



Dear Friends of the Barbara Bus Fund,  
Seasons' greetings and a very warm welcome to our 2017  
Christmas Newsletter.

We hope you enjoy reading the new and extended layout  
with all the news we have to share with you.

## *"Helping wheelchair users to get out and about since 1968"*

### **Greeting from the Chairman – Richard Holland MBE**

In 1998 I became Chairman of the Barbara Bus Fund having served as a Trustee for 2 years. At this time the Fund's first employee, Coordinator Julia Pryor, worked from home whilst the vehicles remained based at the RNOH.

Over the years I have seen many changes in Charity regulations, but the bigger change has been the increase in demand for the services of the Barbara Bus Fund. Although the Fund carries out many journeys for non-medical reasons, the number of medical appointments that vehicles are used for continues to grow. Passengers tell us that they would be unable to get to important medical appointments without the unique service the Fund provides.

We made a conscious decision as Trustees in recent years to expand the fleet size and also have vehicles strategically placed across the UK, enabling as many people as possible to access our services both within hospitals and the local community. As a result, in addition to an increased fleet size at our Head Office at the RNOH where the majority of vehicles are based, we now have satellite operations in Wales, Yorkshire, Sheffield and Buckinghamshire.

It is evident that my Aunt, Barbara, had incredible foresight and with the support of many people started the Barbara Bus Fund. Initially Barbara wanted to help fellow patients to get out of the hospital and visit family and friends for social events and trips. If she could see now how the Fund is supporting so many people in the many different ways it does, she would be so happy. The Fund has developed and expanded over the years whilst maintaining the original ethos. Thank you to everyone who supports the Fund and makes it all happen.



### **Greeting from the Co-ordinator and Office Team**

We would like to thank absolutely everyone who has supported the Barbara Bus Fund this year. The list is long and the thanks are heartfelt. We could not provide this service without every one of you who donates; promotes; uses; maintains, cleans and repairs; drives; provides administration and operational support; and those who make our day all the better and make us smile.

The Barbara Bus Fund is not only for use to attend medical appointments it is for doing the things you want to do. Some of the journeys we have made possible this year are: [family events](#) | [weddings](#) | [funerals](#) | [sporting events](#) | [theatre](#) | [cinema](#) | [music events](#) | [holidays – transport to the venue and airports](#) | [respite care](#) | [shopping](#) | [therapy](#) | [swimming](#) | [gym](#) | attractions including Buckingham Palace, [Lavender Gardens in Hitchin](#), RAF Museum, [Aerobility](#) | [casino](#) | [hairstylists](#)

This year from November 2016 to October 2017 saw 1090 volunteer drives carried out by our ever-dedicated volunteer drivers and 2051 self-drives.

We are very much looking forward to what 2018 will bring and continuing to help you, your family and friends to get out and about.

With all our very good wishes from *Maxine, Irene and Melanie*



**News from the National Spinal Injuries Unit at Stoke Mandeville Hospital:** The first satellite branch to be opened by the Barbara Bus Fund in August 2006, "BARBARA" is the bus based at Stoke Mandeville hospital and is available for use by inpatients. BARBARA is a Vauxhall Vivaro adapted to carry 2 wheelchairs, 4 passengers plus the driver. One of our passengers Charlotte Simcock has been piloting a new scheme with Dogs for Good where a dog, in this case 'Danny', comes with his specialist handler from Dogs for Good once a week to aid with Charlotte's recovery. Read more here:

<https://www.dogsforgood.org/2017/04/pilot-scheme-to-see-how-dogs-can-help-aid-patients-rehabilitation/>

We would like to thank the NHS staff and volunteers for their continued support in the operation of this branch and much needed vehicle.



***"Thank you for the loan of your bus, it was a great help"***

**News from David at Barbara Bus Gwynedd, North Wales:** North Wales was the second Barbara Bus Fund satellite branch to open in April 2009 and continues to go from strength to strength, planning to expand to another branch with a location in Bangor or on the island of Anglesey, the better to serve residents in the northern areas of Wales. We are currently researching the options for a suitable secure, readily accessible base for the vehicle.

A local regular user of the Welsh vehicles has expressed enthusiasm for helping to set up this new branch and we look forward to expanding the work of the Barbara Bus Fund as soon as possible.

The current three vehicles are based around the local community in Gwynedd.

*Photograph:* Our very first Gwynedd Barbara Bus with Pauline Jones and her helper arriving at the Porthmadog Independent Living Centre for a day of socialising and craftwork.



