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Media Release

Hamish Mackie's Swifts sculpture begins to take flight

British wildlife sculptor Hamish Mackie has shared a glimpse into his workshop, where he is busy on a sculpture commission for the new Dyson Cancer Centre at the Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH) NHS Foundation Trust.

Entitled 'Swifts' and representing a pair of swifts in flight, the sculpture will form part of the inpatient courtyard in the new centre. [The video](#), filmed in Hamish's studio in Oxfordshire, shows the internationally renowned British sculptor making the armature – a framework around which a sculpture is built.

The armature has been designed to come apart, allowing Hamish to work on the swifts individually from all angles. The next stage will be to sculpt the original in plasticine and capture the aerodynamic and fast moving nature of these beautiful birds.

The final larger than life sculpture will be cast into bronze and mounted on a limestone plinth where it will form a focal point for the open air first floor courtyard in the centre.

Hamish Mackie said: "Swifts have a well-deserved reputation for being aeronautical masters of speed and precision flying. A migratory bird, they cover huge distances every year of around 200,000km. They even sleep and mate on the wing, remaining in the air for many months at a time. Swifts are monogamous and visit the UK in summer to breed and then winter in Africa. They have long scythe-shaped wings and a forked tail.

"With this sculpture I wanted to convey a sense of freedom, of thermals and high-speed flight paths. The understanding of their long journey to Britain every year and the happiness seeing them evokes, makes them the ultimate symbol of hope. They are the perfect bird to sculpt for the new Dyson Cancer Centre at the RUH."

This special artwork has been made possible through a kind donation from a local individual who is a long term supporter of the Trust's charity RUHX and wishes to remain anonymous.

The use of natural light, external spaces, greenery and artwork are all known to have a positive effect on healing and overall patient experience and have been incorporated into the design of the centre, based around a land, water and sky theme.

The new Dyson Cancer Centre will provide a cancer services hub for half a million people in the South West and remains on track to open for patients in autumn 2023. The purpose built centre will bring together the majority of the RUH's cancer services, including research, under one roof, providing oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services and a 22-bed inpatient ward. Keep up to date with the latest progress on our website www.ruh.nhs.uk/dysoncancercentre or check our social media accounts @RUHBath

Ends

Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

We're currently building a new Cancer Centre at the RUH. The Dyson Cancer Centre, which is set to open in autumn 2023, will help transform the care we provide for patients, families and carers.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

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