



## Press Release

Issue date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**\*\*Photo Attached\*\***

# Trekkers Climb Mountains for RUH Cancer Care

Fourteen individuals from Bath, Bristol, Somerset and Wiltshire have returned home from an incredible ten day charity challenge trekking the Great Wall of China, to help raise funds for Cancer Care at the Royal United Hospital in Bath. As part of their ten day adventure, the trekkers scaled mountains and navigated unrestored and rarely visited sections of the Great Wall to follow its ancient path. Between them, the team has raised over an amazing £45,000 to help build a pioneering new Cancer Centre at the RUH that will transform care for patients and their families.

The team began their adventure in Beijing and journeyed through Huangyaguan, Jinshanling, Geubikou and Mutianyu, encountering all types of incredibly demanding terrain. Whilst some sections of the Wall have been extensively renovated there are many parts which have been left virtually untouched by modern man, which took the trekkers out of their comfort zones to experience the real Wall! Only two days were spent on the 'tourist' sections, with the remainder left to tackle the stony, steep and often slippery pathway that winds between watch towers, traditional farming villages, valleys and mountains. The days were varied with and on one day saw the team trekking for nine hours and on another they tackled a 200-step, near vertical ascent up 'Heaven's Ladder.' Whilst pushing themselves to their limits physically, the trek also had many rewards including the breathtaking views this ancient wonder has to offer.

The RUH trekkers, of which five are staff at the hospital, include Dr Dorothy Goddard who is Associate Medical Director for Cancer Strategy at the Trust, Dr Hugh Goddard, Rebecca Brooks, Karen Burge, Russell Corbett, Jacqueline Cousins, Sarah Leybourne, Paula Richards, Christine Walters, Sue Gilby, Sally Smith, Patricia Symons, Alex Whiting and Bidy Walcot.

As part of their Great Wall challenge each of the fourteen trekkers, who live and work locally, had a fundraising target to reach. In the months leading up to departure a flurry of fundraising activities have taken place to help them get there from cake sales, band nights, clothes swaps to raffles and a very apt Panda naming game – the adventure began before they even set foot in China!

For each member of the team, the trek has been a personal and life changing journey which has brought with it new experiences, friendships and a truly united effort for Cancer Care at the RUH.

Karen Burge, one member of the team from Midsomer Norton, explains her personal journey:

*"The most amazing and difficult thing I've ever done! We had laughter and tears and some great friendships were formed on the Great Wall of China. An unforgettable experience. This time four years ago I was having cancer treatment and struggled to get up the stairs in my house and I can't believe what I've just achieved! We arrived in China a group of strangers and came back a team. Everyone had their personal reasons for being there but all wanting to make a difference. Such an inspirational and wonderful group of people. I will always remember the last few days and how lucky I was to experience them."*

The Forever Friends Appeal's RUH Cancer Care Campaign is raising £8.5 million towards a pioneering Cancer Centre at The Royal United Hospital in Bath. This new Centre will transform the care for patients and their families affected by this life changing diagnosis. The hospital is planning on

replacing its outdated 1940s cancer facilities, with a state-of-the-art £23.5 million Cancer Centre (66% NHS funded / 33% charitable funds) fit for purpose that will bring treatment 'under one roof'.

Laura Pearce, Events Fundraiser for the Appeal comments: *"We are so proud and grateful to all of our China trekkers and those who have supported them throughout their fundraising. They have all worked incredibly hard, not only in taking on this physical, and often emotional, challenge but to help raise significant funds for the build of the new Cancer Centre - £45,000 is no easy feat! We hope that they have made memories and friendships that will last a lifetime, paired with the knowledge that each step they took on the Wall has got the RUH one step closer to a pioneering Cancer Centre"*

With the success of the China Trek, the Forever Friends Appeal are now looking for another group of adventurous fundraisers to take part in a trek to India in October 2015 - to discover the spiritual home of the Dalai Lama! For more information please give Laura a call on 01225 821535 or visit [www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk](http://www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk).

**-ends-**

### **Photo Attached:**

#### **RUH Trekkers on the Great Wall of China**

**Standing (from left to right): Russell Corbett, Christine Walters, Dr Hugh Goddard, Rebecca Brooks, Karen Burge, Paula Richards, Sarah Leybourne, Jacqueline Cousins, Biddy Walcot, Patricia Symons and Sally Smith**

**Seated (from left to right): Dr Dorothy Goddard, Sue Gilby and Alex Whiting**

**For further information, please contact Laura Pearce, Events Fundraiser for The Forever Friends Appeal on 01225 821535 / [laurapearce1@nhs.net](mailto:laurapearce1@nhs.net)**

## Notes to Editor:

The Forever Friends Appeal



### **The Forever Friends Appeal**

The Appeal has helped secure over £17 million to provide state-of-the-art equipment and facilities at the Royal United Hospital (RUH), Bath.

We continue to raise funds for all areas of the hospital (alongside our major campaign), under our recognised name and logo to ensure the best possible level of acute care to the 500,000 people in Bath & North East Somerset, Wiltshire and the Mendip area of Somerset.



### **RUH Cancer Care Campaign**

The Appeal's current major fundraising Campaign is raising a minimum of £8.5million towards the cost of a pioneering new Cancer Centre and Therapies development at the RUH - taking a holistic approach that is designed to produce a highly beneficial healing environment for patients and their families. The new Centre will transform RUH cancer services and provide the very best care for all our cancer patients and their families.

Through support from the public and major donations from The James Dyson Foundation & Medlock Charitable Trust, the Appeal have currently raised over £5.5million for the new Cancer Centre.

The Centre will be another jointly funded NHS / Charitable Funds partnership with the parties contributing c66% / 33% respectively.

**For more information, visit [www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk](http://www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk)**