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Communications Department
Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

Tel: 01225 826230 / 821459
Mobile: 07557 756658 (office hours)

Media Release

Ruh-tr.communicationsteam@nhs.net
www.ruh.nhs.uk
<https://twitter.com/RUHBath>

Historic art given pride of place at RUH

Historic artworks from the Mineral Water Hospital in Bath have been rehung and given pride of place in their new home – the recently-opened RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre at the RUH.

They include one of the RUH Trust's best-known and treasured paintings, by the artist W.T. Hoare, titled 'Dr Oliver and Mr Pierce examining patients with Paralysis, Rheumatism and leprosy'.

It is among five beautiful 18th century paintings from the Mineral Water Hospital, locally known as the Min, that have undergone expert conservation and restoration before being transferred to their new home.

Hetty Dupays, RUH Art and Design Manager, said: "The paintings are hugely important historically and aesthetically. Their restoration has been done wonderfully and they now look magnificent and perfectly in place in the new Centre."

The conservation treatment involved cleaning the oil paint and canvas, repairing the frames and fitting the paintings with a museum-grade UV acrylic glazing.

The glazing will protect them from UV light and pollutants, allowing them to be safely installed in the new Centre where patients, visitors and staff can continue to experience and enjoy the rich cultural heritage of our city's medical past.

The Dr Oliver painting now hangs in the new rheumatology reception area of the Centre. The others are displayed in prominent positions on the main stairway and the seminar room of the building. They are:

- Portrait of Henry Wright by William Hoare
- Mr John Morris, first apothecary, by English School 18th century
- Hygeia, by William Hoare
- Sir William Cockburn, attributed to Thomas Barker of Bath

It's acknowledged that art can benefit patient care and even shorten length of stay in hospital.

The historic paintings join modern artworks that have been specially commissioned, including a geographical timeline tracing the route of Bath's hot springs, decorated glass panels depicting local landscapes and hydrotherapy designs, heritage wallpaper and contemporary images interpreting present-day practice.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now building a purpose-built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and working towards new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk

