AUTUMN 2026





DONOR FAMILY NETWORK

CONNEXIONS

Registered charity 1098781

The Gift of Life Memorial

In August 2026, The British Transplant Games came to Sheffield!

From **6–9 August 2026**, Sheffield hosted the largest British Transplant Games in the event's 48-year history, bringing together almost 2,900 participants to celebrate the life-changing impact of organ and stem cell transplantation.

Sheffield hosted an unforgettable four days of sport and inspiring stories. They were ready for a celebration of strength, spirit and community.

Each year, this competition empowers transplant recipients to optimise their gift of life through an active lifestyle, and demonstrate the life-changing and saving power of organ transplantation.

The Games are the annual flagship event of Transplant Active, and this year attracted a record 2,857 registered participants, including a record 1,145 recipient athletes from 60 teams representing their transplant units from across the UK. This year the Donor Families team consisted of over 50 people, cheering on the athletes and presenting medals. In 2027 the Games will be held in Birmingham. Further details as to how to join our team will be in our next newsletter.

The Games are a powerful reminder of the opportunities that organ donation creates, and it was inspiring to see so many people competing and thriving because of that gift.



THANK YOU



We thank everyone who has kindly raised funds or made a donation to the Donor Family Network recently:

Donations received:

Bird & Co Solicitors
Chris & Steph Slater in memory of their brother Steve
James Burrough
Tony & Kathy Benelli in memory of their son Marcello
Donation in memory of Luca Giovanninni
Jo Coulson in memory of her husband Mike
Keltruck Scania Ltd
Donation in memory of Nicholas Paul Scholey
Colin Ward
Donations in memory of John Davies
Donations in memory of Stephen Smith
Megan Moore in memory of her Aunty Lynne

Thank you to our regular donors:

Patrick Gallagher
Pauline McDonnell
Darren Cox
Keith Astbury
Esther Watt Jones
Roger Quick
A Heron
Tracey Lyon
J Fletcher
S Hall
Dale Gardiner
Paul White

IN MEMORY

JUST GIVING PAGES:



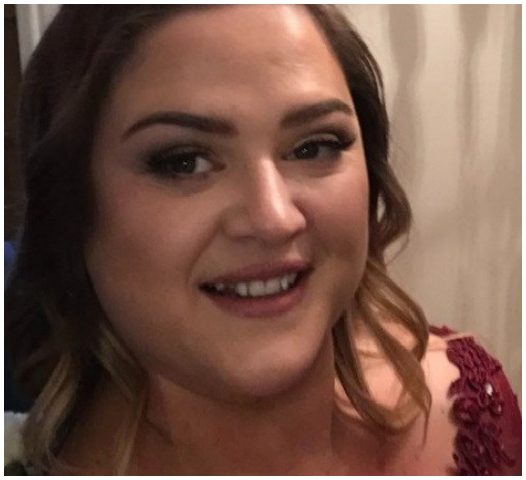
Ruth Wells has raised funds for the DFN in memory of her mum **Patricia Rafferty,** who gave the gift of life 18 years ago. Ruth took part in a bike ride, called the 5 Countries Challenge, in September 2026, which took her 260 miles from Scotland, through Northern Ireland, Ireland, Wales and back to Cheshire in England.



Harry James Alvey's friends, including Frankie Downes have raised funds for us and say, 'he was the most caring, generous, loving person, so knowing that his final act helped change other people's lives feels very Harry.'



In August 2026, keen cyclist **Tim Decker** cycled from the Southernmost to the Northernmost points in Germany, a distance of 850 miles, raising funds for the charity in memory of his son James, who donated in 2024 aged 27 years. Tim's ride, which took a total of 14 days, involved all weather and a great number of hills but he saw some beautiful scenery along the way.



Paul Webb has set up a fund raising page in memory of his beautiful daughter **Niki Webb,** who gave the gift of life in August 2026.

He says, 'in true Niki fashion, her final act was one of kindness and generosity. Through her decision to become a donor two people have been given a second chance at life'.