***"Thank you for the loan of GEORGE to go up to Nottingham for the National league football weekend"***

**News from Peter at The Spinal Unit Recreational Fund (SURF) at Pinderfields Hospital, Wakefield:** The Barbara Bus Fund took over ownership and management of the vehicle "ALEX" and opened its third satellite branch in November 2010. "ALEX" is a Citroen Dispatch converted to carry one wheelchair, 5 passengers plus the driver. The vehicle was generously donated to SURF by the family of an ex patient who had died. SURF was unable to operate the vehicle so approached BBF and here we are, 7 years on and still able to provide invaluable transport for passengers in the Spinal Injuries Rehab Unit and Regional Spinal Injuries Centre. We are enormously grateful to Peter Hanley for his continued dedication and support in looking after this branch.



***"Sending all good wishes to everyone involved with Barbara Bus and many thanks for all the very necessary and wonderful work you do in keeping the Fund going and bringing more joy into the lives of people like my sister"***

**News from the Princess Royal Spinal Cord Injuries Centre at The Northern General Hospital, Sheffield:** We are very excited to announce that the Barbara Bus Fund is right now opening its *fourth* satellite branch at the Princess Royal Spinal Cord Injuries Centre. We are very grateful to Julia Pryor, former Co-ordinator, for effectively project managing this fantastic expansion opportunity and we hope to hand over the new vehicle "BILL" as we go to print. BILL is a new Ford Tourneo Connect, the same specification as our new Fords at Stanmore and is available for use by inpatients. It is named after Bill Seaton, one of the first volunteer drivers and good friend of Barbara.

You can read more at: [www.barbarabus.com](http://www.barbarabus.com) and go to locations.



### News throughout the past year



**November 2016** The Barbara Bus Fund attended a Quiz hosted by the Pinner Tangent club which raised a fantastic £300 for the Fund – thank you so much to all who supported us and what a fun night we had! We fielded two teams; one of 6 and one of 5 and held our own. Teams were made up of staff, volunteer drivers, trustees, relatives of passengers and other 'friends'.

***"Without Barbara Bus there would be no way of transporting the ladies around so I would very much like to thank you and all concerned who work so diligently to provide this wonderful and uplifting service"***

**December 2016** Busy, busy days! We received 28 vehicle requests for 10 vehicles over the Christmas period and worked tirelessly to enable as many passengers to have their requested booking dates.

***"We wish to thank you for all the help you continue to give us on Christmas Day when we provide a Christmas Lunch for the elderly, disabled and lonely residents of Pinner"***

**January 2017** We had our annual drivers' meal at Fellini in Hatch End which was well attended by nearly all drivers, office staff and trustees. This annual get-together is a small token of our appreciation for all the time and dedication our drivers so generously give to our passengers and the Barbara Bus Fund.



### One of our very enjoyable Volunteer Driver afternoon tea events.

If you have some free time, would like to assist in supporting those less mobile and want join our happy and generous team of volunteer drivers, please contact the office for more information.

You never know, you may just find those friendships and team spirit you didn't even know you were waiting for!

T: 020 8416 0733 [office@barbarabus.com](mailto:office@barbarabus.com)

**April** On 22<sup>nd</sup> April we attended the second RNOH open day where we had a small stand. The RNOH is a recognised world leader in the field of orthopaedics and neuro-musculoskeletal medicine and treats more than 120,000 patients a year for conditions ranging from acute spinal injuries to sarcoma.

*Photograph:* Ted and Adrian, two of our volunteer drivers kindly ferried visitors with limited mobility around the hospital for the various tours, followed by a well-earned rest!



**July** We joined other charities from the RNOH at the Stanmore Village Fete and the Buttercup Walk held annually at the RNOH. This year it was based in the playing field behind Orthotics over the road from our offices. The original Buttercup Day took place in the 1930s, when local children picked buttercups from the countryside and sold them in central London to raise funds for the hospital. If you would like to join in next year keep an eye on <http://www.rnohcharity.org/the-buttercup-walk/index>.

**Summer** What a very busy summer we all had with passengers using vehicles to travel to France, the Republic of Ireland and all over the UK – from Scotland to Cornwall to Kent, Wales and East Anglia. As well as ensuring staff in the office didn't overheat in the most unusually hot weather at the beginning of the summer, we worked hard to facilitate as many journey and booking requests as possible. Unfortunately due to overwhelming demand we were not able to fulfil every request we received.

