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The **RMBF** Newsletter

## The Vital Signs in Primary Care New guide gives advice for GPs seeking help with work stress

**We are pleased to announce the release of our new guide, *The Vital Signs in Primary Care*, which is designed to help General Practitioners who are struggling with stress and pressure at work.**

Written by Dr Richard Stevens of Thames Valley Professional Support Unit, the free downloadable guide provides practical advice and guidance, as well as signposting support and resources for those experiencing stress and difficulty during their work in primary care.

The guide is an expanded, GP-specific update of *The Vital Signs*, released earlier this year as part of our What's Up Doc? campaign, which highlighted the increasing pressure and scrutiny faced by doctors across the UK.

Steve Crone, RMBF Chief Executive, said: "GPs experience stress at work just like everyone else, but we know that many are afraid or unwilling to seek help. With this guide, we want to provide useful advice and information, but also to break the stigma associated with seeking support, and encourage doctors to come forward when they are

facing stress and pressure in the workplace."

In the guide, Dr Stevens sets out some of the reasons why doctors often find it difficult to seek help, and how this is exacerbated by a difficult climate in the modern medical profession.

Advice and information is provided on many aspects of self-care and wellbeing, including:

- Prevention
- Common trigger points
- Early warning signs
- Professional development

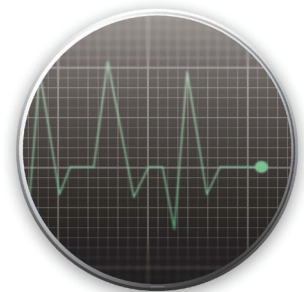
The *Vital Signs in General Practice* was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> October, at the Royal College of General Practitioners Annual Conference in Harrogate. All delegates were provided with a copy of the guide to read and share with their colleagues.

So far, response to the guide has been very positive, with the download being widely shared on websites and social media. Please do share the link with anyone you feel could benefit.

[www.rmbf.org/pages/vital-signs.html](http://www.rmbf.org/pages/vital-signs.html)

### The Vital Signs in Primary Care

A guide for GPs seeking help and advice



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# CEO update

Steve Crone | RMBF Chief Executive



## 2016 has been a year of growth for the RMBF.

As well as providing more direct financial help to our beneficiaries, and reaching more doctors in need of support, we have also launched new initiatives and strengthened our current programmes to ensure we are having the biggest possible positive impact on the medical profession.

### Providing more support

Alongside our new projects and initiatives, our core work of providing financial support to those in need continues to grow. In the first five months of the new financial year, we have seen an increase of over 80% in grant payments, compared to the same period last year. I am pleased to say that our Trustees have committed to support increased grants expenditure this year so that we can help more doctors, medical students and families in need.

This extra expenditure is in part due to an increased number of applications compared with last year, which suggests our awareness-raising activities, including our *What's Up Doc?* campaign earlier this year, are having a positive effect. The enthusiasm of our supporters in spreading the word has also been invaluable in ensuring we reach more of those who could benefit from our help.

We have also recently teamed up with the debt advice charity StepChange. For some time we have offered a dedicated money advice service to our beneficiaries. Now, with support from StepChange, we are also able to offer money advice to those who may not meet our eligibility criteria for direct financial support.

### Medical Students

As reported in our recent annual review, we are changing the financial support we provide to medical students, now offering grants instead of loans.

As well as this significant change, which we hope will encourage more students to

approach us for help, we are developing our Medical Student Programme by forging more links with medical schools. Our aim is to have a named RMBF Medical Liaison Officer for every medical school in the country, who can provide resources and information to students in need.

We had a very useful meeting with the Medical Schools Council recently, and we look forward to working closely with them as we develop the programme.

Our thanks also to the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland, who are kindly supporting the expansion of this programme.

### Anniversary year

The RMBF has now been at the heart of the medical profession for 180 years, and to celebrate this we will be organising an anniversary event and other activities over the course of this special year. To stay informed about our latest activities as they develop, please sign up to our e-bulletin via the website.

We look forward to celebrating this anniversary with our supporters. You can also find a look back at the charity's rich history on page 7 of this issue.

