



## **Bloodbiker - On the Road**

I have been a volunteer for many charities over the last 45 years and can't help myself supporting a good cause, it was in 2010 that my career was coming to an end and it was evident that there was a huge hole to fill in the days, weeks, months etc of my impending retirement. Been riding since 1972 and thought what can I do.

It was several years before that I was on duty and on call Detective Sergeant when I happened to be called to St Georges Hospital in Tooting to deal with a stabbing victim with a dire prognosis. Long story short, after dealing with the terrible incident I came outside for some fresh air and to clear my mind and saw a motorcycle pull up – it was a Bloodbiker, that brief conversation I had with the rider came back to me and the rest is history, I joined up.



**A little bio on Serv – Surrey and South London** - Supply a safe, quick and reliable service to local hospitals and doctors for the transport of emergency blood and blood products. Also transport emergency medical equipment, drugs etc if requested to do so, and transport between hospitals in cases of emergency. This is at night, free of any charge this will release more money for patient care. This service is provided between the hours of 7pm and 6am, 7 nights a week, 52 weeks of the year. SERV also supplies 24hr cover over the Christmas period and all bank holidays. All members are volunteers and receive no recompense for their time or out of pocket expenses.

Our core business is delivery of Blood products to subscribed hospitals when other methods of transport are either prohibitively expensive, unavailable or inappropriate. This is usually because of some form of emergency, be it a serious accident, problem pregnancy or unscheduled referral for operation

I have been riding with Serv for nearly 10 years and initially at that time I used my own motorcycle a Triumph Tiger 800XC but as I was signing on for around 6 night shifts a week, I was allocated a fleet bike, I generally get allocated any new donated motorcycle and last April I was allocated a brand new Yamaha FJR 1300, which was named Polly after the Northern Polytechnic Masonic lodge 6039 that raised the £17000 to buy the machine.

This is just a snapshot of diary of me and my service with Serv Surrey & London Blood Bikes which starts on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2019 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in the London West End where I met Richard Hannay the master of the Northern Polytechnic lodge 6039 and accepted the donation of Polly. The bike was kept on display at the hotel for the following week.



*Richard Hannay handing over Polly – with the bike on display at the Doubletree hotel*

## 1 May 2019 – Polly and her first SERV Surrey & South London Operational Outings.

I took Polly on its first operational outing, taking an urgent supply of baby milk from the Neonatal unit at St Georges Hospital in Tooting to the Kingston Hospital Neonatal unit, urgently required for a premature and sick baby. Had another run milk run from a private residence in Harrow this morning and delivered to Queen Charlotte Children's Hospital near Shepherd's Bush, London.



**Polly On its 2<sup>nd</sup> ever Run – Delivering Human Milk**



**Delivered to The Milk Bank at Queen Charlotte Children's Hospital**

**Milk Banks and Human Milk Donations-** The UK Association of Milk Banks first came into being in 1935, but was officially established in 1939, but UKAMB, as it is today was formulated in 1997, and is a registered Charity in its own



right. Originally funded by 'The National Birthday Trust Fund' but is now funded by Imperial College Hospital NHS Trust. There are now 17 Milk Banks in the UK.

Each Bank can serve between 1 & 36 Neonatal Intensive Care Units, taking care of over 400 premature babies per year, and processes in excess of 700 litres of donated milk annually. The whole process, from donation to storage, delivery and use is regulated under National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. Donated breast milk helps babies in need to get the best start in life and is the ideal food for babies. The goodness of breast milk: It contains all the nutrients (at least 400) that a baby needs and contains hormones and disease-fighting compounds which cannot be found in formula milk. In addition, giving breast milk to premature babies protects them against a life-threatening gut infection, Necrotising enterocolitis, and helps their development in the long term. The national human milk banking service is not financed by government funds.

In Surrey & South London, that would usually mean, attending the donor's home address throughout Surrey and other counties, Sussex Hampshire, Berkshire etc, then packaging the donated milk in specialised and temperature-controlled containers and then transporting it to the respective Milk Banks. The hospitals or Milk Banks I usually attend are, St. Peters, Chertsey, Kingston Paediatric Unit Kingston Surrey, Tooting Milk Bank & Paediatric Unit, St Thomas Hospital Westminster, Herts Milk Bank Harpenden, Hertfordshire, Queen Charlottes Hospital, and Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. Milk deliveries can usually be pre-arranged, without the emergency that there generally is with Blood

## **21 June 2019 - at the Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust Guildford**

Not many people are aware but Serv-Surrey and South London are Surrey Police's nominated Charity of the year and as a result of a positive engagement with and Surrey Police on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2019, around 20 boxes of Celebration Chocolates were donated to Surrey Police at Mount Brown in Guildford.

Surrey Police decided that these were to be given over to us. I liaised with Surrey Police and picked them up. It's true that there were a little too much for me to eat all on my own and would require a little help. So, I decided that the chocolates would be donated to sick Children in the Hascombe Ward within Royal Surrey County Hospital. After making arrangements with the Matron Jane Jame, they were delivered by me on our fleet bike Polly and they were most gratefully received.