**September** We were ever so pleased to welcome our new "ROSE" bus funded by the #RowforRob campaign which was delivered in September and immediately took its inaugural journey with Rob himself. Read more overleaf about the challenge. ROSE is a Renault Master which can carry 3 wheelchairs, 4 passengers plus the driver. Supplied by WarnerBus of Bedford, ROSE is a very high quality and specification conversion. Old ROSE has gone on to pastures new and been purchased by one of our Friends, good luck ROSE and new family!

The RNOH Volunteers generously put on a thank you event for the Barbara Bus Fund, The Disability Foundation and Radio Brockley in recognition and thanks to all the volunteers without whom these organisations would struggle to operate. We were treated to delicious food, great music and a wonderful display from the New Strathspey School of Dancing Highland Dancers.



*"Our grandson and ourselves would like to say a big "THANK YOU" for using FRANKIE it made all the difference. Our children had a wonderful holiday and Barbara Bus helped to make it"*



**October** Sylvia, one of our Trustees, and Maxine attended the QEF – Queen Elizabeth Foundation's Mobility Event in Carshalton, Surrey. [www.qef.org.uk](http://www.qef.org.uk) - keep an eye on their website for details of further years' events. QEF provides a wealth of information and services for anyone with mobility difficulties.

We held our Afternoon Tea fundraising event and were hugely entertained by a performance by One Voice Watford community choir. Thanks to the generosity of all who attended we raised a whopping £402. Further information and photographs from the day can be found on our website.



*"Thank you for arranging transport for both dates so my mum could attend her granddaughter's wedding, your kindness is much appreciated"*





**December** The office will be closed from 1200 Friday 22 December 2017 and will reopen on Tuesday 2 January 2018. There will be no volunteer driven service during this time. There will be an emergency number which can be found on the office answerphone and can be used in case of emergency. For all bookings please leave a message on the office answerphone.

**Reminder:** bookings for the Christmas period open on 1 September 2018. Bookings cannot be guaranteed but we will do our very best to make sure as many of you as possible are able to have use of a vehicle.

*"We would like to thank you on behalf of our residents for without your assistance we would not be able to take them out on trips outside of the home"*

## Fundraising

We are enormously grateful to the RAF Physical Training Instructors and colleagues for completing their 'Row for Rob' challenge. Each RAF base taking part rowed a total of 210,116 kilometres. Corporal Robert Bugden was injured during a parachute training exercise in the US on 21.01.16, which is where the idea for the distance of the row came from. Having set a massive target of £32,000, in March and April they dug deep and raised a staggering £34,590 108% of their £32,000 target, an outstanding achievement. Funds were raised to support a new wheelchair accessible vehicle to be based at Barbara Bus Fund Head Office at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore. You can read more about the challenge on our JustGiving and Twitter pages: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Physical-Training-Instructors> and <https://twitter.com/hashtag/rowforrob>

Tom Kingsnorth ran the London Marathon and The Snowdonia Marathon and raised £275 for the Barbara Bus Fund in support of the Row for Rob campaign – heartfelt thanks Tom for your support and congratulations for completing both marathons. You can read more at: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tom-kingsnorth-barbara-bus-fund>

**Hospital Redevelopment** We continue to watch the transformation of the new hospital build. Most of the buildings on the Stanmore site date back to at least the 1940s, with some even older than that. This first phase is due for completion August 2018 and you can read more about what is happening here: <https://www.rnoh.nhs.uk/about-us/stanmore-redevelopment>.

Please remember to look at the gallery page on our website where we would be delighted to display your photographs and stories, please do send them to us with your permission slip (available from the office) confirming that we can use them.

Donations can be made via our Just Giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/bbf> or by cash or cheque at the office.

## Next year the Barbara Bus Fund will be celebrating 50 fantastic years

We will be organising a celebratory event to remember Barbara and give thanks for her vision and determination



Barbara and her first "Barbara Bus"



Follow us: [www.barbarabus.com](http://www.barbarabus.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Barbara-Bus-Fund-1248706611874500/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/barbarabusfund>

## Seasons' Greetings and best wishes for 2018

**Barbara Bus Fund** | Louis Fleischmann Building | Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital |

Brockley Hill | Stanmore | Middlesex | HA7 4LP | T: 020 8416 0733 | [www.barbarabus.com](http://www.barbarabus.com) | [office@barbarabus.com](mailto:office@barbarabus.com)