

"I don't envy AOC owners their job – importing risks into their organisation and yet another layer of compliance on top of the likes of the CQC, Charity Regulator, HMRC... Then there are all the different roles to recruit to and train up for, the insurance, the maintenance arrangements and so on."

"Even when it comes to reputational risk, I believe Babcock

can help us do that better if any incidents were to happen. They also help us keep the helicopter online and they make sure we have pilots – not as simple as it sounds at the moment with a lack of pilots out there. They are secure and reliable and totally part of our team and our culture – exactly what a single helicopter operation like us needs. It helps that they're local to us, of course. Ultimately for us though, this is a risk decision."

"It will be interesting to see if more providers come in and disrupt the market but I haven't seen anything to convince me that we're on the cusp of major change right now. Who knows what might happen in the future though!"

FROM THE FRONT LINE

FROM RED ALERT TO YELLOW JERSEY

Eight year old Bradley Staples was competing in an off-road cycle race when his father, Mark, noticed he hadn't emerged from a part of the course hidden from his view. As he walked across the course, he could hear someone shouting for 'Bradley's dad'.

"That's when I started to run. I knew it wasn't good when I saw the race had been stopped on top of the bank," said Mark. "When I got to him, I could see that the brake lever was in his leg. I called over to my dad to call an ambulance and the first thing I did was try to make Bradley comfortable."

The track was covered in thick mud and the rain was beating down. Mark and others covered Bradley in coats and kept an umbrella up to try and keep the rain off him. Mark said: *"I had to keep Bradley's focus as he kept trying to look at his leg. The brake lever was all the way to the clamp and you could see the other end under his skin. From seeing him on the floor I wanted nothing more than to swap places with him."*

The Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance crew, Doctor Paul Hancock and HEMS Paramedic Matt Burns, arrived on scene in the Critical Care Car as the helicopter was unable to fly in the weather conditions.

Dr Hancock said: *"We were in a big, muddy field, not the easiest environment to work in. Bradley was in a lot of pain and getting cold as he was in thick mud."*

"It was potentially really serious because there are vessels and nerves there which means an injury like that could cause a lot of damage. These are the things we don't know on the way there and the concern was whether this was life or limb threatening. Something like this could have been life-changing for a child."

The team decided that the best option was to take Bradley's bike apart from under him.

They took the handlebars off and the brake lever on the other



side. The other lever stayed in Bradley all the way to hospital.

"Being a child with this kind of injury in an environment where he's getting cold, it's important that after we've given him pain relief and made him as comfortable as possible, we monitor him and get him to hospital quickly," said Dr Hancock.

The weather began to clear and the crew called for the helicopter to pick Bradley up. Mark said: *"He loved the helicopter ride and I think it was better because it was yellow, which is his favourite colour."*

Just three weeks after the crash, Bradley was back racing. Subsequently, he decided he'd like to give something back and chose to take on an amazing charity cycle challenge to raise funds for the Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance - his way of saying thank you for the care he received from the LNAA crew.

On Sunday 21 August, Bradley cycled a 31-mile route to LNAA Headquarters with his father and two grandfathers. He said: *"I am really good on the hills, and I love endurance. I hope to be a World Champion one day and wear a yellow jersey on the Tour de France."* Bradley has raised well over £2,500.



CHAIN OF SURVIVAL

On 7 May 2020, during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were cycling along a disused railway line – a trailway. The officer in front suddenly heard a crash. He turned around to see his colleague on the floor without any sign of life. He called 999 and began CPR. Remarkably, within 30 seconds of the incident, an off-duty doctor and nurse arrived and were able to assist the PCSO.

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust dispatched a number of resources to the incident, including Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance's car, with Specialist Practitioner in Critical Care Pete Appleby in it, and their aircraft with Dr Stewart McMorran and Specialist Practitioner in Critical Care Jo Hernandez on board.

When Pete Appleby reached the scene, the patient - Mark Lane - had already been defibrillated a number of times; however, he was now in a non-shockable heart rhythm (pulseless electrical activity - PEA). There had been some initial difficulties securing the patient's airway with an endotracheal tube and therefore Pete prioritised optimising the airway, whilst chest compressions and advanced life support were continued by the ambulance crews.

Due to the challenging location, Captain Max Hoskins had to land the aircraft some distance away from the incident site. Stewart and Jo were driven to the scene by a police response car. As they arrived, Pete secured the patient's airway by completing the intubation and as a combined team, they continued resuscitation of the patient. He was ventilated with high flow oxygen and his core temperature was monitored after insertion of an oesophageal core temperature probe. Intravenous access was gained and the LUCAS chest compression device was attached to the patient's chest.