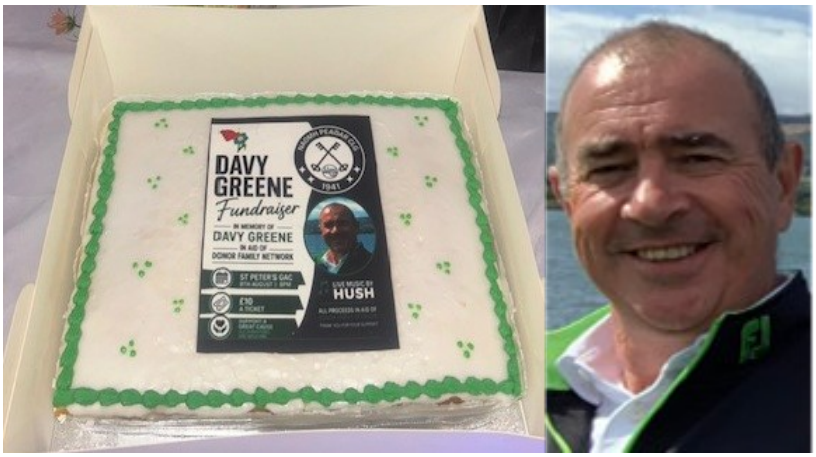
IN MEMORY



Mark Gabriel has kindly raised funds in memory of **Iris Gabriel** who donated in 2026.



The family of **Chloe Galliers** continue to very kindly raise funds for the DFN in loving memory of her.



Wife Kay and daughter Tara Greene held a very successful charity night in Lurgin, Ireland, in August in memory of **Davy Greene.** The funds raised were generously sent to the DFN. Many special memories were shared by family and friends.

Jenny Kingsford Slater, together with family and friends celebrated the life of **Steve Kingsford-Slater**, who donated in May 2026, by holding a charity night to raise funds in his memory.

Jenny says, 'I know he would be very happy and proud that he'd saved three other extremely sick people by donating his organs'.



Annual Remembrance and Thanksgiving Event



Almost 250 people joined us at the National Memorial Arboretum in September for our annual remembrance and thanksgiving event, including donor families, recipients and others who support the work we do.

This annual event includes a ceremony, featuring the lighting of candles, music, speakers and poems and the chance for people to remember those who have given the gift of life through organ and tissue donations, as well as those who have benefitted from a transplant.

The Call, Organ Donor Recognition Artwork

Lead Artists: Liam Curtin and Stephen Raw, Poem by John McAuliffe.



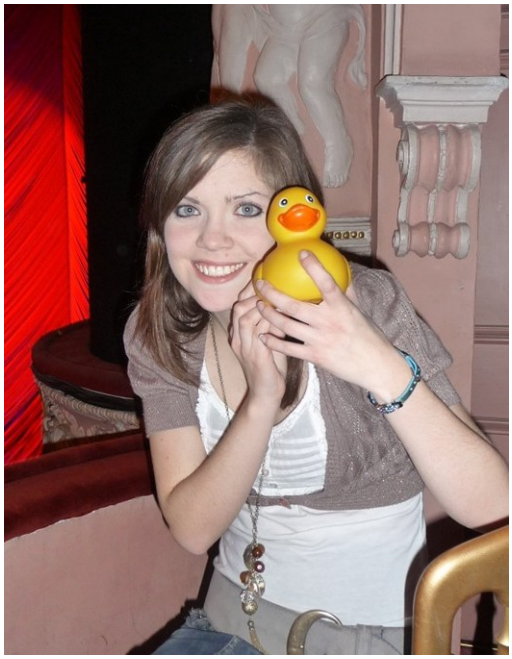
The Call is a landmark ceramic mural in recognition of organ donors and their families located on the wall of the Patrick Cryne Building, in the main boulevard of Manchester Royal Infirmary, depicting a unique poem by John McAuliffe.

To celebrate the 2nd anniversary on 23rd September, Donor Families, transplant recipients, Organ Donor Ambassadors and NHS staff attended and the poet John McAuliffe read out the poem. It highlights the vital and important role of organ and tissue donation and the experience of donors and their families and was composed after consultation with Donor Family members.