### Staff and Board update

Caseworker Faye Ibbitson is moving to a new role at the Turn2Us charity after four years' excellent service at the RMBF. We thank Faye for all her hard work and wish her every success in her future endeavours.

We have just appointed a new Caseworker Sandra Koranteng, who joins us from charity The Silver Line. With relevant experience in advice and grant-making, I am sure she will be an asset to the organisation and we look forward to working with her.

We are also saying farewell to two of our long-serving Trustees, who are stepping down after six years on the Board. Professor Bhupinder Sandhu and Professor David Black have done an excellent job overseeing the RMBF's strategy and development in their time as Trustees, and we are extremely grateful for their dedication to the charity.

At our next Board meeting in December, we look forward to welcoming some new Trustees to the Board. Look out for an announcement on our website in the coming weeks.

### President's Appeal

Finally, I would like to remind you that it is an important time of year for the RMBF, as our President's Appeal is under way. Much as we are excited about new projects and expanding our services, this work simply would not be possible without your support as we rely greatly on voluntary donations.

If you can, please help us continue our work by giving a gift, volunteering your time, or spreading the word to friends, family and colleagues. It really does make all the difference.

# RMBF events

## AGM 2016

On 26th September, we were delighted to welcome many of the RMBF's Volunteers, Guild Officers and supporters to our Annual Volunteers' Meeting and AGM at the Royal College of Physicians in London.

The Volunteers' Meeting in the morning took an interactive approach. With exciting new developments planned for our Medical Student Programme, we wanted the input of our dedicated Volunteers and Guild Officers, who are the backbone of the charity's work



*Productive group discussions under way about our Medical Student Programme*

across the country. Kate Sheppard, our Volunteer Programme Manager, kicked off a group discussion on how best we can improve the support we offer to students in times of difficulty. The session was very productive, and the input received will be incredibly valuable to us as we develop the programme.

The next session saw guest speakers giving engaging presentations on new initiatives for helping doctors in distress. Professor Debbie Cohen of Cardiff University spoke about the problems faced by doctors and medical students who are seeking help or need to disclose

physical and mental health conditions. Following this, Dr Michael Peters and Dr Tony Garelick gave a presentation on DocHealth, our joint venture with the British Medical Association, and the underlying need for more psychiatric support for doctors in the workplace.

After lunch, the official business of the AGM proper was conducted. RMBF President Professor Parveen Kumar opened proceedings, approving the minutes of the last meeting and handing over to Prof Pali Hungin for the annual Treasurer's Report and accounts. CEO Steve Crone and our Chair Prof Roger Jones gave overviews of the charity's work this year and future plans, and the meeting finished with the pleasant business of awarding life membership to several of our hard-working Volunteers and Guild officers.

Altogether the day was a great success and a valuable opportunity for staff and Trustees to connect and catch up with all those who support RMBF's vital work. Our thanks to everyone who attended, and we look forward to seeing you at future RMBF events.



*Prof Parveen Kumar awards life membership to Volunteer Mrs Sara Rees*

## An evening to celebrate our work

In September, we welcomed many new faces to an evening event held at the Museum of the Order of St John in Clerkenwell, London. The function was an opportunity for newer supporters of the RMBF to get to know more about the charity's vital work and long history.

The Museum itself tells the fascinating story of the ancient religious military Order of St John, from its origins caring for pilgrims in eleventh century Jerusalem to its modern role as an international humanitarian charity. Guests browsed the exhibits and met other supporters over drinks and canapes, before heading upstairs to the Chapter Hall to hear a series of short talks. David Nottingham, Head of Marketing Strategy at Wesleyan,

sponsors of the event, spoke about the natural synergy between our organisations. Our President and Chair updated guests on the charity's recent work, as well our exciting plans for the future, which you can read about elsewhere in this issue. Special guest Clive Anderson, whose wife is a doctor, then entertained attendees with stories

from his career in broadcasting and charity work.

The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by our guests, and the RMBF team were pleased to meet so many enthusiastic new supporters. Our thanks to everyone who came along, and to Wesleyan for their kind sponsorship of the event.



