

Mr Owen Sparrow FRCS Neurosurgeon, Wessex Neurological Centre

Mr Owen Sparrow will be retiring after nearly 10 years as a volunteer Consultant with SCT at the end of this year, having dealt with 61 queries for us. He has offered to share with us, one of the cases he dealt with from Armenia; an example of the SCT being able to provide free specialist care in an area where it would not be available to this patient. We would like to say how grateful we are for him being able to donate his time to the Trusts work.

A Complex Referral

A 65-year old man in Armenia was referred to SCT with a very large, nearly 5 cm diameter pituitary region tumour, of uncertain type, causing visual impairment. As surgery had been advised, the query was about the risks of proceeding. Expert assessment by various specialists gave a likely diagnosis of a pituitary gland tumour, with impairment of pituitary hormone functions, and recommending detailed eyesight tests and blood tests of hormone levels. Hormonal insufficiency was identified, so immediate hormonal replacement treatment was recommended, and risks of treatment with surgery, as well as the hormonal treatments required at the time of surgery to make it safer, were described. The referring doctor was able to pass all this back to the treating colleague, to guide the man's future care.

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“There are units to measure the worth of a person, regardless of birth”

The above quote is taken from the address by The Reverend Peter Sherrard which he gave at the Memorial Service for one of our founders, Chairman, Trustee, friend to many and beloved husband, father and grandfather, the late Lord Swinfen MBE, who died on 5 June after a long period of ill health. Together with his wife, Patricia, they set up and ran the charity since 1998, and his loss has had a profound effect on those of us who had the privilege of knowing, working,



and loving him. As a family we have been greatly comforted by the messages of thanks and love that have come from communities across the world, saying that his work with the charity had provided ‘hope and light’ in areas where seeking expert specialist medical help is extremely hard and beyond the reach of many. Lady Swinfen and the board of Trustees of The Swinfen Charitable Trust remain as committed as ever to provide our service Free of Charge, and ensure his legacy continues and we thank everyone for their support and love over a very difficult time. We are delighted that our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal has extended her patronage to the charity and we are honoured to have her continued support as we move forward into 2023.



Sadly, we also lost another of our esteemed trustees earlier this year, Rob Dawson, who died tragically young at 42. He was a wonderful man whose experience and expertise will be sorely missed by the Trust and we send our sincere condolences to all of his family and friends. Despite the sadness within the charity, we have continued throughout to grow and support the Telemedical links across the world. New links have been established at Ebeye Community Health Centre, Kosrae Community Health Centre, 2 at Chuuk Health Community Health Centre, 2 at Tafuna Community Health Centre (part of the Pacific Basin project); the Children's Teaching Hospital, Al-Qadysiah University, Iraq; the Family Medical Centre, Solomon Islands. 3 further links have been added for the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation in Saipan. In Nepal we have set up links in Dhading Semjong, 4 in Nuwacot (Kaule health post, Deurali Hospital), and at Lunkhu. We have also set up a new link in Anambra, Nigeria, and a further link for Basrah Maternity and Children's Hospital, where the resident paediatric Professor has also become a consultant for us. We are in the process of setting up two new links with ‘Prosami’ who work in the Democratic Republic of Congo for the Promotion of Maternal and Infant Health. We have also offered our links to medics heading out to the Ukrainian borders through Professor Karen Rheuban in an endeavour to support in any way we can. They will be ‘roving’ links – attached to a physician rather than a hospital in order to achieve maximum coverage.

We would like to thank our retiring Consultants, Dr Bronwyn Williams, (Paediatrics & Haematology) from Brisbane, Australia and Mr Owen Sparrow (Neurologist working both in Adult and Paediatric) from Wessex Neurological Centre, Southampton, UK. Thank you for your extraordinary support to the charity for very many years. Their work for the Trust has been exemplary and we salute their dedication and commitment. We would also like to express

our sincere gratitude to all the Consultants who offer their advice and time Free of Charge, and to our dedicated team of System Operators who are all volunteers and Sankalpa Ghose and his team of IT engineers, a huge thank you for all your devoted help this year. Thank you also to Wing Commander Ankur Pandya, Consultant Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgeon who has offered to do some online courses in Primary Care, Infectious diseases, Childcare and Maternal health. We hope to set these up for some of our remote clinics very soon.