There were speeches by Liam Curtin, the artist and potter, Judy Coutinho, mother of a donor and Emma Thirlwell, SNOD, followed by a welcome cup of tea and biscuits. It is hoped this will become an annual event.

CALLING ALL CRAFTERS

THE LITTLE YELLOW DUCK PROJECT, THE STORY BEHIND IT



Clare was born with the genetic lung disease, cystic fibrosis, and by the age of 24, her lungs were so damaged that a transplant was her only hope of survival. Sadly, a matching donor was never found and despite a long fight, she passed away on April 15th 2013, aged 26.

Despite her own time running out, Clare asked her Mum, **Ann Rowcliffe**, to promise to donate any organs or tissues that she could after her death. Although a matching donor hadn't been found in time for her, she wanted to give someone else that chance and hope. As a result, the sight of two young adults has now been restored by receiving her corneas. Clare had the most stunning bright blue eyes that shone with life and enthusiasm. It's a tribute to her generosity and kindness that others can now see life clearly as a result of her gift.

The Little Yellow Duck Project has been inspired by Clare's generosity, her sense of fun and her love of little yellow ducks. Each handcrafted little yellow duck gift aims to spread a little happiness to its recipient and a little awareness of how we can each follow Clare's example in saving or transforming the lives of others through blood, bone marrow, organ or tissue donation.

The Little Yellow Duck Project was created by **Emma Harris** in memory of her best friend, **Clare Cruickshank**, a kind and fun-loving person who lived life to the full. Clare loved being creative and could spend hours happily covered in glue and glitter or finding a way to make something with her sewing machine! She was also crazy about little yellow rubber ducks and had a huge collection of them in all shapes and sizes.

The Little Yellow Duck Project is a global initiative highlighting the life-saving random acts of kindness of blood, bone marrow, and organ and tissue donation.

Whilst every random act of kindness has the ability to brighten someone's day, these donations have the ability to literally save or transform someone's entire life. They are 'Gifts of Love and Gifts of Life'.

Why organ and tissue donation matters

Right now hundreds of thousands of children and adults around the world are awaiting a life-saving treatment as their only hope of survival.

This treatment can't be created in a laboratory, swallowed as a tablet or injected as a medicine. In fact, in many ways, it's not really a treatment at all. It's a gift and – incredibly - it exists in each and every one of us. It's the gift of an organ or tissue. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

Sadly, as well as a huge need for donor organs, there is also a desperate shortage of them. As a result, thousands of people around the world are dying every day. Only by more of us registering our wish to be donors of the future, can these lives be saved. Each donor can save the lives of up to 9 children or adults by donating organs such as the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, bowel and pancreas. They can also restore the sight to two patients through corneal donation and help multiple recipients by donating bone, skin, heart valves and tendons.

You can choose to either donate all tissues and organs or to only donate certain ones.

Why stem cell (bone marrow) donation matters

Stem cell (bone marrow) transplants are often the last chance of survival for children and adults suffering from blood cancer and other serious blood disorders.

Thousands of people around the world need a life-saving stem cell (bone marrow) transplant each year. But it can be very difficult to find a compatible donor as there are thousands of different tissue types out there.

As a potential stem cell donor, you could one day have the opportunity to save the life of a child or adult who desperately needs a stem cell transplant to survive.

Getting your details added to a national register of potential stem cell (bone marrow) donors is very easy to do. When a patient needs a life-saving stem cell transplant, their tissue type is matched against those on the register to locate a possible donor.

If you are pregnant, you may be able to donate your baby's blood from the umbilical cord and placenta after their birth. It will be kept in a national cord blood bank and may be used in the future to save the life of a seriously ill patient with a matching tissue type.

Every second of every day, people around the world – of all ages and from all walks of life – need a blood transfusion to survive. It is a vital treatment used in everything from cancer and blood disorders to burns and accidents. The reasons for transfusions vary, but the demand for blood is ever-present and growing and more blood donors than ever are required to meet these demands.

