

# The piano that built a hospital



## The first of its kind

The lung disease tuberculosis was very common in Victorian times and considered to be untreatable. So when his clerk got it, lawyer Philip Rose decided a new specialist hospital was needed and in 1841, he founded the Brompton. The first wing opened in 1847 and, 40 years later, another was added thanks to the bequest left in the piano.

### DID YOU KNOW...

**Hospital rules were strict in 1847. No patient in the Brompton was allowed to read Sunday newspapers, "upon pain of expulsion"!**

*Cartoon of Philip Rose from Vanity Fair magazine, 1881*

The first Brompton Hospital doubled in size thanks to a lady called Cordelia Read. Cordelia fell out with her family and when she died in 1871 her will, found inside a piano, donated her estate (worth £15m in today's money) to help enlarge the Brompton. The piano remains at the hospital to this day and Cordelia's portrait hangs in the Boardroom.

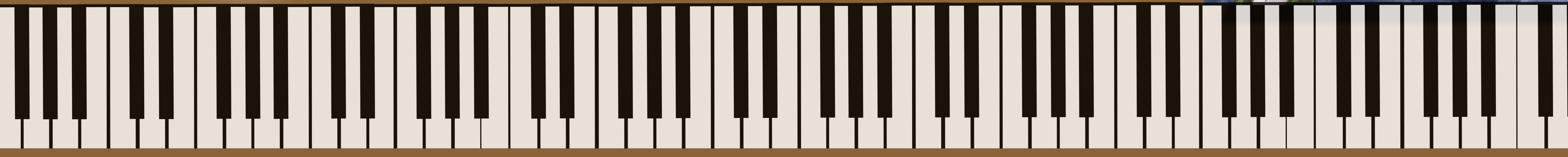
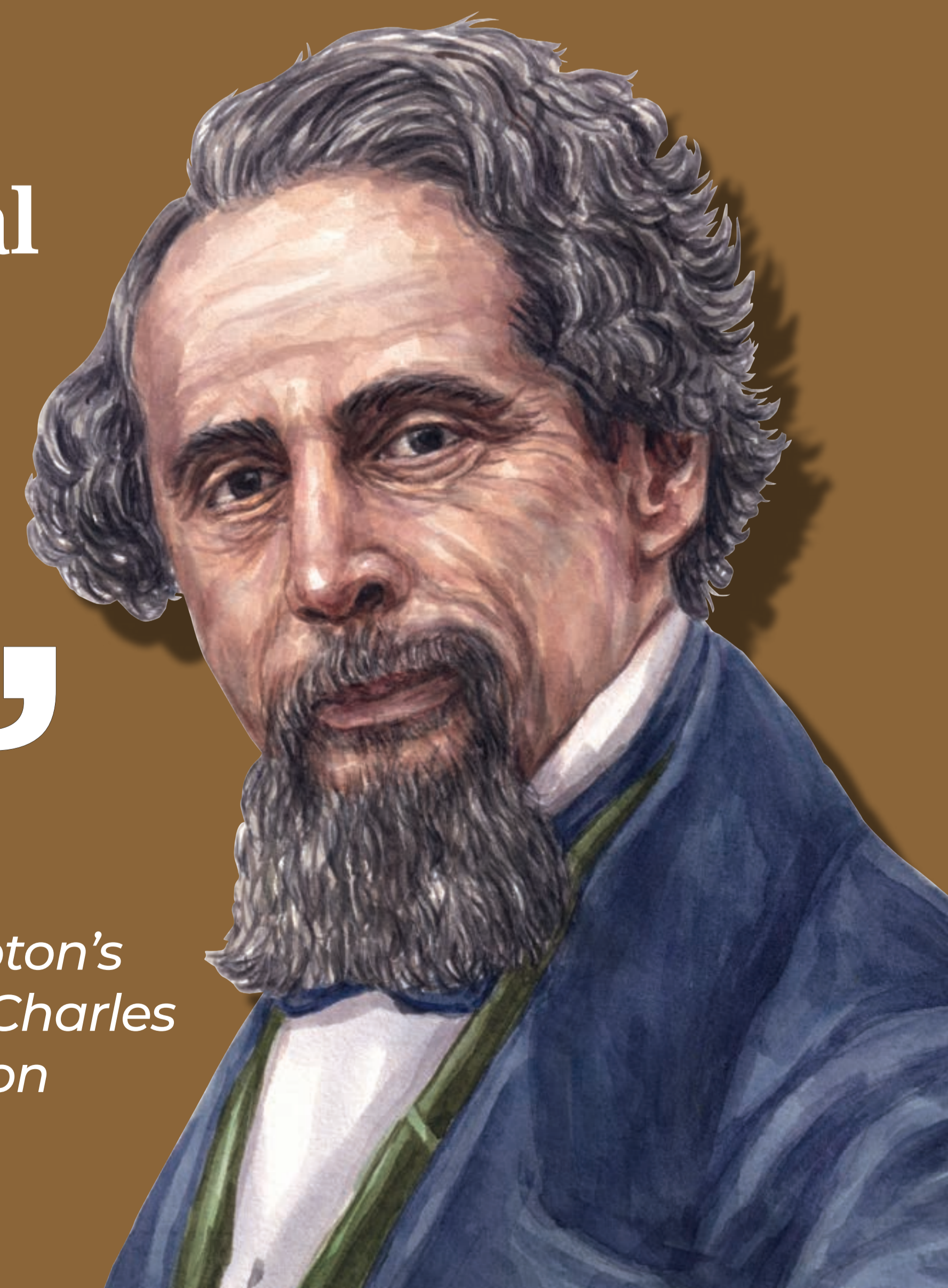


*Photo courtesy of Barts Health Archive*

“ The hospital is a refuge and resting place for hundreds. ”

