

HEART TO HEART

ISSUE 2 DECEMBER 2009

Friends of Baird – Steve Suttor

Our fundraising efforts this year reconnected us to a former Sydney Cardiothoracic Surgeons patient - Steve Suttor. Steve is a keen supporter of The Baird Institute, and he offered to share his story with us.

“My illness, a spontaneous pneumothorax, occurred when I was 15. The operation - a pleurodesis - causes the membranes around the lung to stick together and prevents the build-up of fluid in the space between the membranes. The operation was conducted 20 years ago at St George Hospital.

“I had further surgery in 1991 at Strathfield Hospital where they inserted a tube into my left lung and a yellow liquid went into my lung cavity. This was supposed to make the lung stick to the side, therefore preventing it from collapsing. So my lungs are permanently stuck together at the top on both sides.

“Basically I almost died twice. I owe my life to the doctors and nurses who worked to save my life. I am forever in their debt for still being alive - so I want to do something to

give back to the medical profession, especially in the heart-lung field. To me, if it wasn't for their skill and technology, I wouldn't be here.

“The Baird Institute is the only organisation that does specific research into cardiothoracic surgical techniques. This research will result in better treatment, better procedures and overall a better recovery for all the people who face these diseases every day. For me, the choice to support such an organisation and to help them fundraise for their research work is obvious.”

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

2009 has been an extremely busy year for The Baird Institute.

We have maintained our focus on mesothelioma and heart failure and with support from two of our major research partners, Medtronic and St Jude we are able to offer two new scholarships commencing in 2010.

Our Medtronic Scholarship will focus on clinical or laboratory based research into the mechanisms and management of heart failure. While our St Jude Scholarship will continue the work we have been doing for the last 2 years on the development of novel bio-compatible bypass conduits and their surgical application.

Dr Michael Byrom who is the current St Jude Scholarship holder is profiled in this edition of Heart to Heart.

At The Baird Institute we are fortunate to have many dedicated and caring people willing to support our work and we are very appreciative of all their efforts.

I would particularly like to thank Steve, Michele and Jamie Dallimore for all their hard work organising the very successful night **Blues for Baird** in Nowra and Mrs Pat Johnson for her year-long fundraising in Mudgee culminating in the **Mudgee Ball**.

Jamie Dallimore was born with a heart condition known as aortic stenosis. Earlier this year I conducted open heart surgery replacing his faulty heart valve with a mechanical one. The surgery was a success and Jamie has recovered perfectly. You can read

more about Jamie's story in this edition.

Despite the economic challenges of 2009 we have been fortunate to have a number of corporate supporters coming to our fundraising assistance. Our very sincere thanks go to each of these organisations for their generosity and support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new **Partners in Research**. Future Focus, our regular donor program, has seen a number of our donors deciding to donate each month and become a Partner in Research. Our sincere thanks to you all for your regular support.

The work of The Baird Institute is only possible due to you – our donors - I would like to thank each and every one of you for your continuing support.

Season's Greetings and best wishes for 2010.



**Professor Paul Bannon
PhD MBBS FRACS
Chairman**



New Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery

Congratulations go to The Baird Institute's Chairman, Professor Paul Bannon, who earlier this year was appointed Professor and Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Surgery, Central Clinical School at Sydney University. Paul holds the first Chair in Cardiothoracic Surgery at Sydney University.



Paul Bannon and Lucy Bannon

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Heart and Lung Research Update -

Meet our extraordinary Clinical Trials Coordinators!

Catherine Powell and **Lisa Turner** both have a background of Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Nursing and have worked at Strathfield Private Hospital and RPAH over the last 12 years.

The Cardiothoracic Clinical Trials Coordinator role was established in 2003 when Catherine was employed with the commencement of the Warfarin SMART Study and the updating of the Patient Warfarin Education Clinic. In 2004 Lisa joined Catherine and the role has grown into the comprehensive role it is today.

Clinical Trials Coordination is an important role and forms an integral part of our research work. Clinical Trials are research programs conducted with patients to evaluate a new medical treatment, drug, or device. The purpose of clinical trials is to find new and improved methods of treating different diseases and special conditions.

Clinical Trials Management involves a number of activities including: ethics applications and reports; engagement and recruitment of consenting patients; coordination of trial randomisation; trial administration

including data entry, follow up with patients and liaison with sponsors.

Currently, Lisa and Catherine are managing four clinical trials:

- ♦ **Warfarin SMART Study** - a Self Management of Anticoagulation Research Study in collaboration with ROCHE Diagnostics
- ♦ **ATACAS - (Aspirin and Tranexamic Acid for Coronary Artery Surgery)** - an International multicenter randomised trial looking at the use of Aspirin and Tranexamic acid in coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery
- ♦ **NOVEL** - this is a Temporary IVC Filter and the First-in-Man trial in collaboration with the RPAH Vascular Surgery Department and NOVATE
- ♦ **CORONARY** - Comparing the outcome of On Pump and Off Pump Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery

In addition to the clinical trials coordination Lisa and Catherine manage two large databases. The **RPAH Cardiothoracic Surgery** database provides reports to the



Catherine Powell and Lisa Turner

Australasian Society for Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons). This database assists the continuing monitoring of patient outcomes in our area of speciality.