Blood donors are the world's lifesavers, contributing over 100 million blood donations a year. Blood can't be manufactured; it can only come from generous donors who choose to help others. Every single blood donation (a procedure that takes around 10 minutes) can save the lives of up to 3 others. In fact, an adult could potentially donate enough blood to save the lives of over 1000 people during their lifetime!

Despite the desperate need for this life saving resource, very few of us make a difference by choosing to donate. Giving blood is quick, easy and it saves lives.

Wherever you live in the world, we would love you to join us in taking part in the Little Yellow Duck Project!

All you need to do is create a handmade item around the 'Little Yellow Duck' theme. You can use one of our specially designed patterns or make up your own design

Then print off one of the special tags, attach it to your item and leave your gift for a stranger to find somewhere in your community. It might be in a library, on a park bench, or in a shop. The choice is yours!
Finally, sit back and congratulate yourself. You have just spread a little sunshine and helped saves lives at the same time!

Any questions? If so, simply contact us on thelittleyellowduckproject.org.
There is information regarding various knitting, crochet, cross stitch and fabric patterns, also labels to print off, on the website.

Happy Duck Making!

HAVE YOU LOST A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS ?

Children's Organ Donation

Conversations, Care, Choices



Losing a child is an experience no family should have to face.

In this project, we invite families to join us as partners in reimagining how conversations about organ donation are approached after the loss of a child.

By sharing your experience, in your own time and your own way, you can help shape more compassionate support for families in the future.

To find out more, please contact our research team or visit the study webpage using the details below.
Thank you for considering this.
Your voice can make a difference.

Leah Mclaughlin
Email: l.mclaughlin@bangor.ac.uk
Tel:07561598600
Webpage:www.kidneyresearchunit.wales/impact-case-studies.htm?id=39

Artist who had transplant designs donor cards



Sheffield artist Pete McKee has designed six new organ donor cards to encourage more people to sign up to the national register and donate organs.
Pete underwent a life-saving liver transplant in 2017 after discovering he had a hereditary condition affecting his lungs and liver.

The limited edition run of cards were handed out for free at a launch at his Leah's Yard studio in the city. The designs have been commissioned for the British Transplant Games, but Pete hopes to also produce illustrations for more general donor cards in future. His cards feature emblems of Sheffield, including a steelworker pouring molten metal into a heart-shaped cask.

Pete confirmed that people could donate nine "solid" organs: heart, liver (in two parts), two lungs, pancreas, small bowel and two kidneys - as well as tissue which can "dramatically improve" the lives of up to 50 people.

The NHS Blood and Transplant Service said it was “delighted” that the 2026 British Transplant games organ donor cards would feature Pete McKee’s artwork.

Pete’s art brings to life the conversations about organ donation and it’s life saving impact on others. The UK’s transplant list has reached record levels, nearly 9,000 people now waiting for life saving transplants.

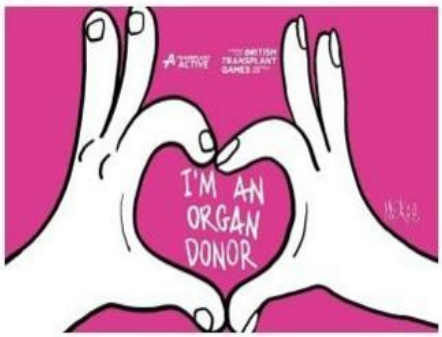












CHRISTOS LIASKOS – DOUBLE LUNG TRANSPLANT



Recipient Christos says, ` fourteen and a half years ago, I received a double lung transplant at the age of 23, having been born with Cystic Fibrosis (CF).

Growing up, supported and encouraged by my family, sport, keeping active and healthy was always very important to me – not only did I enjoy it, but I also knew it was my best chance to fight my illness.

Tennis had always been my preferred sport. As my health deteriorated through my teens and early twenties, I inevitably lost much more than I won – as someone who has always been extremely competitive this was very hard to take and fighting my illness by staying active was often the only reason I continued. At 22 I was eventually put on the waiting list for a double lung transplant. I stopped working and decided to focus all my energy into keeping myself as fit and strong as possible for when the call came. In the year prior to my transplant, I struggled to walk 200m without needing a rest and my lung function sat at 25%.

