

LiftOff

January
2024



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Air Ambulance
funded by you, flying for you



WHAT'S INSIDE...

- New targets for the charity
- News from the crew room
- Exciting events calendar

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Welcome from our new chairman

Last year I was proud to become the charity's chairman, taking on the mantle from the long-standing Chris Lear.

I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Chris for his 12 years of service as a trustee, the latter 7½ years as chair.

During his time on the Board Chris oversaw considerable change, including the purchase of our Bell 429 helicopter, the move to a new purpose-built airbase at Semington, and achieving our Air Operator Certificate, as well as dealing with the impact to operations following the Salisbury Novichok incident.

I am delighted that Chris has accepted a life presidency role with the charity.

We continue to build resilience within our aircrew rota, with more pre-hospital doctors now on board than ever before. In addition, we remain committed to advancing the training and development of our critical care paramedics and trainee critical care paramedics.

However, in our endeavour to enhance our patient care, with investment in clinical upskilling we have to contend with rising costs including fuel and utility bills, as well as those associated with our Devizes charity shop.

Thus, our fundraising need has risen to **£4.5 million each year**, which put into greater context means generating **over £12,000** every single day.

This is a huge challenge for our very dedicated charity team but one I am confident they will rise to, as they have done many times in the past, especially seen during the Coronavirus pandemic and more recently as we go through this Cost-of-Living crisis.

Last year saw an increased need for our services across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas, as we attended 1,167 missions, a jump of 10.6% on the previous year.

We can only continue to be there with the support of you and the local community, and throughout this Lift Off magazine you will find many ways in which you can help your local air ambulance.

We hope you will never need the service, but if you do, we aim to be there.



Rob Kevan
Chairman



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www.wiltshireairambulance.co.uk

registered charity number 1144097

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Chris Lear

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Manager

Dr Maria Smith

Medical Director

News from the crew room



Driving lifesaving excellence

Take a look at our brand-new Critical Care Car, which has been fully funded by a grant from the HELP Appeal.

The BMW G5X X5 xDrive30d arrived at our Semington airbase in November 2023 and is mission ready to take our critical care paramedics and doctors to emergencies across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas.

The HELP Appeal also provided the funds for the helipad installation at Wiltshire Air Ambulance's airbase

when it opened in 2018, including its underfloor heating.

We now have two fully branded cars with state-of-the-art technology and equipment to use when the helicopter is unavailable, when an incident is particularly close by or if we need to send a second crew by road.



We've recently added to our aircrew, with Matt Metcalf (pictured left) joining us as a trainee critical care paramedic, plus the arrival of critical care doctors David Connor (pictured right) and Mike Harrison.

Matt left the Royal Air Force to join the Ambulance Service and has spent eight years working as part of the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) in Bristol before arriving in Semington.

David brings previous air ambulance experience from the Emergency Medical Retrieval Service (EMRS) in Scotland, which is also where he attended University. He is originally from Northern Ireland.

Mike is an Emergency Medicine and Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine Consultant working in Wales and the South West of England.

Meanwhile, Ben Abbott has been appointed to the role of Advanced Care Practitioner in Critical Care and Clinical Lead, with Lou Cox taking on the position of Air Operations Officer.



Welcome to the team!

MISSION REPORT

1 January - 31 December 2023

2023

Top five hospitals
we airlifted/assisted
patients to:

Royal United Hospital, Bath – 85

Southmead Hospital, Bristol – 69

Great Western Hospital, Swindon – 57

Bristol Royal Infirmary – 21

Salisbury District Hospital - 19



Helicopter
646



Critical care cars
521

274

cardiac emergencies



237

medical conditions
(including collapses
and strokes)



1,167
total missions

231

road traffic
collisions



60

sporting incidents
(including horse
riding)



Scan the QR code to view our interactive missions map



Note - 44 incidents were jointly attended by the helicopter and critical care cars, but for illustrative purposes this counts as one incident in that location.

All the above statistics are combined – helicopter and critical care cars

Simon's story

The dedicated fitness instructor, then aged 59, was training for a triathlon when he suffered a cardiac arrest in the pool at Chippenham Olympiad Leisure Centre.