The **Heart Failure Surgery Database** collects information that may improve the treatment for patients who have had surgery for heart failure.

Finally, Lisa and Catherine also manage the **Warfarin Education Clinic**. All RPAH patients who require warfarin have access to the Education Clinic. This is a one on one education session covering all aspects of safe anticoagulation management. The majority of these patients are referred by the Cardiothoracic Department.

How your Support Helps – Jamie’s Story

Jamie Dallimore was first diagnosed with aortic stenosis as a young child. The family GP, Dr Andrew Bonney, first picked up Jamie’s heart murmur when he was one about one year old. As a result, he has been seeing a cardiologist all his life to monitor the progress of his heart condition.

Just before Christmas last year Jamie was told he had between one and five years to live unless he had surgery for this heart condition.

“I got a big pit in my stomach when I heard what the doctor said. I had no symptoms, only shortness of breath, so you wouldn’t know,” said Jamie.

“Going to see Paul Bannon for the first time was a fairly daunting experience. We knew we were there to discuss the process of the operation, so he gave us the full impact of what surgery would involve and made it all so real,” said Michele Dallimore, Jamie’s Mum.

“Before that, we were able to keep it at arms length, so to speak. It was very confronting and emotional for all of us. BUT we all walked away having

full confidence in Paul as a surgeon. If Jamie had to be operated on, we were happy to have this guy do it.

“We now see the results of the surgery and how well Jamie has recovered and we know that it has a lot to do with the skill of the surgeon and his team and the care Jamie received while he was in hospital. We will be forever grateful to Paul and his team and the staff at Strathfield Private Hospital for looking after Jamie so well.”

“We feel overwhelming gratitude because they have given our son a second chance at life,” Michele added.

The surgery was a tremendous success and Jamie is now getting on with his life. He has just been accepted to study Nursing at the University of Tasmania at their Darlinghurst Campus and he will be attached to St Vincent’s and Mater Hospitals. Jamie now feels he can start his life afresh.

That gratitude prompted the Dallimores to want to give something back. Jamie, Steve, Jamie’s Dad and

his two older brothers, Tim and Jono, are all keen musicians. They came up with the idea of pooling their talents and joining with other musician friends to put on a blues concert to raise money for The Baird Institute. This was a tremendously successful event raising nearly \$7000!

Jamie is on a bit of a high at the moment. He turned nineteen in October and was heard to say “I am so happy I made it to 19!”. He has now passed the six month anniversary date of his operation - a very big milestone.

Our best wishes go to Jamie, and our most sincere thanks to the Dallimore Family for all their support and generosity.



Jamie Dallimore

Meet our Scholarship Holders

TRISTAN YAN

Tristan has been appointed a Cardiothoracic Surgical Training Post at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) for 2009 and 2010. At the same time he will be involved in the research of malignant pleural mesothelioma (MPM) for The Baird Institute, under the guidance of Professors Paul Bannon and Brian McCaughan. Tristan is the inaugural Slater & Gordon Research Scholarship recipient.

Tristan was born in Beijing and came to Australia when he was 17. He graduated from the University of New South Wales, with Bachelor of Science (Medicine), Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in 2004. As soon as he completed his Internship Training at the St George Hospital in 2005, he went on to work with a prominent surgeon, Dr Paul H. Sugarbaker, for one year at the Washington Cancer Institute in

Washington DC, where he completed his Surgical Oncology Research Fellowship in Peritoneal Mesothelioma.

In 2007 he returned to Sydney and graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Surgery at the University of New South Wales. Tristan has made a major contribution to the literature in the field of Surgical Oncology. At the end of 2007, he was ranked 1st for Cardiothoracic Surgical Training and 2nd for General Surgical Training among all applicants in Australia and New Zealand.

Tristan is indebted to his surgical mentors. He appreciates Professor David Morris who taught him how to care for patients and introduced him into the fascinating world of academic surgery, which is the link between medical science and the patient's bedside.

Tristan's research for The Baird Institute is two fold. First, he will

perform a detailed analysis of clinico-pathologic and treatment-related data in a cohort of 540 patients with MPM to determine the safety and efficacy of surgery, adjuvant chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Second, he will work closely with senior colleagues to establish a tissue bank and identify potential biomarkers in order to stratify and individualize treatment therapies for mesothelioma patients.

This is only Tristan's fourth year out of medical school and indeed it has been a fast track for him, but he understands that this is just the beginning.