Advanced life support drugs were administered, as well as intravenous fluids. After a further 20 minutes he developed a return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC).

The patient was given a pre-hospital anaesthetic using ketamine and rocuronium to provide adequate sedation and paralysis following his ROSC. Anaesthesia continued with a ketamine infusion through a syringe driver via a peripheral vein. An arterial line was inserted into the patient's radial artery, enabling the team to commence invasive blood pressure monitoring.

The patient's invasive blood pressure reading was low, so an adrenaline infusion optimised the patient's cardiac output. An ECG demonstrated a large anterior ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (heart attack), therefore the team chose to transport him to the local cardiac centre at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital, so he could receive prompt primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) in order to unblock the coronary artery.

The Fire Service drove their pickup vehicle down the gravel path to the patient's side and the DSAA team accompanied him as he was driven slowly down the bumpy track to the road. On the journey, the patient suffered a further three cardiac arrests



and was successfully defibrillated each time. To reduce the risk of further cardiac arrest, he was given sodium bicarbonate and magnesium sulphate intravenously.

The DSAA team accompanied the patient by road to the Royal Bournemouth and to the Catheter Lab for his PPCI procedure. He had treatment to open up his coronary arteries but his heart was still struggling, so a team from St. Thomas's Hospital came to the hospital and placed him on a heart and lung bypass machine called ECMO. He was then transferred to London for ongoing ECMO support. Mark has since gone on to make a full recovery.

Leonie Lane, PCSO Mark Lane's wife, commented: "Mark was in ICU in London for three weeks, but due to the pandemic, we were not allowed to visit. After three weeks, he was stable enough to be transferred back to Bournemouth ICU and we were allowed to see him by the lake in the grounds of the hospital. After almost five weeks, Mark began to be a bit more communicative and I was allowed to visit him for an hour a day. I witnessed his first steps supported by physios on both sides. Six weeks to the day, Mark was brought home by the physio team, with friends and neighbours lining our road clapping and cheering. It was certainly an emotional homecoming! Mark's recovery was slow to start with. His shoulders took several months of physio to recover and he has been left with a dropping right foot. His heart is working at reduced capacity but is well managed by medication and his in-built defibrillator/pacemaker provides reassurance. Amazingly, he has returned to work on reduced hours. In July 2021, we were finally able to meet the team who helped to save his life, together with Jo Petheram, DSAA's patient and family liaison nurse, who has been such a friend and helpful contact right from the start. We will forever be grateful for Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance."

NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY FOR KSS



Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) has unveiled its ambitious Five Year Strategy (2022- 2027) 'Working Together to Save More Lives', created to help take important steps towards realising its vision of an end to preventable loss of life from medical emergency.

The strategy should enable KSS to evolve and extend its service, with the introduction of innovations and initiatives to save even more lives. These include:

- Developing its aviation capability – this includes developing all weather aircraft operations through performance-based navigation.
- Developing KSS's clinical leadership and clinical governance structure.
- Implementing its research and innovation outputs, including investigating the drone deployment of defibrillators and continuing to develop techniques to deliver advanced medical interventions in the helicopter cabin.
- Developing community-based initiatives to prevent and respond to medical emergencies.
- Evolving its Patient and Family Aftercare Service.

David Welch, CEO, KSS explains, "Collaboration and partnership are key to our success, especially with our colleagues in South East Coast Ambulance Service, the wider NHS and the communities we serve. To realise our vision, we need our communities to come together to enable sustainable change so that together we can save more lives."



999 HEROES

Crew members from Magpas Air Ambulance and the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) won the 999 Hero category in The Sun's Who Cares Wins awards, which was aired on Channel 4. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak presented the team with the award.

The nomination came after they brought 13-year-old Daisy Webb back to life after she suffered a cardiac arrest whilst walking to school in Huntingdon earlier this year. Witnesses saw Daisy fall to her knees and stop breathing, and they immediately called 999. Fortunately for Daisy, EEAST crew members arrived within minutes; they began CPR and shocked Daisy's heart until her pulse returned. The crews then handed over care to colleagues from Magpas, who placed her under general anaesthetic at the scene to protect her organs and take over her breathing, before accompanying her to Addenbrooke's Hospital.

Daisy has since made a full recovery, and her family nominated her full team of lifesavers for the 999 Hero award. Daisy said, "Words can't really describe how I feel, just gratitude and thanks to everybody who gave me the chance to live."