He received CPR from staff at the premises, before Wiltshire Air Ambulance landed nearby, flown by chief pilot Matt Wilcock, with critical care paramedics Adam Khan and Paul 'Rocky' Rock.

The aircrew quickly brought Simon back round before he was taken to the Royal United Hospital in Bath, by land ambulance.

Simon takes up the story: "I was in triathlon training; my cycling had been going great, my running had been progressing well and I was having help from one of my clients, Nicky, for the swimming side because she is an experienced swimmer, looking to qualify as a coach.

"I had been hitting all the distances and I'd actually learnt how to swim front crawl properly. My first triathlon was going to be the Westonbirt one, which involves 400m in a swimming pool, so 16 lengths.

"I reached that distance reasonably quickly, probably faster than I thought because before the lessons I was a hopeless swimmer!

"On the day of the incident I had no issues, I felt normal. We did our 16 lengths warming up and then stopped for a rest. Nicky asked if I was ok, she's a trained nurse, so is clearly good at spotting signs. She told me to take it easy and just rest a minute, because she thought something wasn't right.

"I rested but told her I was fine and actually felt great, so insisted we should carry on. I said to Nicky she should head off down the pool and I would follow right behind her.

"She swam off and there was another lady, Danielle, in the medium lane who gestured for me to jump and follow Nicky, but that never happened."



Simon Bennett needed the lifesaving skills of Wiltshire Air Ambulance after collapsing in a Chippenham swimming pool in April 2022.





“I think it’s amazing what the charity does and it needs people to support it by donating.”

Simon Bennett - former patient

“I’m told – as I have no memory of it – that I turned my body and made a wheezing noise (agonal breathing). By the time the lady in the pool had called for help from the lifeguards, I was face down floating in the water.

“All hell broke loose. Nicky and Danielle managed to get me out of the pool with the help of the lifeguards and after that, the next thing I remember was the critical care paramedics, Adam and Rocky, staring me in the face.”

The leisure centre’s duty manager had delivered CPR and used the on-site defibrillator on Simon before the aircrew had arrived. They were also joined by paramedics who had been attending a nearby fayre in Monkton Park and a St Johns Ambulance responder from a local beer festival.

Simon added. “I suppose I was just in the right place at the right time, as I know the survival rates for out-of-home cardiac arrests is really low.

“My vital signs came back fairly quickly, which I know surprised the paramedics but that is probably down to my fitness levels.”

Twelve years earlier Simon had undergone a triple heart bypass, which inspired him to become a fitness instructor and trainer in the first place.

His 2022 incident was diagnosed as a cardiac arrest. He said: “They believe I went into ventricular fibrillation, so the ventricles were just quivering and stopped oxygen getting around the body, leading to the agonal breathing.

“After six days of observation in hospital, I was transferred to Great Western Hospital in Swindon to have an ICD (Implantable cardioverter-defibrillator) fitted.

“I was eventually given the all-clear to return to fitness work – albeit with the warning not to go and try setting any personal records!”

Simon has since completed his first 10k run and plans to take on the Westonbirt Triathlon in May 2024 (the event he was training for when he had the cardiac arrest). Good luck Simon!



“I’ve joined the Wiltshire Air Ambulance lottery and asked people not to buy me presents for my 60th birthday, but instead give money to the charity.”

Upcoming events

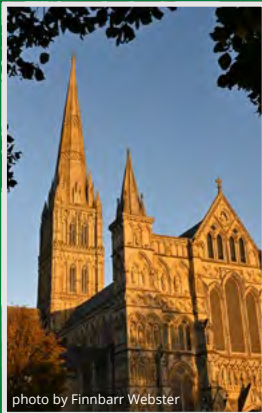


photo by Finnbarr Webster

8 February

A Unique Concert for Wiltshire

Held at the iconic Salisbury Cathedral, award-winning pianist Rupert Egerton-Smith, will perform with The Band of The Grenadier Guards and The Band and Bugles of The Rifles.



17 March

Bath Half Marathon

Race through the heart of the World Heritage City and take part in one of the most popular half marathons in the UK! On a fast and flat course, the Bath Half is suitable for all abilities.