*Above: attendees enjoying the reception  
Right: a talk from special guest speaker, Clive Anderson*



# Fundraising & Guild News

## Challenge fundraisers going the extra mile

### Bicycle made for two: Dennis and Ursula's amazing journey

Over the course of a month this summer, Dennis and Ursula Ferriday, both doctors, rode a tandem the length of the country from John o' Groats to Land's End to raise money for the RMBF. Along the way, the pair faced steep hills, temperamental weather and even roads blocked by fallen trees.

Dennis chronicled the journey in a very entertaining blog with plenty of fantastic pictures, which you can find at [www.ferridayjogle.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.ferridayjogle.blogspot.co.uk)

### On foot from Winchester to Canterbury

Another momentous fundraising journey was undertaken in June by Dr Michael Lancaster-Smith, a supporter of our Bromley & Chiselhurst Guild. He walked solo from Winchester to Canterbury, a journey of some 150 miles taking in stretches of the historic Pilgrim's Way.

**We are delighted to say that between them these two journeys have raised**



*Dennis and Ursula flew the flag for the RMBF on their tandem's trailer*



*At journey's end after 940 miles*

**over £4,000 to support the RMBF's work. Our deepest thanks to Dennis, Ursula, Michael and everyone who donated, fundraised and offered moral support!**

Challenge fundraising is a rewarding and fun way to support our vital work, and we are always keen to help our fundraisers out however possible. This could be by providing custom equipment with an RMBF logo, or helping to promote your online fundraising page via the web and social media. If you or someone you know is interested in fundraising, please get in touch with Mark Williams on 020 8545 8443 or [mwilliams@rmbf.org](mailto:mwilliams@rmbf.org) for a chat!



*Dr Michael Lancaster-Smith*

## Guild & Volunteer activities

### Brentwood Supper Party

On Saturday 19th November, our Brentwood Guild will be holding an evening supper party at Thorndon Park Golf Club, Ingrave, Brentwood, CM13 3RH.

Tickets cost £37.50, to include a three course carvery supper, reception drink and a glass of wine at supper, with all proceeds of course going to help the RMBF's vital work supporting doctors.

These events invariably prove popular, so check availability as soon as possible by contacting Mrs Maryanne Ker on 01621 855809 or Mrs Angela Beal on [bealam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bealam@hotmail.co.uk).

### Attending the Patron's Lunch

For National Volunteer Week in June, we held a ballot for our Volunteers to be part of the Patron's Lunch street party in the Mall to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. There was a great team spirit to the day despite the early rain, and our Area Visitor, Dr Margaret Denman, managed to chat with Princess Anne and tell her all about the RMBF's work.



### Summer lunch success

We are pleased to report that the Woodbridge & Aldeburgh Guild's annual summer lunch was a huge success. The Guild Chair, Lucy Bowditch, said: "The weather was perfect, the food delicious and the guest speaker Dr.Liz Ball was outstanding in her public speaking confidence, content and delivery of her powerful message about the importance of medics supporting medics in times of need."

### In Memoriam

We are sad to hear of the death of Janet McKerron, who passed away in July. She was a long serving, dedicated and active member of the RMBF's Woodbridge & Aldeburgh Guild. Our condolences to Janet's family and friends.

# New improved RMBF website launching soon

The RMBF website is set to get a new look and some major improvements as it relaunches in the coming months.

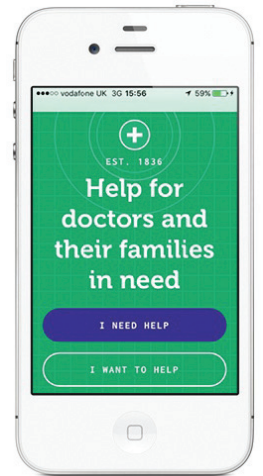
The new site is designed to simplify the process of applying for financial help from the RMBF and finding other sources of support. It will bring information from our support websites Support4Doctors and Money4MedStudents together in one place, and we'll be updating and refreshing the advice and resources we offer.