In the early hours of 27 December 2011, my phone rang, requesting me to go to Papworth Hospital. A few hours later I was heading into surgery. I spent the subsequent 2 ½ weeks of recovery in hospital watching old Federer-Nadal tennis matches, using the hospital's exercise bike and dreaming of the things I would do with the gift I had received, the gift of life. Over the coming years I widened my horizons and jumped into running, cycling, climbing, alpine mountaineering, and various multi-day challenges.

In July 2026, I returned from a two-week trip, cycling over 700km and climbing almost 2,000m altitude several times, with my partner, riding from Geneva to Nice on the Route des Grandes Alpes, crossing 16 mountain passes, including the highest in Europe – Cime de la Bonette at an impressive 2,800m.

I have been aware of this challenge for many years, but I never thought I would be fit enough to take it on. Half-way through the first day I was considering hitch hiking, and by the end of the second day I was looking into car hire options. However, as the extreme heat abated slightly, and with it went the heat exhaustion and cramps, I decided to attempt one climb at a time knowing I could always turn

round and head to the nearest town and catch a (very expensive) taxi. Thankfully, I never had to do that and I completed the biggest challenge I have ever taken on.

At home, I am not strong enough to ride with a club because I am too slow. I am proud that despite this, I not only took on a challenge that I thought I may well not complete, but that I also kept plodding away, each day, day after day.

Given my medical history, I am not the average, fit cyclist that would take this challenge on. At 14 ½ years post-transplant, I am still hampered by a lifetime of living and growing up with CF.

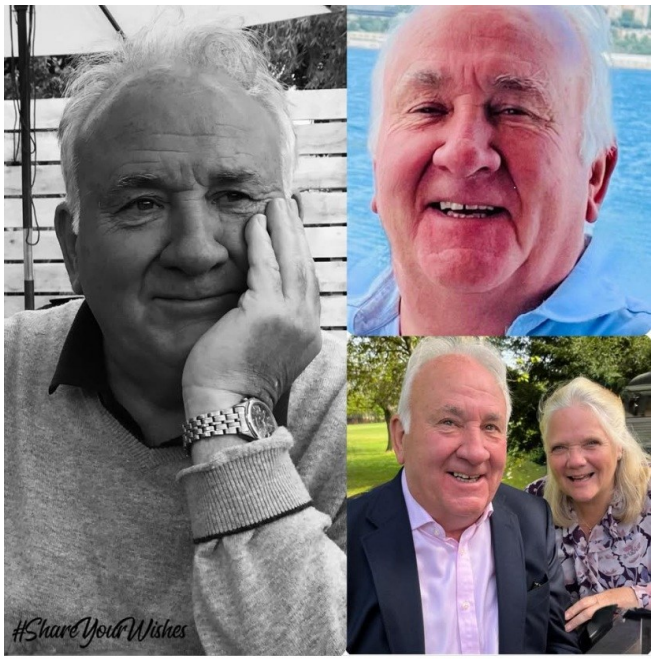


With the numerous challenges I have taken on over the years, in moments of struggle I often think back to times before my transplant and that period of recovery in hospital after the operation. This gives me the motivation to push and keep going. Nothing I have done since 27 December 2011 would have been possible without my donor, from leading a normal life where I can go to University and get a job, to cycling across the Alps. For that, I will be eternally grateful and I will always make the most of my second chance at life, in tribute to those who were not so fortunate'.



ONE OF OUR MEMBERS SHARES HER DAD'S STORY

Alison and Hannah Green share their thoughts and pride of **Grahame Green**:



Daughter Hannah says, 'precious memories are something my mum will cherish forever. They had recently celebrated 45 years of marriage when dad passed away in October 2023, aged 68. Dad taught me a lot of things and was the first person I wanted to tell when anything good or bad happened. The only man who could solve my emotional problems.