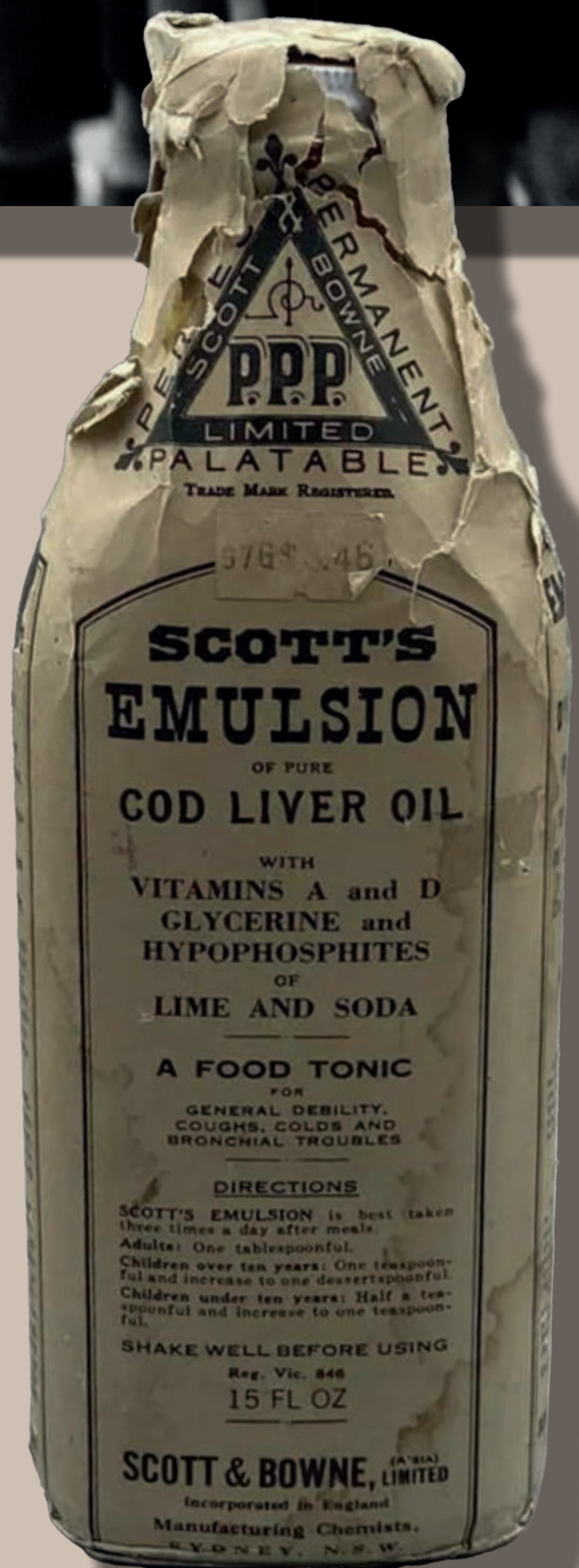
Charles Dickens

*Dickens spoke at the Brompton's second anniversary dinner. Charles Darwin also made a donation*





# Founded on research



The Brompton actually conducted one of the first ever clinical trials – about the beneficial effects of cod liver oil on TB (tuberculosis) patients. Over a century later, children were still being given doses of the famously unpleasant tasting oil.

Our research pioneers include Margaret Macpherson, who joined the hospital in 1936 to research TB and carried out the first X-ray survey in England.

Today, our links with academic institutions – particularly King's College and Imperial College – have been critical to our world class reputation for clinical-academic research.

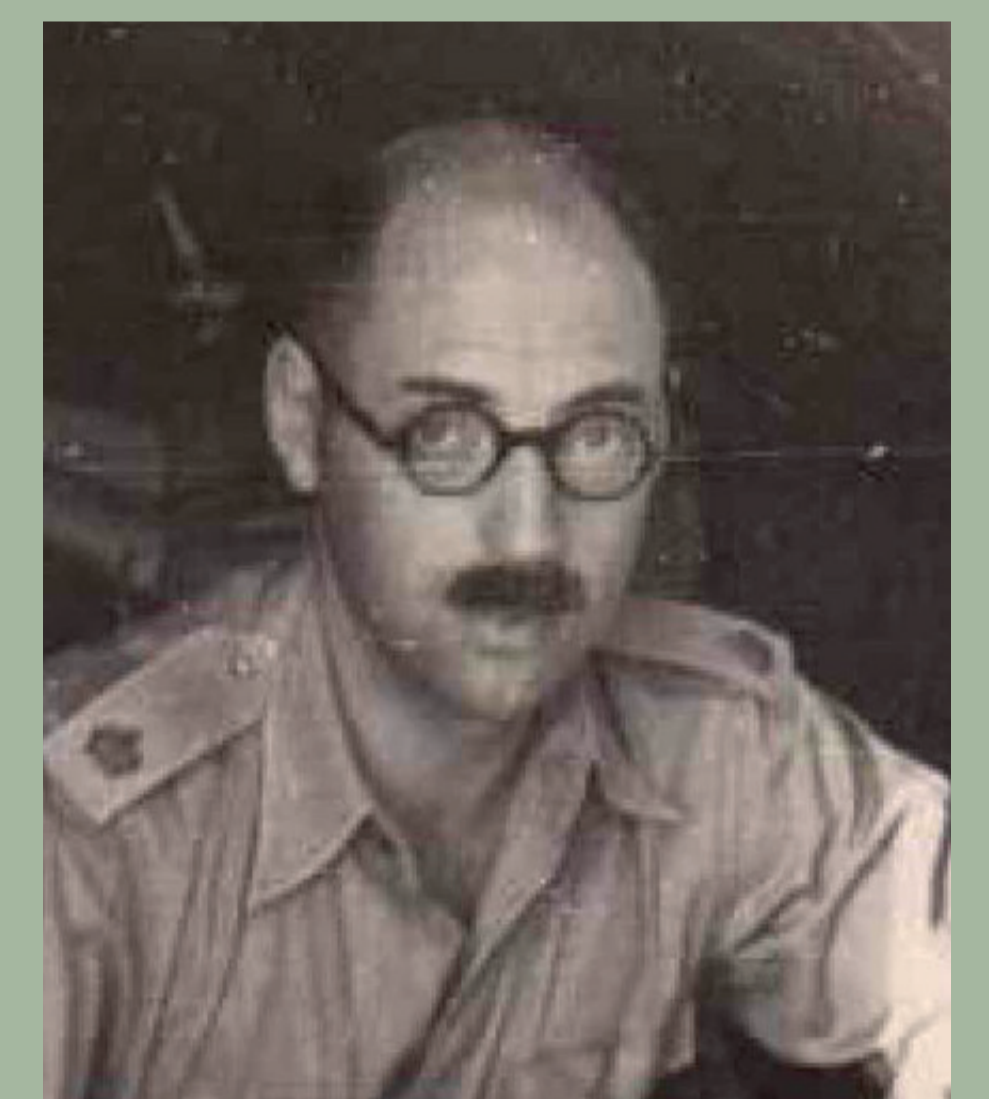
Our research discovered the genetic variants that can lead to a more severe, life-threatening reaction to COVID-19 and in 2022, we opened a new clinical research facility at Harefield.



*Brompton cough lozenges first appeared in 1886 and pirated versions were sold from stalls in the Fulham Road for a penny a box*

## DID YOU KNOW...

In 1946, Guy Scadding (right) – sometimes called the ‘father of respiratory medicine’ – developed the Institute for Diseases of the Chest here, researching chronic diseases like emphysema and bronchitis.

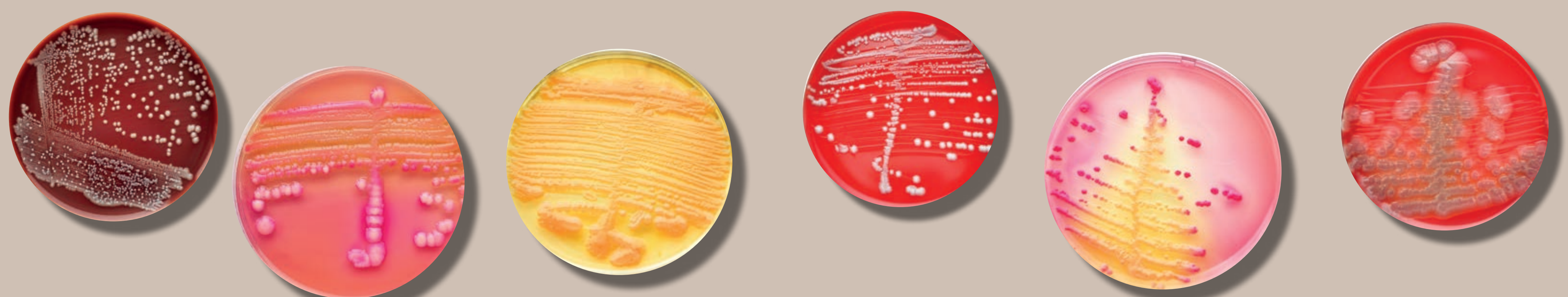


Staff included Lynne Reid, the first woman in the UK to become a professor of experimental pathology and Margaret Turner-Warwick (right), the first female president of the Royal College of Physicians.