The web addresses [Support4Doctors.org](http://Support4Doctors.org) and [Money4MedStudents.org](http://Money4MedStudents.org) will now redirect to the appropriate section of the RMBF website. We hope that those who are looking for health

& wellbeing support or student money advice will explore the RMBF site, share information and help others to get involved with supporting colleagues in crisis.

You will be able to find news of the RMBF's latest projects, resources, news and events, in a more easily accessible format. A responsive design also means the website works seamlessly on mobile and tablet devices, and as before, RMBF Volunteers will have access to a dedicated section with news and useful volunteering resources.

Look out for the new website at [www.rmbf.org](http://www.rmbf.org) early in 2017.



## News in brief

### Edinburgh Volunteer meeting

We held a very successful Volunteer seminar in Edinburgh in June which was attended by Dr Mini Mishra, Senior Medical Officer for Scotland. Dr Mishra's insight into doctors' health issues locally was extremely valuable for all the attendees.

In 2017, as part of our 180<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations we are planning on holding a Volunteer meeting for all of our volunteers across the country to come together and celebrate the work of the RMBF and to plan for the future. Please contact Kate Sheppard at [ksheppard@rmbf.org](mailto:ksheppard@rmbf.org) if you are interested in further information on volunteering with the RMBF.

### Working together to highlight the importance of benevolence

One of the key challenges the RMBF faces is reaching those beneficiaries most in need of help. This is a similar problem felt across all benevolent funds, and to help combat this, the Association of Charitable Organisations is developing a PR working group with representatives from across the charity sector to highlight the importance of benevolence to the public.

We are delighted that our Fundraising and Communications team have been asked to join this group and play a key role in developing this campaign. If you have any ideas of how you might be able to help spread the word of our work please do get in touch with Mark Williams at [mwilliams@rmbf.org](mailto:mwilliams@rmbf.org).

### Thank you to Medical Protection

We are delighted that Medical Protection have continued to support the RMBF in 2016 by donating £10 for every survey completed by their members. So far a fantastic £5,595 has been raised through the scheme. We are grateful for this support from MPS and we look forward to working together on further projects in future.

### Prof Hungin new BMA President

We are very pleased to say that RMBF Treasurer, Professor Pali Hungin, was inaugurated as president of the BMA at their Annual Representative Meeting in Belfast in June. He was announced as President-elect last year.

Professor Hungin (pictured below) hopes to focus on keeping patients at the heart of the profession, re-evaluating the role of doctors and professionalism, with research as a key element of high quality care and medicine.

The RMBF is fortunate to now have two Presidents of the BMA on our Board of Trustees. Our President, Professor Parveen Kumar was President of the BMA in 2006.



## DocHealth update

**In June, the RMBF and the British Medical Association jointly launched DocHealth, a specialist-led service which helps doctors deal with stress-related anxiety and depression.**

The service is initially being run as a two-year pilot, based in London but open to all doctors. If the project proves successful, the service will develop regional hubs across the country.

Early signs are that there has been good take-up for the service. We are seeing an average of two new referrals per week, 37 so far in total. 21 of these were junior doctors, and 16 seniors. Those who are unable to meet the costs are eligible for a subsidy, provided by the RMBF as part of our support of the project.



## Case study: Dr Bell

“ A trained ophthalmologist, I was out of work for over 16 years following the onset of severe and aggressive Crohn’s disease. My only source of income during this time was health-related benefits.

At the time of my application to the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, and following some improvement in my health, I had been considered fit for work, but whilst actively seeking suitable employment I was facing difficulties restoring my name to the GMC register.

The RMBF were able to help with this, and after successful completion of an induction programme with Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, I was able to return to practice and to begin work as an Honorary Clinical Assistant in the out-patient department of the Western Eye Hospital. The RMBF were also able to help with the purchase of essential equipment, unavailable from any other source, necessary for the evaluation and diagnosis of patients. Initially unpaid, the RMBF also provided me with extra help for the increase in my day to day living expenses incurred as a result of my return to work. I am pleased to say that the post then led to my being contracted on a fairly regular part-time basis as a paid locum, thus enabling me to regain my full independence.