Dad suffered a sudden arrhythmic event, which left him spending six days in ICU being ventilated. By the end of this time we knew dad was not going to recover from his injuries and mum and I had discussed the possibilities of what was ahead of us. We had both, through our work, witnessed the benefits of organ donation and we approached the medical team to discuss this further. Dad had spent all of his life supporting and helping others, therefore it was an easy decision to make. Not only had we discussed it as a family but we knew he had signed the register, making it a straightforward decision for mum and I to make. We accompanied dad to theatre where he passed away peacefully and continued on his journey to help others. We know that his kidneys were both used and that some of his tummy muscles were used. Other skin, ligament and other tissue are 'on ice' awaiting to be called upon when required. Other tissue and even his heart (which could not be transplanted) went on to support science and research, especially in relation to genetic testing.



Dad lived a too short, but very full life, devoted to mum and I. He was a keen photographer and had a passion for woodcraft and DIY (no project was too big or too small!).

He is and always will be much loved and will always stay in our hearts.

Dad- your absence is one of the toughest lessons that life will teach me. You taught me everything and played a significant part in where I am today … but you failed to teach me to live without my super-hero. It's been a honour and a privilege to have known you and to be called your daughter.

THE OLDEST LIVING PERSON WITH A HEART TRANSPLANT

The Donor Family Network are happy to report about Ted Warner, the UK's oldest living person with a heart transplant and believed to be the oldest in the world.

Ted recently celebrated his 95th birthday and continues to enjoy life to the full, including regular clay pigeon shooting.



In 1990, he was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy – a disease of the heart muscle where the walls of the chambers become stretched, thickened or stiff, making it difficult for the heart to pump blood around the body. After assessment at Royal Papworth he was placed on the waiting list for a donor heart.

With his condition deteriorating he spent a period of time in hospital. When discharged he was told he had about three weeks left to live. The very next day, everything changed. Ted received a call from Royal Papworth. A donor heart was available and an ambulance was on its way to collect him. His transplant was a success.



Thirty-six years later, Ted is still making memories with his family and friends. During that time he's seen both of his sons, Neil and Adam, get married and begin their own families, welcomed grandchildren and travelled the world. All because of organ donation.



Ted is the oldest person in the UK living with a heart transplant. His story is an inspirational reminder of the incredible difference that organ donation can make, for patients and their loved ones.

Ted has voiced deep gratitude for the selflessness of his anonymous donor and their family stating he thinks about them every day.

PROMOTING AND SINGING ABOUT THE GIFT OF LIFE

I have been involved in supporting Organ Donation for 16 years, having been appointed to Chair the Organ Donation Committee at Whiston Hospital (the St Helens and Knowsley NHS trust as it was at the time) in 2010, and from which role I have just retired. I have also been, and continue for the time being as, Chair of NHS BT's North West Organ Donation Committee since January 2020.

Although these have been, and are, voluntary positions, the Chair is expected to have a significant impact on the maximisation of organ and tissue donation within the hospital trust/health board, and in terms of the regional role to help lead the development of organ and tissue donation across the region. Each role is seen as a vital role within the hospital trust and also within the local community and regionally.

So, when it comes to promoting organ donation, I have tried to support the role of our front line staff in every way possible, and also to use every opportunity to develop an awareness and support for the work of NHS BT.

Each year, over the last four years, I've attended a group in Liverpool called Turtle Song. TURTLE SONG, brings music, song writing, movement and singing to people living with dementia and their companions and carers. I have been going with my best friend who is a dementia sufferer – sadly this year he has not been well enough to attend – but I've gone along anyway – to join in and help with the group. Each week the challenge is to write new songs to share at a final performance in the last week of the project. The main theme this year was Gathering on the Street of Hope – our project was based at the Everyman Theatre which is on Hope Street in Liverpool.

What has this to do with organ and tissue donation you may well ask? Well, I mentioned one week that I couldn't attend because it clashed with one of the Order of St John commemoration events in Liverpool, at which I was speaking. This prompted a discussion about organ donation – and the writing of one of the songs which was performed at the final celebration.