**“ From early on as I advanced my career I wanted to make the playing field more even for women. ”**

*Lynne Reid (left), Professor of experimental pathology*



# The 14-year-old who swallowed a screw



An extraordinary variety of objects have been found in people's lungs including coins, buttons, safety pins, screws, teeth, stones, needles and springs

In 1937, 14-year-old Clifford Hopkins accidentally swallowed a screw, which ended up inside his lung, until it was removed at the Brompton through complex 'bloodless surgery'.

Our hospital has been famous for treating lungs and their diseases – such as through surgery or less invasive techniques – ever since it was founded to treat TB (tuberculosis) in the 19th century.

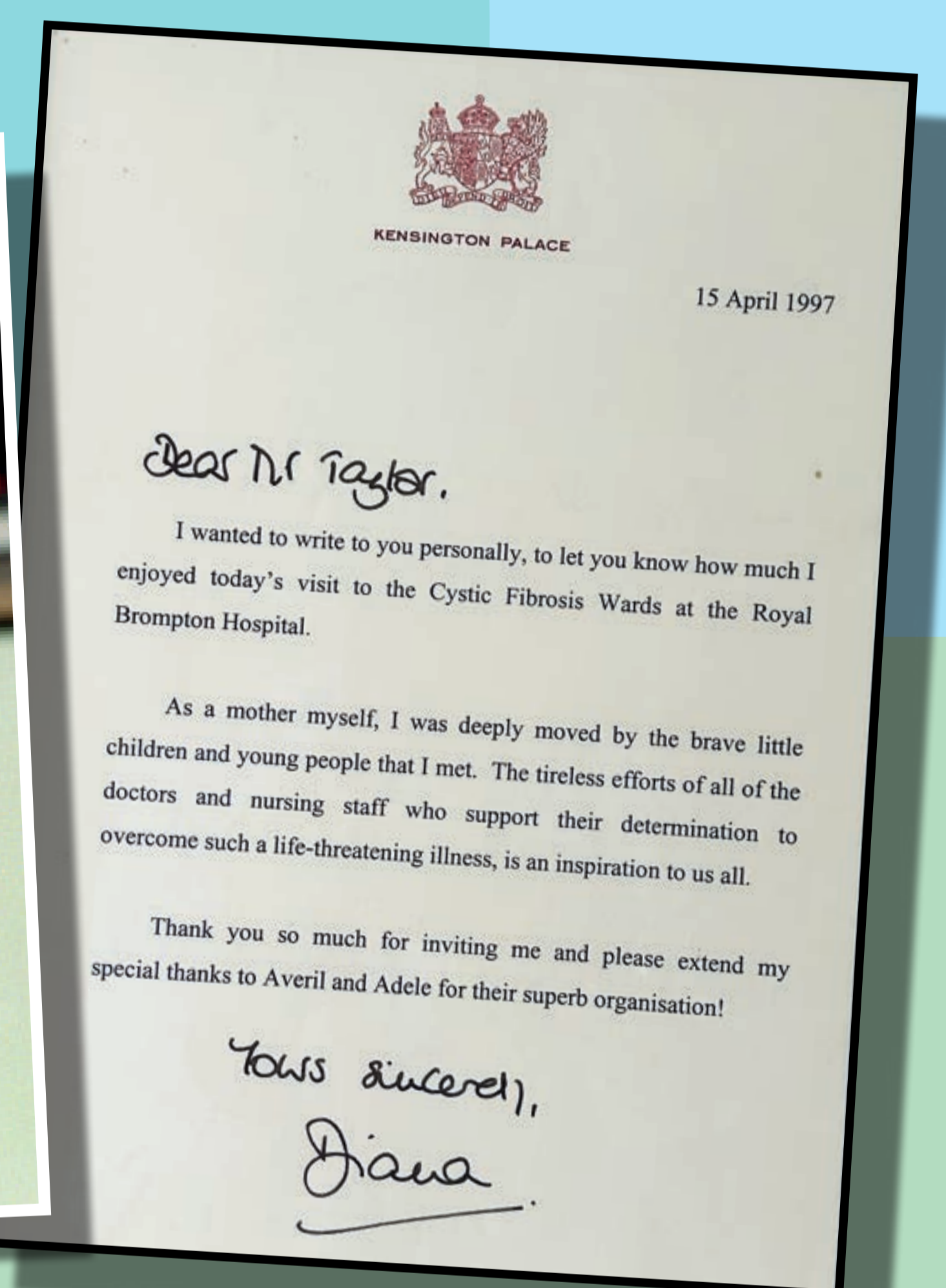


Ivan Magill

Tudor Edwards was the first to remove a lobe of the lung in 1928, helped by anaesthetist Ivan Magill, a major influence on thoracic surgery in the 1940s-1950s.



Princess Diana visited our world leading cystic fibrosis centre in the 1990s



## DID YOU KNOW...

In the 1930s, Winifred Linton started the first school of physiotherapy for chest diseases at the Brompton and Eric Sparrow set up one of the first occupational therapy services at Harefield to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of long-stay patients.



In more recent years we have used innovative heat technology to heal areas of asthmatic lungs. 'Bronchial thermoplasty' is now widely available on the NHS.

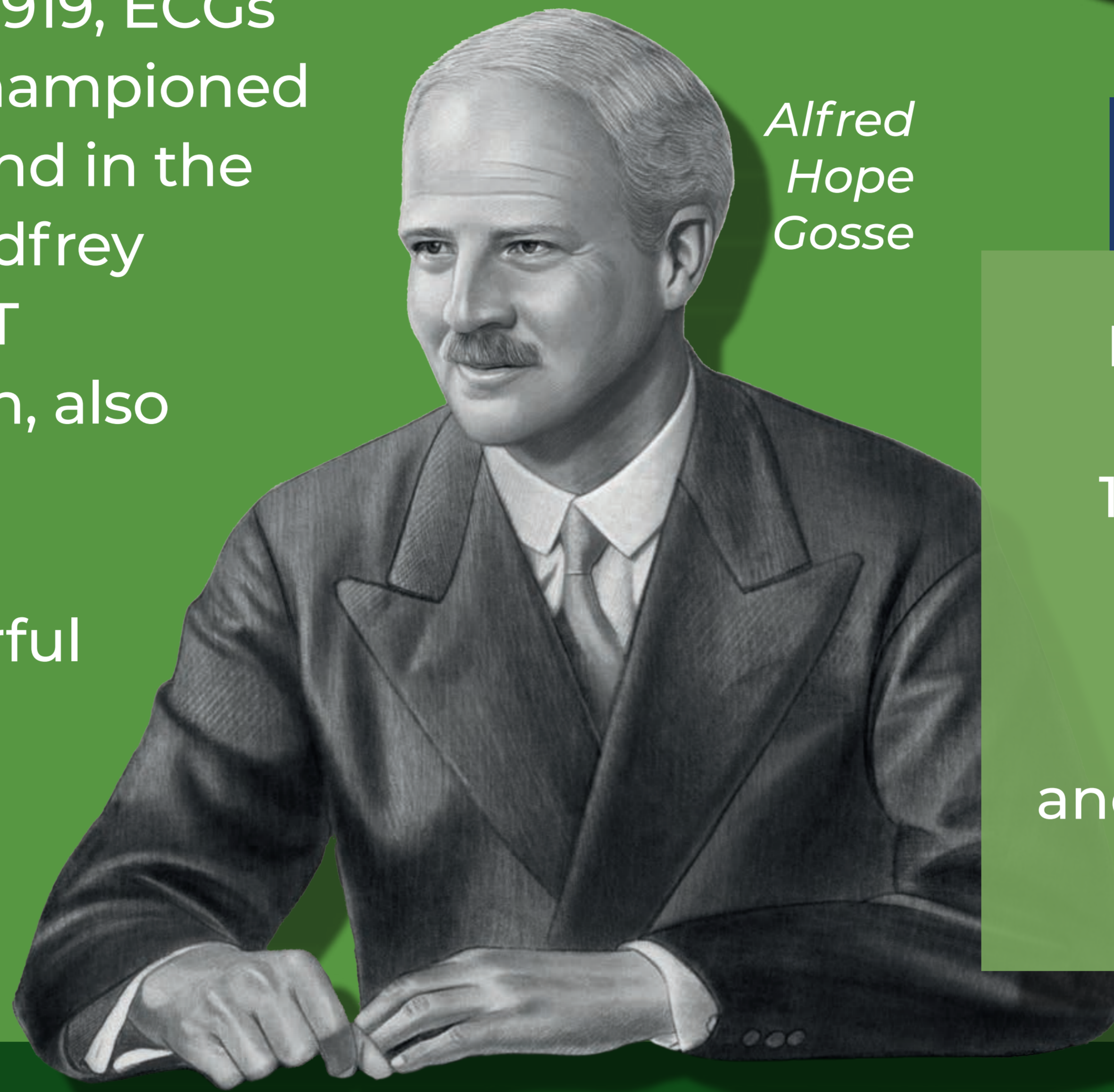
"Instead of reaching for the inhaler every morning and coughing all day, I now wake up fine. It's simply changed my life."