The Trust was invited by The American Telemedical Association to participate in a Webinar on Telehealth in September, on a panel with Doctors without Borders, (MSF) and a Telemedicine system specifically for dermatology – Teledermatology. Katherine Davies and Sankalpa Ghose had a slot to present on the Charity – how it works, statistics, where in the world etc., and to have the opportunity with others to discuss the main challenges and advantages associated with this service. We are the longest running telemedical charity, and it was useful to consider with others the problems we face in providing this service. We are at present in the process of designing our next generation of the Secure Platform that is unique to the Trust – this will enable the Charity to have a firm footing technically for the next five years and extend our Services, and we have a huge fundraising hill to climb to ensure we build a system that encompasses the technological changes for the future without leaving those behind who have limited access to modern technology.

In one of his final acts for the charity, Lord Swinfen applied to St. Michael's and All Angels Church, Chiswick to be considered for their international fundraising appeal slot – The church supports 3 Charities over three years, one international and we were delighted to have been chosen as their international charity. This fundraising appeal is specifically targeted at raising enough funds to re-engineer our Apps. As we press forward we want to ensure we do not disenfranchise those without the means to keep up with today's advances in digital technology, and are therefore keeping our Android App as well as the IOS App, to ensure that our remote communities can still contact us. Particular thanks are owed to Chris and Janie Pickard who stepped in to support Katherine at the Bedford Park Festival shortly after Roger Swinfen died, and valiantly manned the stand throughout the weekend. We are also extremely honoured to have one of the parishioners, Mark Critchlow, take on the mammoth task of swimming from Ramsgate to Belgium, a distance of 92 km in the first ever cross channel swim via this route. He was part of an organised challenge under the group leader, Chloe McCardel, the World Record holder for Marathon Swimming. Mark is 61, registered severely visually impaired since 2011, and he has swum the English Channel 5 times already; sadly 13 hrs into the swim the swim had to be abandoned as the Belgium authorities had a problem with the route – but undaunted the team then took on the challenge of swimming around the Isle of Wight, beating the previous record by 1hr 35minutes, and completing it in 23hr and 35minutes. We salute their endeavour and are very grateful for all the fundraising that Mark has initiated for this charity, anyone wishes to support this remarkable swim can still donate at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mark-critchlow6>



Char Bhanjyang Centre for Health, Telemedicine Clinic (Swinfen House) Khalte, Parbat, Nepal

Hon Lt Chandra Gurung reports that the Clinic is working very well and now has established an x-ray room with working machine and we are grateful for the help of Captain Deo with this project. There is also now a patient bed. The total number of treatments carried out by the nurses at Khalte since it was established by us, is 25,561 (173 referred directly to Swinfen Telemedicine for specialist advice and support). The majority of the cases involve joint pain, Rheumatoid & Osteo Arthritis, Neurological cases, epilepsy, depression – Gastritis (APD) and fungal infections. Many of the patients travel in from some distance away, Parbat, Baglung, Myagdi, Syangia, Humla-Jumla, Lamjung, Pokhara and Kusma. Total staff there is now four. With local government support, the clinic now has a security fence and entrance gate. CCTV cameras have also recently been installed. The Clinic will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2023, and a celebration will be held on January 23rd 2023 which all are welcome to attend.



Chandra has been elected as Chairman of Char Bhanjyang Tamu Samaj International Coordination Committee and he will therefore be facilitating a relationship with organisations and the Nepal Government to support the Char Bhanjyang Area Development projects – we at the Trust wish him well and will do our best to continue to support him and thank him for all his help in Nepal with setting up the new links and of course at Khalte.