**Polly stacked with boxes of Celebration**



**Polly and grateful staff at the Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust Guildford**

## **22 June 2019 - Waitrose Worcester Park.**

We are always out fundraising to fund our fleet of vehicles and administration costs so it was great news when we were lucky enough to be chosen as a Waitrose Community Matters charity at Waitrose Worcester Park. Me and Polly gratefully received a cheque for £243 that will go directly towards supporting our work in the local community. It was great knowing that so many customers recognised the vital contribution we make to National Health Service England by providing an emergency out of hours blood and medical delivery service free of charge saving your NHS money.



**Yours Truly and "Polly" working hard to promote the great work that SERV does in the community and it's all free of charge to our precious NHS.**

## **August 27<sup>th</sup>**

August bank holiday was a busy Bank holiday for me and Polly, in particular we did over 200 miles on 3 different and varied jobs yesterday - An urgent sample from Camberley to Public Health England at Colindale, - 3 litres of Human baby milk from St Georges Hospital Milk Bank for Kingston Hospital Neonatal Unit and a consignment of blood from the Blood Bank In Cranmer Road Tooting for St Peters at Chertsey.

Today was another one of those urgent jobs which involved a 120-mile round trip from St Peters Hospital to the John Radcliffe Hospital (Neonatal Unit) in Oxford with 4 litres of Human Milk for sick babies.



**Polly on an urgent Human Milk run to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford**

### **19<sup>th</sup> September – Fleet Hospital**

Another event that I have been doing regularly since its inception 5 years ago with Serv-Surrey & South London supporting the Fleet Lions Club assisting with Prostate screening at Fleet hospital this evening. with 10 phlebotomists helping out, and Polly to take the samples to Frimley Park Hospital for testing. Big queues for this local event which is provided free by the Lions to local residents, this event always well attended.



**Fleet Lions Prostate Screening evening at Fleet Hospital**

### **26<sup>th</sup> September - Kings College Hospital**

Excepting the Air Ambulance duties which are a must, never fail to do job, Class one's are the most critical and important runs we get. There I was just getting my boots off at around 130am when I get a call for a class one consignment. Its two boxes for Kings College Hospital in Denmark Hill. We are never told what or who it's for but it must be done now without delay. Back on with the boots, lid and gloves and I'm off back to the blood bank at St Georges Hospital. There I pick up two boxes absolutely crammed with 30 units of blood, and plasma...

The technician states it's needed yesterday and he states its very urgent. Strapped on both boxes and with every traffic signal at green or going green as I approached, I rode the most progressive ride that I have done for a long time, getting to Kings College in around 11 minutes. The pathology lab resembled a war zone. I was told two young men had been stabbed at the Elephant and Castle and blood was coming out faster than they were able to put it in. Sadly, one of the young men died as a result of his injuries -yet more victims of London Knife Crime.



**27<sup>th</sup> October – Serv on the Ride Of respect for PC Andrew Harper @ RAF Benson**



**13 November - East Surrey Hospital Redhill**

Absolutely abysmal weather out on Polly this evening ... Picking up two boxes of blood, shown strapped to Polly. Weather is a nightmare yet again. Torrential rain and strong winds made it a tricky ride.



**Braving awful weather – like most times I ride. Hence my nickname, “The Rain man”**



**The Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance**

**Air Ambulance**, Since February 2013, SERV Surrey & South London have provided a critical, daily service to the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance Trust. This entails delivering two boxes, each containing four units of O Rh- blood, to their hanger at Redhill Aerodrome every day without fail, including Bank Holidays, Easter and Christmas, as well as replenishing them whenever they have cause to open, or worse use the contents, of either box.

In September 2013, the aircraft at Redhill Aerodrome was certified for night flying, meaning that they were able to provide 24-hour airborne emergency services, instead of being restricted to fast response vehicles during the hours of darkness. During 2014, the two aircraft together flew some 1900 missions, taking the Accident & Emergency Department to the incident.

All of our other work is done under best endeavours; if we have the resources available, we'll field the request, and happily. This however is a commitment. KSSAAT deliberately searched for an organisation that could and would provide a 24/7 365 service with time-bound deliveries. Along with our sister organisation SERV Kent who service the second aircraft based at KSSAAT Headquarters at Redhill.

### **Mid November 2019**



Out on a very windy and yet another very wet night, returning from a run to South London.