Royal Brompton patient Nicola Kerr

# Peering into the body

Treating illness often depends on knowing what is going on inside the human body. In the early days, it was all about X-rays. From 1919, ECGs (electrocardiograms) were championed here by Alfred Hope Gosse, and in the 1980s, Nobel Prize winner Godfrey Hounsfield, inventor of the CT (computed tomography) scan, also worked at the Brompton.

We installed the most powerful scanner of its time in 1990 and in 2024, did the same again.



Alfred Hope Gosse



In 1991, a special double decker bus was designed at the Royal Brompton to carry out especially detailed heart MRI scans

## DID YOU KNOW...

Diagnostics is not just about radio waves and X-rays. In 1977, our hospital introduced a new onsite blood test, to make diagnoses more efficient. Nurses Mai Wong and Christine Trendle were the first to deliver the service.

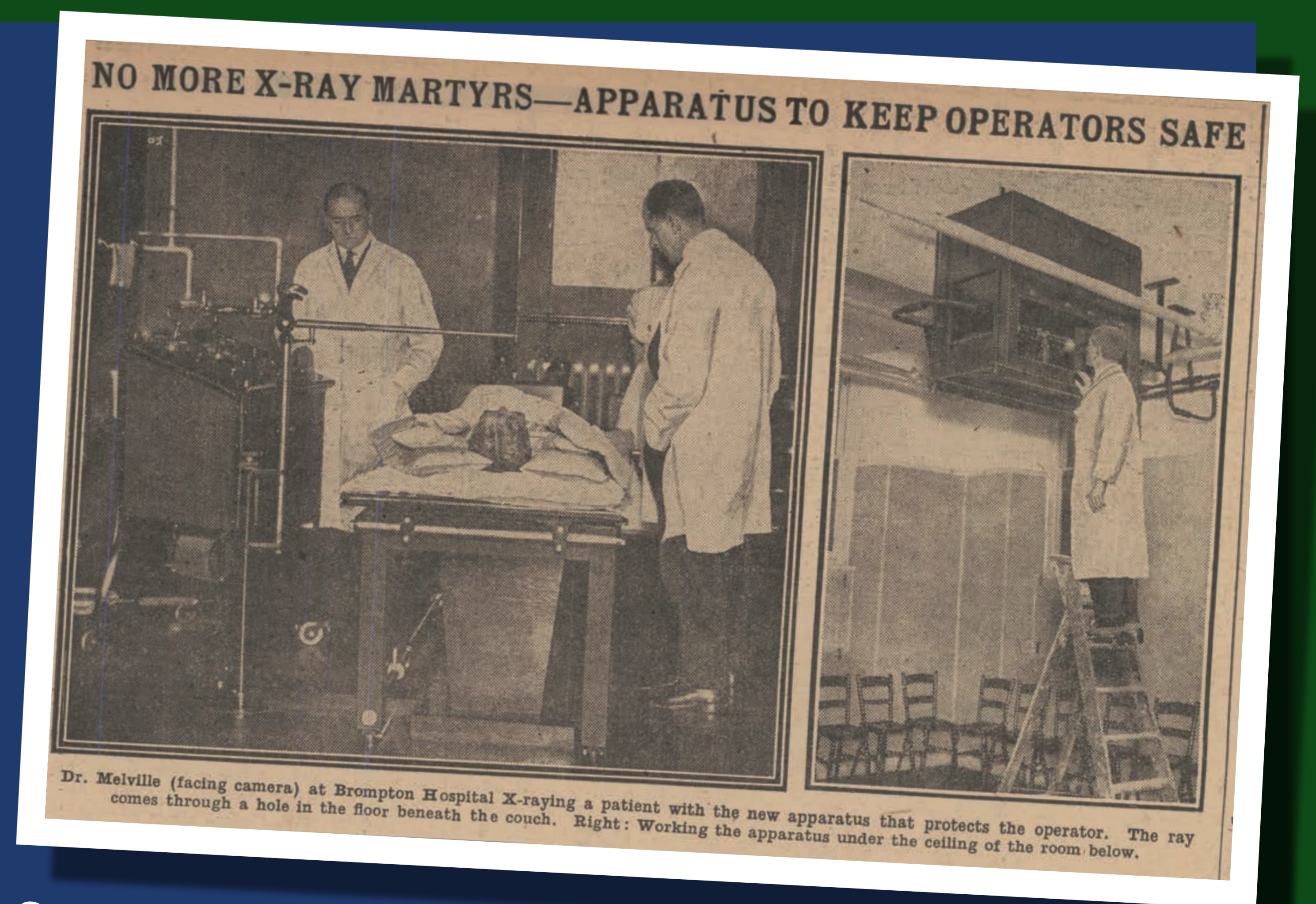


## Visually magnetic

Today we are a leading centre for cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (CMR or MRI), producing highly detailed images of the heart with magnets and radio waves. Our CMR centre was one of the first when it opened in 1984 and in 2022, it was succeeded by our new Diagnostic Centre.

**“ I heard there was going to be a great outcry against X-rays... and I pledged myself to work to discover a means of protection. ”**

*Stanley Melville, a former director of X-rays here, lost fingers due to radiation and when a friend died from the same cause, campaigned for new measures to protect radiologists. They were adopted all over the world.*



Stanley Melville in The Daily Mirror, 1928



# COCKTAILS AND INNOVATIONS

From pioneering medical mixtures to groundbreaking medical procedures and therapies, our hospital has led some of the greatest medical innovations in the world.

The 'Brompton Cocktail' consisted of morphine, cocaine, gin and honey. Invented by surgeon James Roberts in 1920 as a painkiller after lung surgery, it avoided the side effects of morphine injections. The cocktail was in use well into the 1970s.



## BROMPTON FIRSTS

In 1965, John Batten established Europe's first adult Cystic Fibrosis clinic here. It is now among the largest in the world for treating the inherited condition.

The Brompton pack was developed here as the first ventilatory support machine, replacing the iron lung. It is now a mask and small portable machine.