We live in a world with many challenges. The song that I wrote with some inspiration from the group was entitled the Gift of Life. The first verse focuses on the hope for young people, and the last verse is almost a throwback to a 1960's protest song – hoping for a better, peaceful world in which everyone can thrive!

The second verse is dedicated to organ donors and the hope they create, and the lives they save.

The Gift of Life.

Verse 1: The gift of life is full of hope, the spark of passion we find in youth

Ambition drives success, let's help young people grow,

To be the person they hope to be.

Chorus: Do what you want to do, don't tell me what to do,

I want to do the things I love.

Verse2: The gift of life is full of hope, even when we die, we can help

To donate something special, to help someone to live

A gift of life gives everybody hope

Verse 3: The gift of life should give people liberty; we hope the world can be a better place

Stop wars and global warming - end poverty,

The gift of life should give everybody hope!

Sharing the challenges of life and the lifesaving sacrifice made by organ donors was a clear focus for the song. The chorus has a striking message in that we should all be allowed to do what we want to do, and not be dictated to, but allowed to fulfil our ambitions doing things we love to do – within reason of course. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could remove some of the obstacles that prevent some people, who want to be organ donors, from being able to?

And the hope is for young people reaching their potential, that the world will be a better place, and of course that everyone who has expressed a wish to be an organ donor can make that gift of life when circumstances allow. Maybe the answer is blowin' in the wind?

Peter Morton

Chair North West Organ Donation Committee NHS BT

June 2026

QUIRKY QUIZ

1	Which King in a pack of cards doesn't have a moustache?	
2	What is a "butt load"?	
3	What is the dot over an i called?	
4	The Pope cannot be an organ donor, true or false?	
5	Which country does the Kiwi fruit originate from?	
6	Which popular drink once contained cocaine?	
7	What percentage of people are left-handed?	
8	Are avocados fruit or vegetable?	
9	What is the real name for a hashtag?	
10	What are the seeds/specks on a strawberry called?	
11	How many dimples does a golf ball have?	
12	Can you sneeze when asleep?	
13	Which animal has cubed shaped poo?	
14	What do you call a sleeping bull?	
15	What is the medical term for smelly feet?	
16	Which human organ can fully regenerate?	
17	How many legs do ants have?	
18	What is the correct term for a question mark?	
19	How many teeth does a seahorse have?	
20	Which animal has the most teeth?	
21	How many times does an average person blink in a minute?	
22	No number contains the letter A until 1,000. True or false?	
23	Apart from water, which is the most popular drink in the world?	
24	Which breed of dog yodels instead of barking?	
25	On average how many peanuts make a jar of peanut butter?	
26	Which is the oldest land animal?	
27	Which animal sleeps the most?	
28	Which food never goes spoils or goes bad?	
29	Which animal burps when it's happy?	
30	Which country has the most islands?	

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For the Commonwealth Tribute to Life conference, held at the Golden Jubilee conference centre in Glasgow earlier this year, Pàdraig MacAoidh (Peter Mackay) the Makar (National Poet) of Scotland composed a poem entitled "A Gift". It was commissioned to recognise and honour organ and tissue donors across Scotland and serves as a lasting tribute to their extraordinary generosity and the lives they have touched. The Network has been presented with a signed copy, in both English and Scots Gallic, in the hope that it will "stand as a meaningful symbol of remembrance, gratitude and recognition for all those who have given the gift of life". The framed copy was on display at the Precious Gift Event in September and will be shown at the British Transplant Games next year.

For those who have received, it is a present of time,
a gift of days and years, born of selflessness,
full-hearted and generous, delivered
through hope and skill not possible -
not even conceivable - for most of human history.
It is a reminder that none of us live alone,
but are surrounded by other people's love,
that we hold each other up: each scar,
seen or unseen, is a bridge crossed, a beam
of light, a path to here and now, an aftermath.
There are never the words that will suffice
for the day-to-day gratitude, for a future,
for the breaths, pulses, tears, smiles.
It is immeasurable. It is life.

Translated from the original Scots Gallic by the poet, Peter MacKay