**I had never imagined, during my long illness, that any of the above was attainable, and I do not believe now that, without the sympathetic consideration and dedicated assistance of the RMBF, I would have ever made a return to the medical profession and to be enabled, once again, to serve the needs of patients in the NHS.** ”

*Dr Bell’s name has been changed to protect anonymity*

## Make a lasting difference by leaving a legacy gift

By remembering the RMBF in your will, you will be providing a valuable and lasting contribution to our work. Your gift will help to change lives and make a real difference to those who need our support, ensuring that the RMBF will always remain at the heart of the medical profession.

### How to leave a gift

Family and friends are, of course, always the first concern when making a will. Once your personal commitments have been taken care of, a legacy can be left to the RMBF in the following ways:

- **A pecuniary gift** – a sum of money
- **A residuary gift** – a share of your estate

- **A specific gift** – an item of property, works of art or antiques
- **A revisionary gift** – allows for your assets or estate to be passed on to your named individual(s), for their lifetime, after which your gift reverts to the RMBF

### Tax benefits

There are also tax benefits to leaving a gift in your will to charity. Inheritance Tax is currently paid to the government at a rate of 40% if your estate is worth more than £325,000. The rate could be reduced to 36% if 10% or more of your estate is left to charity.

### Get in touch

Our Fundraising and Communications team are always happy to speak about

legacy giving, and can send out packs with further information via post or email. Please contact Mark Williams on 020 8545 8443 or [mwilliams@rmbf.org](mailto:mwilliams@rmbf.org).



# A window into the past

## The RMBF has now been at the heart of the medical profession for 180 years.

In September 1836, members of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association (which itself later became the British Medical Association) founded the Medical Benevolent Fund. Any doctor in need was eligible for help, whether or not they had paid a contribution.

The medical world has of course changed enormously since the Fund was first established. We entered the twenty first century with unprecedented levels of medical student debt and ever increasing litigation, not to mention rising government, media and patient expectations and evidence of increasing stress and disillusionment within the profession.

While we have undertaken new projects and initiatives to respond to changes in the profession, our core mission has remained constant. We still aim to help those in the most acute need, without requiring contributions, and of course we are still highly dependent on voluntary donations. We cannot thank enough those who have supported us throughout the charity's history.

## From the archive

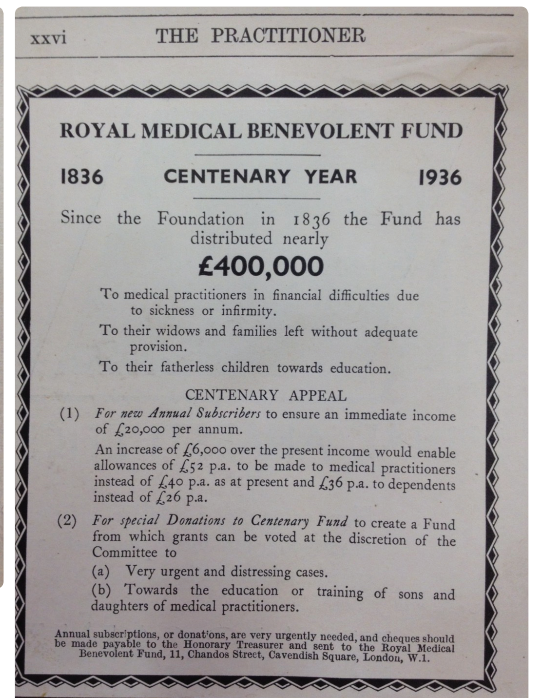
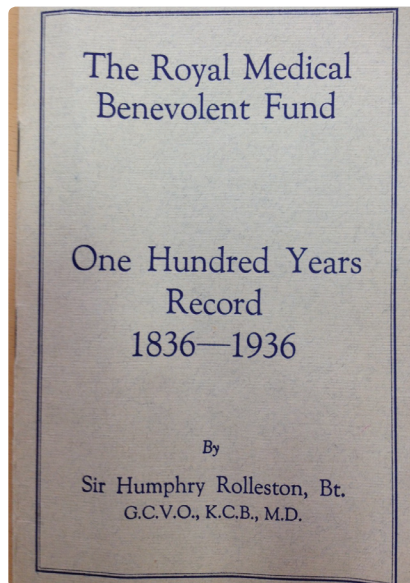
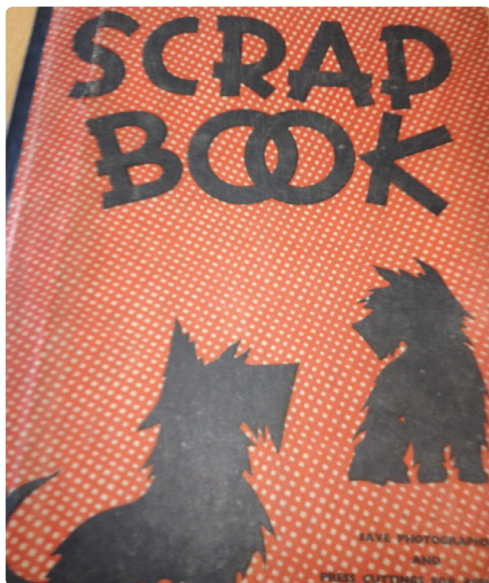
Below, we present a selection of clippings from the time of the charity's centenary in 1936. These come from a historical scrapbook of the RMBF, kept in the archive at our office in Wimbledon, London. We are in the process of transferring this archive to the Wellcome Trust. The Wellcome Library holds one of the world's largest resources for the study of medical history, and they