The first coronary angioplasty – using a balloon to unblock arteries – was carried out here in 1980. And former Brompton director of cardiology, Ulrich Sigwart, inserted the first ever coronary stent – a tiny tube that also unblocks arteries.



Ulrich Sigwart

In 2011, we set up the UK's first dedicated cardio-oncology service to improve the health of people before, during and after cancer treatment.

Anaesthetist Ian English developed the Brompton Manley Ventilator in 1970. More powerful and adjustable for use on infants, it led to the modern ventilators that saved lives during COVID-19.



A Brompton Manley Ventilator

## DID YOU KNOW...

**In 1926, Clara Novello Davies – mother of famous entertainer Ivor Novello – started singing exercises to help younger patients with their breathing. "Singing for breathing" remains popular today.**



Clara Novello Davies (above on the left) watching children at the Brompton doing breathing exercises

# Mending broken hearts

Pioneering Brompton surgeon Russell Brock was the first to operate inside a living heart in 1948 and colleague Bill Cleland performed the UK's first open heart surgery here in 1953.

Our cardiologists also led the way in operating on children with a 'hole in the heart' and, in the 1990s, developed 'closure devices' to avoid surgery altogether.

Today we are the largest service in the UK to fit artificial hearts, and the leading centre for 'keyhole' surgery to repair heart valves.

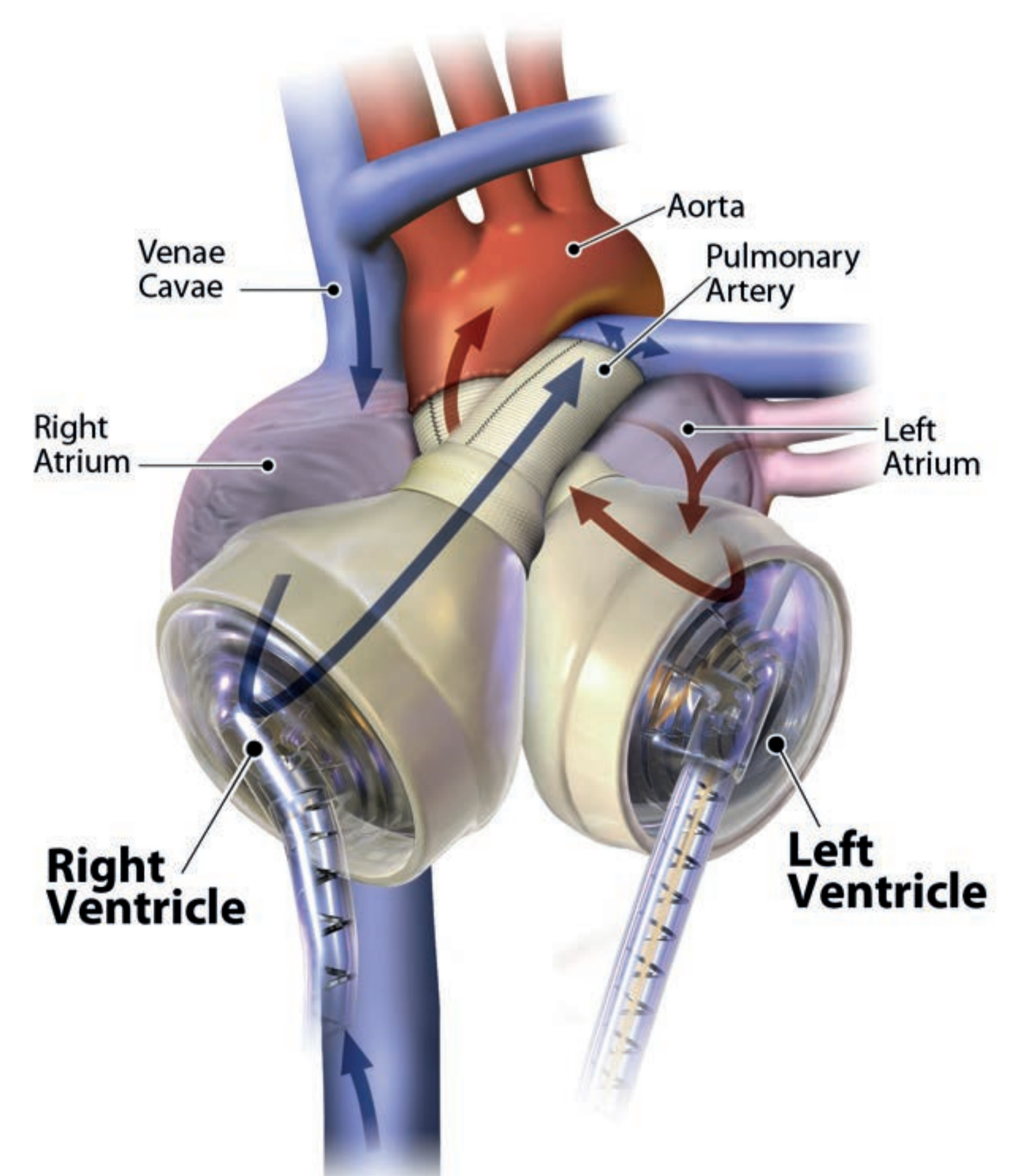


Nurses from our hospital designed a bra that helps wounds heal after heart surgery. It won a National Patient Safety Award in 2017

## DID YOU KNOW...

**A total artificial heart is a surgically implanted device with four mechanical valves that pump blood around the body, controlled by a rechargeable 7kg backpack.**

### How a total artificial heart works



WORTHING GAZETTE  
WORTHING, SUSSEX. ISSUE DATED - 5 JUN 197

### HEART BOY TONY BEATS THE ODDS



TONY BELDAM, aged 2½, was running around at his home, 21 Gaisford Road, West Tarring, this week, just one month after undergoing major open heart surgery at Brompton Hospital, London. Tony was born, not only with the main pulmonary artery on the wrong side, he also had a hole in his heart. 'I can't believe it's really true seeing him running around well,' said his mother, Mrs Janet Beldam. 'The surgeons had told us that this was one of the most difficult heart operations and hadn't held our very high hopes for its complete success.'

#### Relief

'It's impossible to describe the relief that my husband, Reginald, and I feel now. We are terribly grateful to the hospital.'

Tony's condition was observed immediately after birth, but he was fortunately able to have a small corrective operation when he was only 18 months old.

TONY BELDAM playing at his home this week.

'At 2½ he was rather old for this particular operation but it couldn't be done before,' said Mrs Beldam, 'and his surgeon warned us that if when his heart was open the arterial blood pressure was found to be too high, they would just have to stitch the incision up again and abandon the operation.'

'Fortunately everything was right for it and the operation was completed in 4½ hours. 'That was really quick, but it was the longest 4½ hours in our lives,' said his mother.'

Mr Beldam is a driving instructor with the GPO, and Tony's mother used to work as a hairdresser at Enid's Hair Fashions, Downlands Parade, Upper Brighton Road, Worthing.

'All the clients used to ask after Tony,' she said cheerfully. 'They will be thrilled to know he's going to be all right.'

**“ If you're in a heart institute like the Brompton there's an expert there in virtually every field of cardiology, so within the group, within the team, there are always people that you can ask. ”**

*Dr Michael Rigby, paediatric cardiologist*



Some of our nurses caring for a very young heart patient in the 1960s



# At the centre of it all

Frederick Charles Canty, a warehouseman from Dalston, was among patients (above) who built a reservoir at Frimley Sanatorium in 1910, as part of their occupational therapy regime. Originally opened by the Brompton to aid patient recovery, Frimley Sanatorium was closed in the 1980s as other developments gave rise to better patient care.