3 April

Brew with the Crew at Easter

Enjoy a brew with our pilots, doctors and paramedics at our airbase. The event is during Easter school break so is perfect for all the family. Children's activities will be available.



7 April

Steps to Remember in Semington

A chance for friends and family to get together and remember their loved ones. Take part in a four-mile walk along the canal, which starts and finishes at our airbase in Semington.



30 May

Charity Golf Day at Bowood

Establish new and lasting relationships with businesses and individuals that all have a common interest – golf and supporting the lifesaving work of Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

To find out more, scan the QR code or visit: wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/events



8-9 June

Middlewick House Open Garden

A great family-friendly weekend! Wander around the beautiful garden at Nick and Annette Mason's home and browse the array of stalls, selling everything from plants to art.



14 July

Snowdon Sunrise Challenge

With headlamps lighting the way, you'll navigate the trails under the stars, forging a path to the summit in time for a sunrise to remember at the highest peak in Wales.



8 September

Skydive over Salisbury

Get ready to experience a rush like no other! Your skydive will take you over the beautiful Wiltshire countryside, taking in Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge from the skies above.



6 October

CycleFest at Castle Combe Circuit

Whether you are an elite cyclist or want to enjoy laps around the iconic circuit near Chippenham with your friends and family, CycleFest is the perfect event for you!



1 December

In Celebration of Life Service

Held in The Barn at Lowden, our annual free event gives you and your family the space to reflect, share and remember a loved one. There will be readings, music and a moment of reflection.

Are you looking to support Wiltshire Air Ambulance?

Get in touch with our fundraising team, we'd love to hear from you!



Dick Lovett BMW Melksham

For every customer service response the branch receives, £1 is donated to us. They raised over £1,200 in 2023!



Afternoon tea with our friends

We were delighted to host our annual gathering for our long-standing supporters at Royal Wootton Bassett Rugby Club.



Bowled over by your support

Captains Mike and Julie visited us alongside their vice captains Kelvin and Lynn after supporting us at the Devizes Bowls Club fun event.



Erin's sweet treats

Six-year old Erin, from Calne, organised her own cake stall. She spent five hours selling and raised an amazing £135.70!



Urchfont Scarecrow Festival

The organisers presented us with proceeds from the 2023 event, where they raised over £5,500.

Remembering Rob

Wiltshire Air Ambulance pilot Rob Collingwood posthumously received a Special Recognition award at the Air Ambulances UK Annual Awards of Excellence.

Rob, a much-admired pilot, passed away in April 2023 at the age of 42 after a short battle with cancer.

He joined Wiltshire Air Ambulance in 2016 after serving over 10 years in the British Army.

Rob loved working for the charity and the staff loved him. He was so passionate about our cause and understood the importance of being a team player.

He had a real passion for environmental sustainability, a strong faith and was always positive.

Most of all, Rob enjoyed keeping the team fed with his famous South African braais (barbecues).

Rob's widow Hattie (pictured with the award) was in attendance at the Annual Awards of Excellence to collect the Special Recognition honour, alongside chief pilot Matt Wilcock (pictured right).

There was a standing ovation from the packed auditorium when the award was announced, as attendees heard how Rob had continued to dedicate himself to his work and colleagues, despite receiving news of his diagnosis, which halted his flying.

*Rob Collingwood
1980-2023*



Could you support our lifesaving work by joining our Regular Giving scheme or lottery?

What is 'Regular Giving'?

It's a regular donation made by direct debit, which is a simple, secure and effective way to support our lifesaving work.

You could choose to donate monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or simply yearly. The donation amount is up to you, we are grateful for whatever you are willing to give.

Why a regular donation?

More of your money goes directly to our lifesaving service, as regular giving direct debit admin costs are lower.

With reliable income that we can depend upon and predict, it means we are able to plan our finances more effectively.

It's also easy to set up, change or cancel at any time.

How does it work?

It's simple to get signed up and can all be done online in a matter of minutes. All you need to do is decide how much you want to donate and how frequently.

To get started, simply scan the QR code on the right or visit our website: wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/savelives.