GWAAC PHEM SYMPOSIUM RETURNS

In September, Bristol's Aerospace Museum opened its doors to the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) and its guests for the return of the Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical (PHEM) Symposium.

The first Symposium was held in 2016 but the last two events in 2020 and 2021 did not run due to Covid-19.

The day comprised an impressive array of expert speakers from varied backgrounds, with topics including: critical care transfers; ECMO; claims, inquests and the regulator from a pre-hospital perspective; designing a wellbeing strategy; and the keynote from Professor Jonathan Benger CBE looked at: pre-hospital critical care - where have we come from and where are we going?

PRU grows

London's Air Ambulance Charity has announced that the Physician Response Unit (PRU) wing of the service has launched a third team. As a result, the geographical footprint of the PRU will expand to cover Barking, Havering and Redbridge, alongside the existing operations in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest. Earlier this year, the PRU celebrated 20 years of operation.

Honorary doctor

CEO of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, Jane Gurney, has received an honorary degree from the University of Essex. In recognition of her dedication to expand and improve pre-hospital care, Jane is now part of an inspiring list of over 300 people, who since 1967 have been honoured by the University for their contribution to the local community. Jane has led EHAAT since 2003 and is the longest serving CEO of the 21 air ambulance charities in the UK.

Outstanding Devon

Devon Air Ambulance has been ranked 15th in the Best Companies to work for in the UK Charity sector. The survey was completed by the organisation Best Companies earlier this year and resulted in Devon Air Ambulance being called an Outstanding Company to work for.

Hooked in

Wales Air Ambulance has announced that former Wales and Lions rugby international James Hook has become an ambassador for the charity. James, who retired as a rugby union player last year, made six appearances for the Lions on the 2009 tour of South Africa and won 81 caps for Wales. James said: "I'm delighted to become an ambassador for the Wales Air Ambulance. It's a cause that's close to my heart as they attended my eldest son just over 10 years ago when he became very ill."

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



TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Design and merchandise agency – and air ambulance merchandise specialist – Bluestep is AAUK's newest partner. Alongside becoming an affiliated member of AAUK as a whole, Bluestep are offering to support individual air ambulance charities by making high-quality merchandise available to them at bulk-buy prices.



Nikki Nicholls

"We have already worked with air ambulance charities for over ten years," comments Nikki Nicholls, Charity Account Manager at Bluestep. "By partnering with AAUK, we will be able to offer our experience and expertise to even more air ambulance charities, with the added advantage of bulk buying leading to lower unit prices without compromising on quality."

A key element of Bluestep's partnership with AAUK is to encourage different air ambulance charities to order centrally through AAUK in order to tap into the value that bulk ordering brings. This doesn't mean that individual charities have to compromise on their identities, though – each can continue to brand all products exactly as they wish. Indeed, Bluestep's ten years working with air ambulance charities has given the agency a deep understanding of the importance of these unique brand identities for their ongoing fundraising work.

When Bluestep started out working with air ambulance charities, it was the die-cast replicas of their helicopters that formed the bulk of the work. Overseeing this precision process, Bluestep quickly became known for its meticulous work on the identical replicas and became the leading supplier in the sector. The agency has now supplied hundreds of thousands of these ever-popular pieces of merchandise.

Their product range has extended since then to other branded merchandise items, buttons, badges, balloons, t-shirts, running apparel and technical clothing – in fact, you name it and they supply it. Their design, merchandise, storage and fulfilment

offer has proved invaluable and enables a charity to take a project through right from initial idea to final delivered product. Bluestep also has a range of eco-friendly merchandise that air ambulance charities can source – and they'll even offer free warehouse storage.

Air ambulance charities are now able to not only order Bluestep's merchandise with confidence but also call upon the agency's ten years' experience supplying fundraising merchandise, which means they have plenty of invaluable knowledge that they are always happy to share. They understand that each air ambulance has its own unique history, identity and demographics and will help charity teams to develop individual strategies to reflect that.



Karl Simons

Karl Simons, Senior Growth Manager, adds: *"We're looking forward to really getting this partnership off the ground. For AAUK members, it's a win-win: they keep their individual identities, get a skilled and experienced team to work with, and by buying together with fellow air ambulance charities, they get a great deal."*

You can find out more about Bluestep and AAUK's partnership and how you can get involved by calling: 01604 879 608, or emailing: nikki.nicholls@bluestepsolutions.com, karl.simons@bluestepsolutions.com, katie.davidson@airambulancesuk.org or by going to: www.bluestepsolutions.com



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