How patients are looked after in every way is central to effective treatment. The Brompton 'Almoners' Department,' set up in 1903, supported patients going home. Former Almoner Constance Marx conducted an annual patient follow-up in the 1930s-40s, then a highly innovative idea.

Today we have dedicated patient experts, providing feedback on every aspect of our hospital, ensuring we always put the patient at the centre of what we do.

## DID YOU KNOW...

In 1938, American jazz pianist Fats Waller played an unexpected concert at our hospital here, after he heard that 20-year-old patient Ronald Smith had always wanted to hear him play.



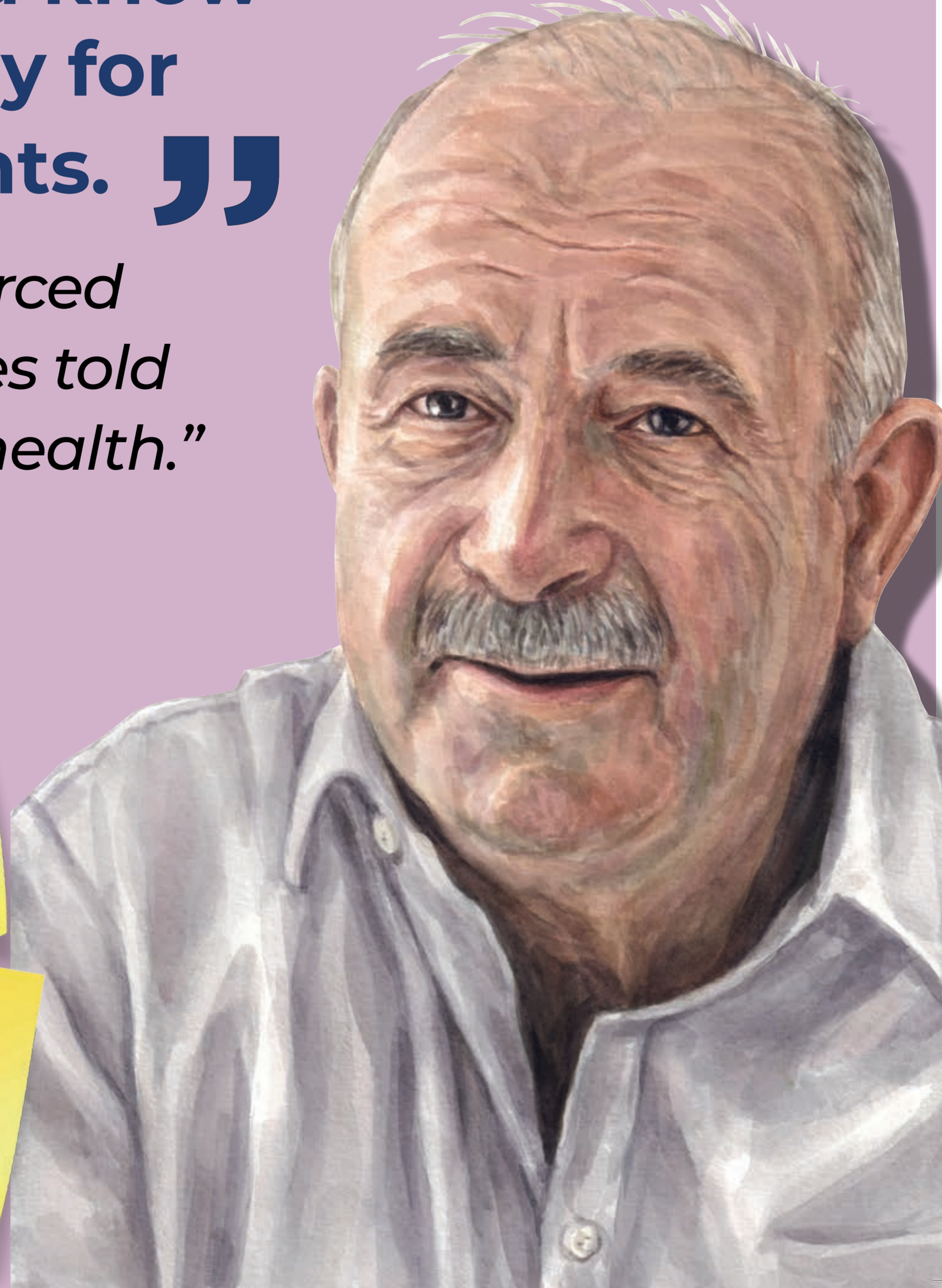
**“ When patients are in the hospital and they have their food on a plate every day, three times a day, you know you need to make it a bit more enjoyable, especially for long stay patients. ”**

Mike Duckett

*Hospital catering chief Mike Duckett brought fresh, locally sourced food to the Royal Brompton. Visiting in 2008, the future King Charles told Mike his approach “ticked all the boxes” and led to “better patient health.”*

### Actual patient comments

- Biggest thank you for saving my life
- I wanted to say thank you to the NHS
- We greatly appreciate you
- A heartfelt thank you to the amazing staff
- The skill is mind-blowing
- I'm in awe of the amazing work
- Thank you for giving me my life back
- I am thankful every day for the care
- My husband and I will be forever grateful
- Thanks for your care, kindness and support
- Everlasting thanks to the hospital
- Thanks for taking care of my father



# Nursing our talent

In the early 20th century, nursing staff were not allowed to wear fringes or have their hair parted on one side and were forbidden from 'singing, laughing, loud talking and walking arm-in-arm or with crossed arms.'

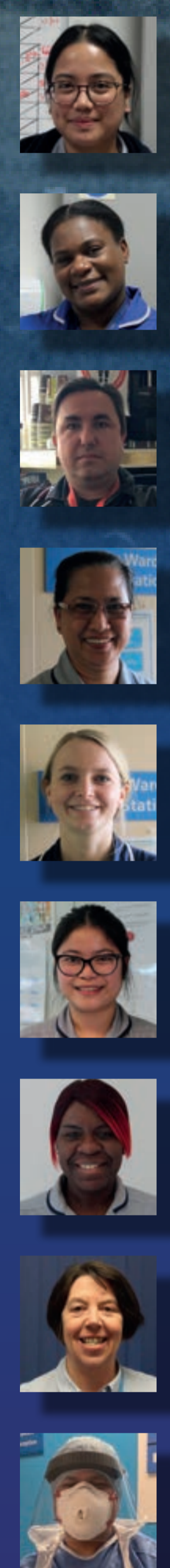
Alongside medical innovations, our nurses have always kept pace with change, developing new specialist skills and new complex services. As early as 1935, Brompton matron Eva Huggins introduced a new one-year course about lung patients.

Since then, our nursing staff have re-organised wards to manage developments in open heart surgery, intensive care, and neonatal and paediatric surgery.

As a specialist hospital, our advanced nursing team today – nurse consultants, lead nurses, clinical nurse specialists, and advanced nurse practitioners – all have postgraduate qualifications.