Tristan Yan

MICHAEL BYROM

Michael Byrom is our inaugural St Jude Research Scholarship holder, due to complete his work with us in December 2009. The aim of his work is to develop a novel vascular bypass conduit using synthetic human elastin.

Michael came from New Zealand, half-way through his 6 year training in cardiothoracic surgery. He moved to Sydney with his pregnant wife in January 2007 to undertake a PhD at the University of Sydney.

His research is a collaboration between many fields including cardiothoracic surgery, cardiology, biochemistry, and physics, with the aim of developing new conduits for use in vascular bypass surgery.

The key challenges in his work involved developing methods to study and use elastin, an important protein in the body which has only recently become available for research use.

The benefits and opportunities from undertaking the research are numerous including:

- + The opportunity to explore an exciting area of active research in vascular surgery - the development of improved vascular conduits - in order to address a huge unmet need for patients who require surgery to bypass occluded vessels
- + Experience in applying tech-

niques in basic science developed in the laboratory to design materials that can then be taken from 'bench to bedside' and applied to clinical problems in patients

- + Exposure to the way the surgeons in the Sydney Cardiothoracic Surgeons group incorporate research in their clinical practice to develop a career in academic surgery.

"Overall the experience has been extremely positive and rewarding. Despite the challenges of moving to a new country we settled in quickly and have thoroughly enjoyed the warm (sometimes hot!) climate and the friendliness of people we have met along the way. The structure provided



Michael Byrom and his family

through Prof Paul Bannon at The Baird Institute has provided me with a wealth of opportunities to pursue my interest in surgical research and to develop the skills and experience needed to continue this interest as a career in academic surgery."

Fundraising Activities - Thank You!

Our sincere thanks go to all our supporters

- + Merrill Lynch
- + Medtronic
- + Slater & Gordon
- + Mrs Pat Johnson
- + Boston Scientific
- + The Ingham Family
- + The Biaggio Signorelli Foundation
- + Baxter BioSurgery
- + The Dallimore Family



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The Board

During 2009 the Board welcomed two new members:

- ♦ **Ms Joanne Wade**, Asbestos Practice Group, Practice Group Leader, Slater & Gordon and
- ♦ **Professor Jeffrey Braithwaite**, Director, The Centre for Clinical Governance Research in Health, Faculty of Medicine at UNSW.

2009 has also seen the retirement from the Board of Mr Warren Ryan, Ms Odette Gourley and Mr Neill Whiston. We thank Warren, Odette and Neill most sincerely for their contribution to TBI over the last few years. Warren held the position of Executive Director for some time and we thank him for all that he has done in support of our work. We look forward to Warren, Odette and Neill staying on as friends of TBI!

Meet Jean Haavasalu, Administration Manager

Jean joined The Baird Institute in May 2008 as part-time bookkeeper. She now works very closely with Michelle managing all the financial accounts preparation and all the documentation associated with fundraising!

"I have had a long career in accounting, with two diversions into nursing, thwarted by shift work. When I left my previous full time position as the Central Accountant for a large private company in the southern highlands in 2005, I thought, what a good opportunity to retire! But one evening, I was idly searching the field of available jobs on the internet and wow, there was a lovely sounding part-time job, flexible hours, for a "Part time bookkeeper" at Newtown where I have accommodation.

"It was a lovely surprise to find that The Baird Institute involved heart and lung surgeons. My mother had had a long association with RPAH and heart surgery since the 1950s, when she was taken to RPAH thinking she was dying, with our local country doctor saying it was "just nerves". Mr Nicks was the wonderful surgeon then, and over the years she had a number of heart operations, all under Mr Nicks except for the last one, by a surgeon whose name I did not remember. Mum passed away at 76 years of age in 1992, having decided "no more operations".

"After settling in at the Institute, I asked if any old records were kept of patients from years back. Eleanor Harvey, the SCTS Practice Manager, looked it up and yes, Mum was actually in their database and her last operation was under Prof. Baird himself! And here I was all these years later, at The Baird Institute."



Become a Partner in Research and join Future Focus today!

A regular tax deductible gift of \$15 or more per month entitles you to become a **Partner in Research**. Your regular gift every month will ensure that we have the necessary funds available to help ordinary people as they battle unexpected, life-threatening diseases of the heart and lungs.

Please join Future Focus and become a Partner in Research today! As a Partner in Research you will receive regular research updates and invitations to special Baird Institute events. Please accept this key ring as a token of our appreciation when you join Future Focus.

For more information please contact Michelle Sloane, Executive Director on 9550 2350 or 0412 267 828



**ON BEHALF OF ALL THE TEAM AT THE BAIRD INSTITUTE
WE WISH YOU ALL THE VERY BEST FOR CHRISTMAS,
THE NEW YEAR AND THE HOLIDAY SEASON.**