have agreed to house our collection following a cataloguing exercise and recommendation from a professional archivist.

This means that the collection can be properly cared for and stored. The archive dates back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, and includes historic Annual Reports, Case Committee Minutes, accounts and other documents.

The Wellcome Trust Library will become physical custodian of the material, but the RMBF will retain intellectual property rights so that researchers wanting to use the archive will need to seek the RMBF's permission, and will need to work within the parameters of data protection appropriate to the collection.

We hope you will find this look back at the history of the charity as fascinating as we have.



Clockwise from above left: scrapbook of clippings from our centenary year; cover of the charity's One Hundred Years Record; centenary notice and appeal in journal *The Practitioner*, still published today; two extracts from the One Hundred Years Record

### Title of Royal Medical Benevolent Fund

Another festival dinner, in connection with King George V.'s gracious grant of the addition of "Royal" to the title of the Fund on July 12th, 1912, was held at the Hotel Cecil on April 30th, 1913, at which Prince Arthur of Connaught would have taken the chair had he not been prevented at the last moment by illness; this dinner was attended by 283 guests and brought in £2,662. It may be noted that some of the beneficiaries relieved in that year are still receiving assistance from the Fund.

### War Emergency Fund

An important and successful achievement, largely due to the energy of the late Sir Charters Symonds and the late Dr. Newton Pitt, was the raising of the War Emergency Fund, which between 1916 and 1928 distributed more than £35,000 to help medical men or their dependents in financial need as a direct result of service in H.M. Forces.

# Spread some festive cheer

Help support the RMBF's vital work with our Christmas cards. Four attractive new designs available plus gift and accessories.



[www.charitycardshop.com/rmbf](http://www.charitycardshop.com/rmbf)

## Donation form

### Your details

Title  Forename(s)

Surname

Address

Postcode

### I would like to make a regular donation

Amount £  beginning on

and  monthly  quarterly  annually thereafter until further notice

Bank name

Bank address

Account number

Sort code

Signature  Date

### I would like to make a one-off donation

£25  £50  £100  Other  £

I enclose a **cheque/charity voucher** made payable to **RMBF**

I would like to make a donation by **MasterCard/Maestro/Visa/Visa Debit/Amex**

Card no.

Start date     Expiry date

Issue no. (Maestro only)  Security code

Signature  Date

### *giftaid it* Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

**In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:**

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

**Please notify the charity** if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return forms to **FREEPOST RMBF**  
Donate online at [rmbf.org](http://rmbf.org) or by phone on 020 8540 9194  
Your support makes our vital work possible and we'd like to keep in touch with you to tell you more. If you don't want to hear more from us, please tick here.

NLAU-16

Payment to: RMBF, NatWest Bank, Regent Street, London, sort code: 56-00-27, account number 24465178. **This replaces any existing standing order**

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