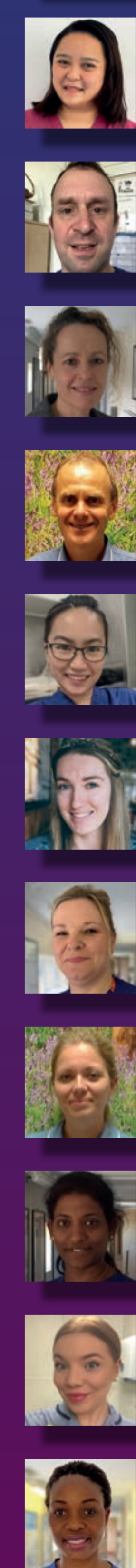


Agnes 'Susie' Walton, matron here from 1958-1972, not only introduced many new changes but also set up a nursing school that attracted students from around the world.



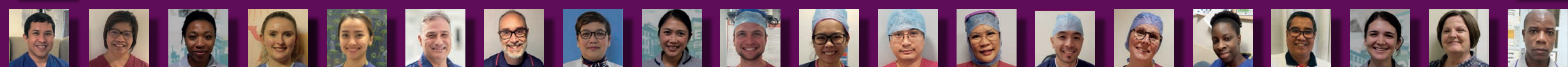
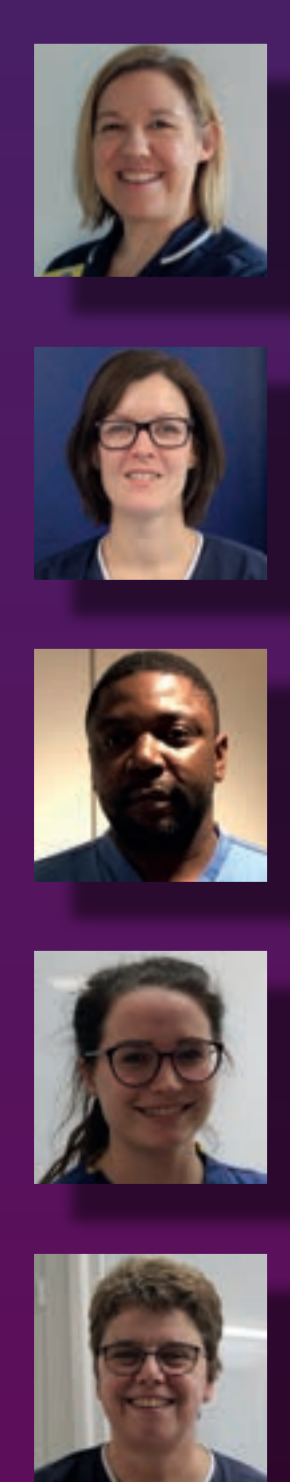
“ One of the most rewarding aspects of my nursing journey is the deep connections I form with my patients... Making a meaningful impact on someone's life brings me immense fulfilment and happiness. ”

*Brompton nurse Precious James, quoted during the NHS 75th anniversary celebrations in 2023*



## Travellers' tales

Our nurses have always come from diverse backgrounds. In 1955, we recruited Sister Karaguilla from Baghdad, Iraq. She spoke Arabic, French and Persian, and worked here for 19 years. More sadly, in 1874, one of our nurses, Isobel Smith, perished in the Cospatrick shipping disaster on her way to New Zealand.





# The miracle of transplants

When we think of pioneering surgery, transplants often spring to mind. Donald Ross performed the first successful heart transplant in the UK in 1968 at the National Heart Hospital, which later merged with the Brompton.

In 1983, surgeon Magdi Yacoub performed the first heart-lung transplant in Europe at our hospital in Harefield. A year later, he performed the first transplant there on a newborn baby and also provided a new heart to Bert Janssen, who broke Guinness World Records in 2024 when he became the longest-surviving heart transplant recipient ever.



Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub OM FRS

Pam Baldock was the very first transplant coordinator at Harefield Hospital from 1973 until she retired in 2003. She remembers having only 3 hours to retrieve and transport a donor heart.



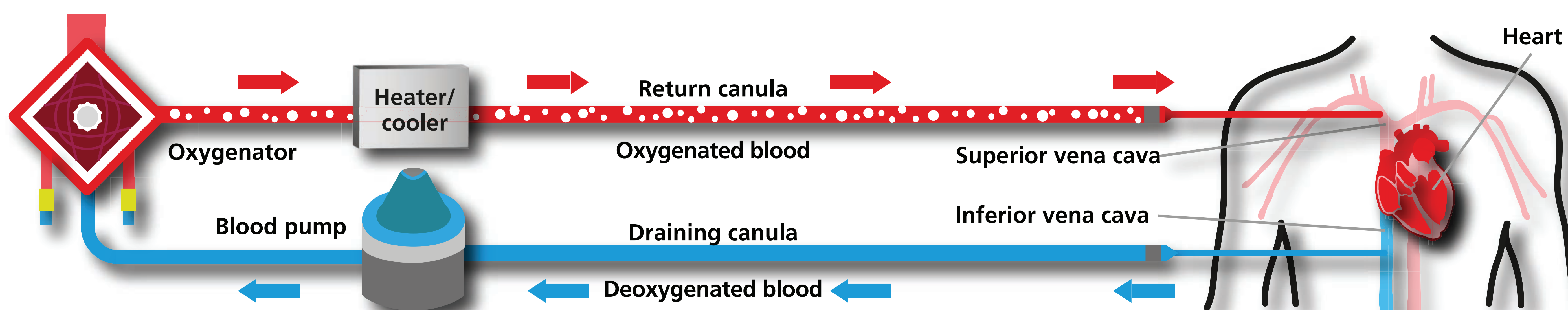
*It took about 20 minutes to take a heart out and perfuse it and pack it, change out of your scrubs, get into your car or plane, and get back here. And then to stitch it in would take the boss about 30 to 35 minutes.*



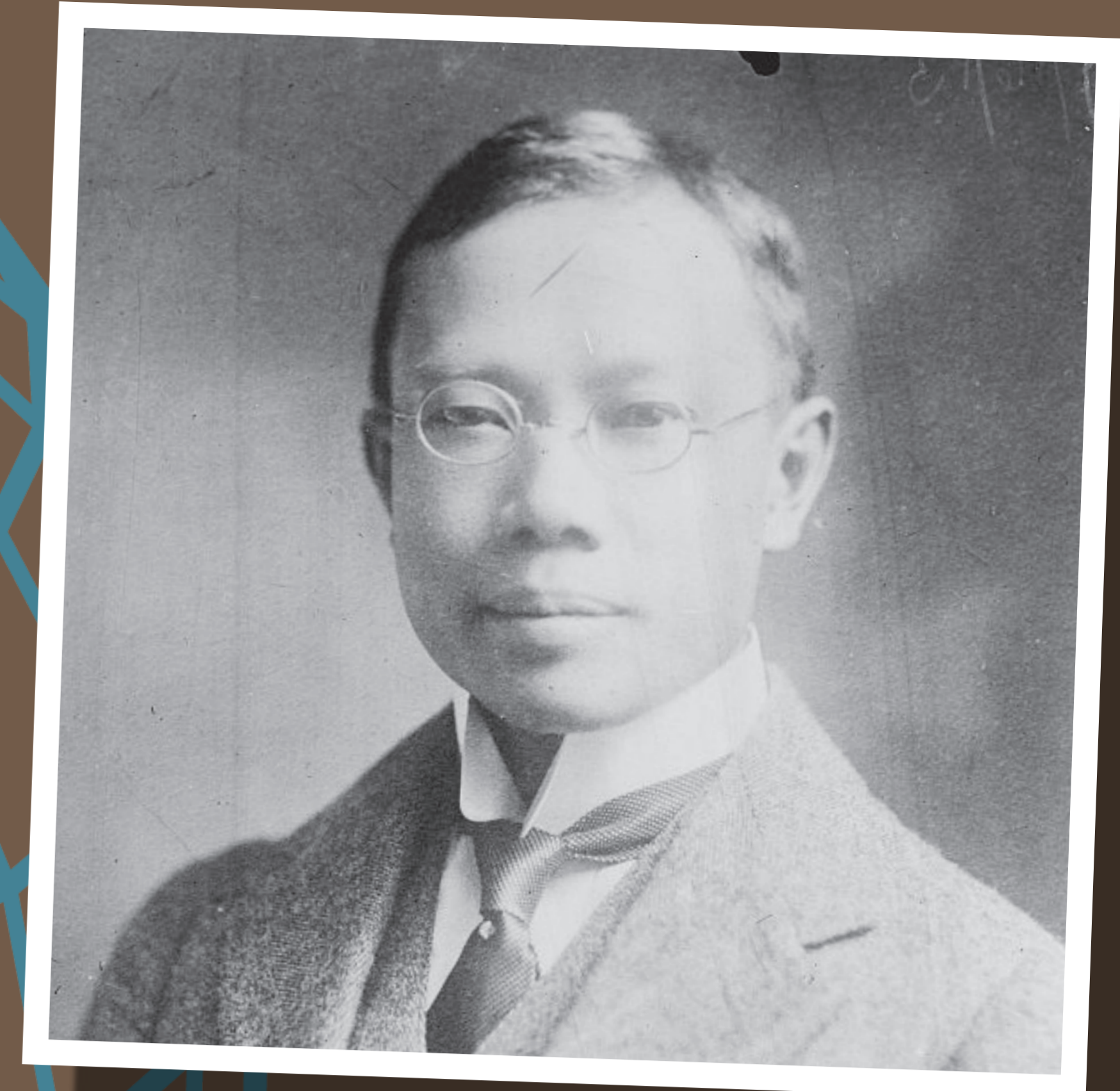
In 2015, to mark the hospital's centenary, Harefield hosted the largest gathering of heart transplant recipients in Europe