Lifesaving Lottery



Be in with a chance of winning £1,000 every week!

We also run a Superdraw, which could land players a rollover jackpot of £25,000, think what you could spend that on!

Importantly, with around 40,000 entries into our Lottery and Superdraw each week, it helps to fund one in every four missions.

It costs just £1 a week to play our Lottery, with a weekly cash prize of £1,000 up for grabs and four additional winners banking £25 each.

For a further £1 you can also enter the Superdraw, which offers the chance for larger prizes.

Our Lottery began in 2009 and, up to this point, has generated over £12 million for the charity.

To sign up visit our website, wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/lottery or scan the QR code on the right.

£3 could help us buy a box of 10 scalpels, used to perform lifesaving surgical procedures.

£17 could help us buy a ventilator circuit to deliver oxygen to our anaesthetised patients.

£25 could help us buy a sling to stabilise a patient's pelvis and reduce bleeding.



Hats off to Hilary!

Hilary began fundraising for the charity in an obscure way three years ago in an idea that sparked from the madness of Covid lockdown.

The volunteer knew she would be unable to help the charity in her usual way of heading out to community events, so decided to embark on her daily walk wearing a variety of hats.

With each day that passed, Hilary left the house donning a different hat on her head, and told her story online, asking for donations to Wiltshire Air Ambulance along the way.

Hilary's husband Shaun (pictured right) has been saved twice by Wiltshire Air Ambulance after falls from height.

The first saw him come off a ladder while decorating and he suffered multiple fractures in his neck, back and arm.

He was flown by Wiltshire Air Ambulance to Frenchay Hospital in Bristol and later underwent an eight-hour operation at the Royal United Hospital in Bath.

A year later Shaun fell from a shed roof and fractured his shoulders, hip and skull.

Once again Wiltshire Air Ambulance were on hand to assist and he has since made a full recovery – going on to run two marathons, raising money for the charity along the way.

Hilary completed a remarkable year-long “Hatwalk 21” challenge by donning a different hat for 365 days straight.

That was where it was meant to stop, but she continued the run into a Hats-ercise22 the following year, where she undertook 30 minutes of exercise each day, again showcasing a different style hat.

She took part in cycles, swims, yoga, bodyboarding and more – and continues to support the charity, both as a volunteer and a fundraiser.

“I’ve got no plans to stop, just as Wiltshire Air Ambulance doesn’t stop saving lives” she says.

If you’d like to volunteer for the charity, scan the QR code to find out more.



Meet volunteer Hilary Fleming, who has taken on a unique fundraising challenge to support the charity.



Will you make a difference?

A gift in your will costs nothing in your lifetime and means we can continue to save lives in the future.

Around one in four of our lifesaving missions are funded by gifts in wills, ensuring the Wiltshire Air Ambulance aircrew can get to the patient in the fastest possible time, enabling them to treat and stabilise patients before providing transportation to the right hospital for their needs.

Wiltshire Air Ambulance has a range of partnerships which allow you to write a will for free.

Write your will at home

We've teamed up with The Goodwill Partnership to enable you to write your free will from the comfort of your own home, at a time and date which suits you.

Get a will online

We work with Make A Will Online to offer an online will writing service, which is a great way to receive a solicitor-checked will at your own pace.

Secure a solicitor drafted will

We have partnered with Parker Bullen LLP, an award-winning and long-established law firm with a base in Salisbury, to assist you from start to finish with a will.

You don't need to include a gift to us in your will in order to use our free wills service, but if you are able to support us after taking care of your loved ones, we will be very grateful.

If you are interested in our expansive wills service or would like more information about how it can benefit your local air ambulance service, scan the QR code.



“Completing the will online, in the comfort of my home, meant I could take my time and decide the intricacies of where we wanted various parts of my will to go.

I knew from the very beginning that Wiltshire Air Ambulance was the first thing I was going to include in my will.”

Pete Burch, below, who was airlifted by Wiltshire Air Ambulance after a road traffic collision on his motorbike in 2015.



Maxi to the rescue!

The importance of our Emergency Awareness Training programme has been demonstrated after 11-year-old Maxi Bastable came to the rescue of his choking grandfather.

The youngster had been taught lifesaving skills by the charity at his school, Westonbirt Prep in Tetbury, in 2022.

Wiltshire Air Ambulance began delivering Emergency Awareness Training in schools in 2019, which teaches children how to manage an unconscious patient, how to perform CPR and how to assist a person who is choking.

The training became a real-life scenario for Maxi when his grandfather Francis was eating a murray mint at home and started choking while his wife Patricia was outside in the garden.

The youngster calmly took control of the situation and delivered an abdominal thrust on his grandfather to try and dislodge the sweet, which he did successfully.

Maxi recently visited Wiltshire Air Ambulance's airbase to meet the aircrew along with his mum Joanna, dad James and his older brother Ted.

Joanna said: "We're very proud of Maxi for coming to his grandfather's rescue and we will be forever grateful to Wiltshire Air Ambulance and its Emergency Awareness Training programme.

"We're based near Malmesbury and we often see the helicopter flying overhead. We always look to support the charity and we are part of the Somerford & District Show, held annually in August, which raises funds for Wiltshire Air Ambulance and other local charities."

The charity's Emergency Awareness Training instructor Andrew Robinson said: "This is exactly why Wiltshire Air Ambulance began the programme five years ago and we have so far delivered the training to more than 33,500 children across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas.

"It's brilliant to hear that Maxi was able to take what he was taught by Wiltshire Air Ambulance in school and put it into practice when the need was there."

Emergency Awareness Training bookings are full until September 2024, but schools wishing to benefit from the programme later in the year should email emergencyawareness@wiltshireairambulance.co.uk to enquire.

Find out more about the programme by scanning the QR code on this page.



Meet Maxi, 11, who saved his grandfather after receiving Emergency Awareness Training.



BARNES COACHES

START PLANNING YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE FOR 2024!

REQUEST A FREE HOLIDAY BROCHURE



Norfolk Broads & Coast, Great Yarmouth
Mon 11th Mar 2024
5 Days: From £399
Includes half price bar at hotel! Visits to Saffron Walden, Sheringham, Wroxham, Norwich & Albans.



Complete Isle of Wight, Sandown
Sun 17th Mar 2024
6 Days: From £499
Including Alum Bay, Yarmouth, Ryde, Shanklin & Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary!



Eastbourne
Mon 18th Mar 2024
5 Days: From £439
Mon 1st April 2024
5 Days: From £459
Including Arundel, Brighton, Worthing, Littlehampton & Midhurst.



The English Riviera and the South Devon Coast: Paignton
Mon 25th Mar 2024
5 Days: From £359
Including Exeter, Dartmouth, Blackpool Sands, Totnes, Torquay, Looe & Wells.



Easter Mystery Tour
Fri 29th Mar 2024
4 Days: From £399
Easter mystery with an Easter egg at this 3-star Victorian hotel with all mod cons and in a county with two national parks!



Castles, Canterbury, Kent Folkstone
Mon 1st April 2024
5 Days: From £599
Includes Eastbourne, Walmer Castle, Deal, Rye, Chapel Down Winery, Canterbury & Rochester.



Weymouth
Mon 1st April 2024
5 Days: From £429
Inc. Christchurch, Sandbank's Ferry, Swanage, Poole, West Bay, Lyme Regis, Chesil Beach and Lyndhurst.



North Devon and Exmoor, Ilfracombe
Fri 5th April 2024
4 Days: From £379
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Fri 5th April 2024
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Boundless South Coast Beauty, Bournemouth
Mon 29th Apr 2024
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FREE HOME PICKUP & DROP OFF SERVICE ON HOLIDAYS 4 DAYS & OVER!
Check our free pickup area map online or on the reverse of our brochure.

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Shop with us

We have a Charity Shop in Devizes which sells high quality clothing, books, children's toys and has many more items to browse through.

How to find us

2 Maryport Street
Devizes
SN10 1AH

Tel: 01380 819592

Opening hours

Monday - Saturday
9.30am - 4.30pm



Did you know we offer a collection service?

Collections for shop donations are bookable by calling the shop.

Registered charity number 1144097 © Wiltshire Air Ambulance 2024