## DID YOU KNOW...

Major surgery on the heart and lungs – such as during a transplant – requires the use of an 'ECMO' heart-lung machine that takes over the body's blood circulation and oxygenation functions. Our specialism in this kind of work proved life-saving for many during the COVID-19 pandemic.



# World class, worldwide



Wu Lien-teh

Thanks to our reputation, we have a long history of attracting different cultures and nationalities to our hospital. In the early 1900s, Malayan Wu Lien-teh was a physician here, later making his name combatting plague and inventing the forerunner of the modern face mask.

The Maharajah of Nepal Sir Chandra Shum Shere Jung donated £1,000 to the Brompton in 1911 (about £150,000 today), after one of our doctors went on special service for the Nepalese government.

## DID YOU KNOW...

In 2023 we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush that brought 1,000 passengers from the West Indies to the UK. Many joined the NHS which launched just two weeks later.

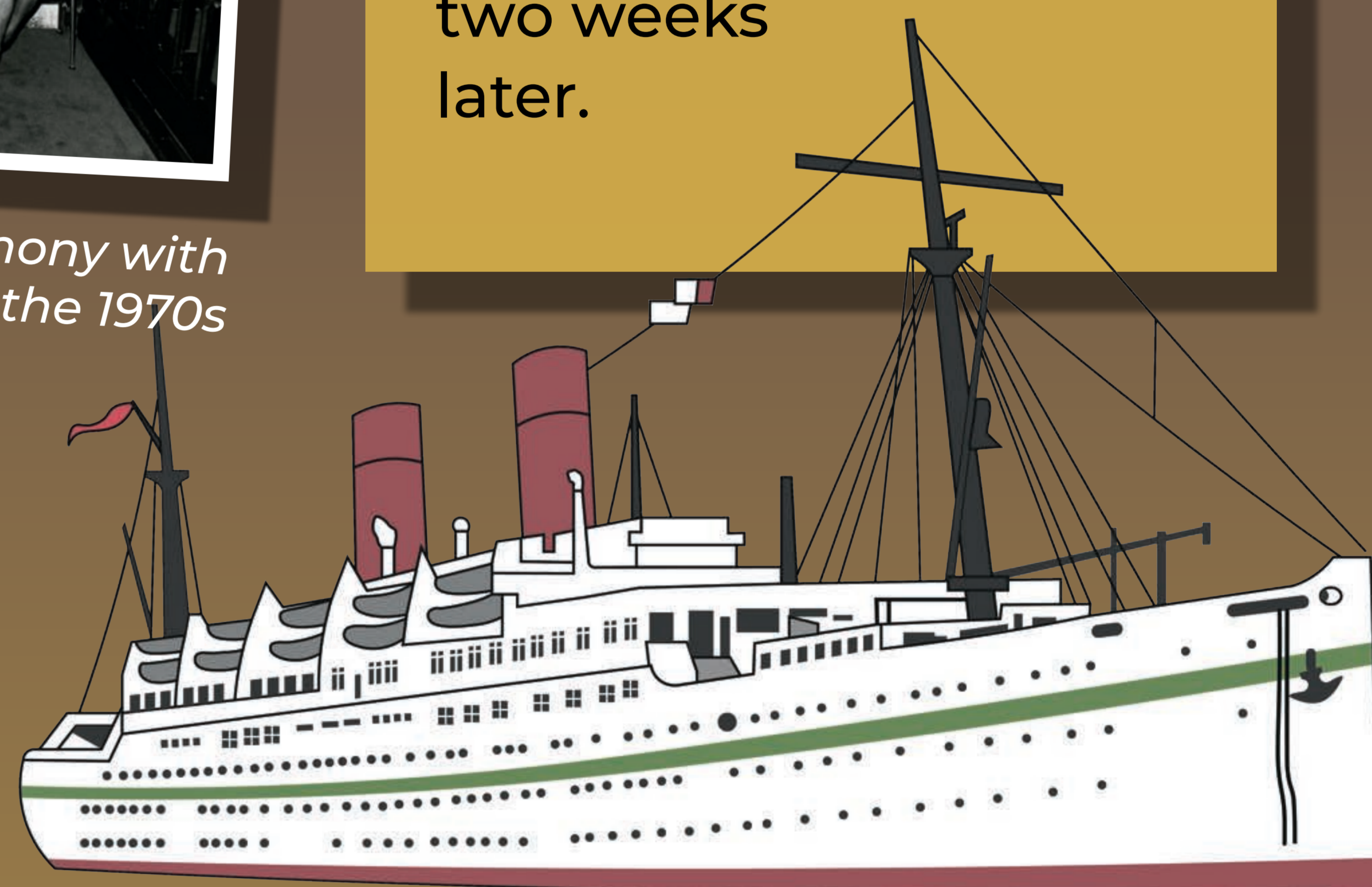


The Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa came here in 2023 to celebrate 'Portugal Day' with our staff



A nurses' prizegiving ceremony with Dame Cicely Saunders in the 1970s

In 1972, an international team of our porters from the Caribbean, Europe and North America won the Fulham League Cup and went on a tour of the Far East as the Brompton Amateur Football Club.



Today we have an incredibly diverse workforce, with particularly large communities from the Philippines, India, Nigeria and Portugal. We also have lively staff networks representing different ethnicities, sexual orientation and gender, and disability.

**“ The Brompton is like the United Nations. I have had cardiac consultants that are Syrian, Portuguese, Welsh, Hong Kongese, English, Greek, Italian, Palestinian... They've all come to the Brompton! ”**

*Baroness Betty Boothroyd, former Speaker of the House of Commons and one of our former patients*