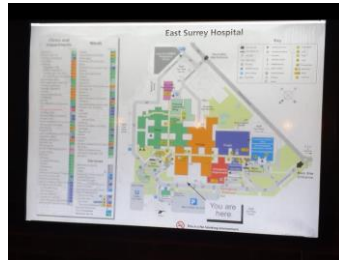
A dreadful accident happened in front of me. Being on a motorcycle and dressed in an official looking florescent jacket, people turned to me. Basically, I ensured that the casualty was still breathing etc it was clear that my biker down and basic first aid skills were not sufficient for this scenario - I put Blue lights on, Blocked the road and ensured Police, Ambulance was called and I requested Air Ambulance as it was obvious this was as serious as it gets. The Air Ambulance came and they were carrying the blood that I had restocked for them earlier. Nothing more really to say but scene was horrific and sadly ended in a fatality 😞

### **25<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Day**

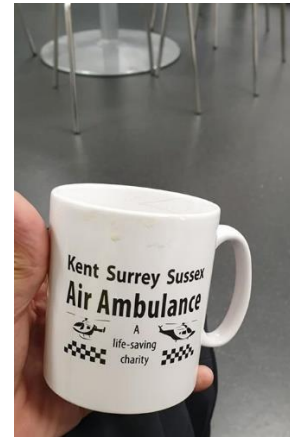
Yes, we are still out on Bank Holidays and Christmas day 2019, was no different – Luckily while wife was drinking the house dry 😊 I was out on Polly with Serv Surrey & South London again servicing the trauma blood for the Air Ambulance. Once the run was complete, I was invited back and ended up having a cuppa with the awesome staff down at the KSSAA @ Redhill Aerodrome.

It really is an absolute privilege to be able to support the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance.





**Christmas Day 2019 at East Surrey Hospital and Polly**



**Christmas Day Drink – a Cuppa Tea**

## 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Well there's me Volunteering at Brooklands Museum all day today when I get a call this afternoon from the day controller at SERV - Surrey & South London, it's an urgent transfer a package from Merseyside going to Guys Hospital in Southwark Central London, to be picked up at Beaconsfield.... this sample was the first Coronavirus sample that came down from Merseyside, was very urgent. We have since moved many such samples and continue to do so.



**Polly at Beaconsfield Service Station on M40 getting drowned in the incredibly heavy rain**



My thoughts after the ride – Was out on Polly & Job now completed but Wow, that ride was intense, had to bring my A game out there, filtering in heavy peak time traffic on M25, M40, M4 and Central London. With it hacking down with rain, and boy that gusty wind was immense... a very interesting ride.

**The Rain Master strikes again 😊**



**Polly after delivery of the urgent package at Guys Hospital**

#### **25 March - Corona Virus Lockdown starts**

The first full day on lockdown consisted of a call at 940am Hugh my on-call controller for Milk and paediatric cases. It's an urgent human milk run from Queen Charlotte Children's Hospital in Du Cane Rd to St Marys Paddington paediatric unit, quite a simple run of around 80 miles – weather was absolutely fantastic for riding a motorcycle. Out on Polly & Job completed by 1pm



**Polly at St Mary's Hospital Paddington**

A nice restful afternoon checking over the bike and enjoying the sunshine, but 530pm off to East Surrey Hospital for the Air Ambulance trauma blood restocking. Nice ride down to East Surrey Hospital and onto the Air Ambulance at Redhill Aerodrome, and job sorted quite comfortably.

Now we are supposed to be all staying at home, but I'm shocked, on my ride this evening I saw kids playing Frisbee on the green as I got to Reigate this evening, also many Cars, motorcyclists and lots of people around .... I think the message has either been lost on some people or they've just ignored it.

## **2 April 2020 • Coronavirus lockdown continues....**

Been absolutely manic since the lockdown – Air Ambulance duties, Collection of samples from hospitals going to Public Health England in Colindale – Pick up and transfers of samples in Camberley from Dorchester Hospital for testing at Charing Cross Hospital – picking up Platelets, Blood and Plasma from the Blood Bank in tooting and delivering all across our catchment area – yes been really busy out on the bike, but at least its great weather and roads are on most occasions clear of the usual manic traffic.



***Members of the Public posting messages of support at Charing Cross hospital***



***Coronavirus Bio-Pouch***



***The Blood Bank Colindale***

Several hundred miles clocked up on Polly on these runs, hopefully we at SERV - Surrey & South London have made a significant and worthwhile contribution to supporting our incredible National Health Service.



Human Milk donations for sick and premature babies during Lockdown - this particular collection was from the home of a mother who had coronavirus and was self-isolating but her milk was needed for her new born babies in the neonatal ward at Frimley Hospital.

The lockdown rules meant Social distancing was the key to ensure safety of the product and indeed myself, wearing disposable gloves and copious amounts of hand gel, I put the refrigerated box on the doorstep and stepped back to the pavement, whilst the donor put the Milk in the box. I then sealed box and putting more gel on and rubbing furiously put the boxes on the bike. Together with Steve another Serv Biker, we took turns over several days to support this lady and her babies.



**Milk Collection during Lockdown**

## **9 April - Air Ambulance**

This was an update on the Serv Surrey and South London Social Media platforms, incredibly it has attracted over 23000 views and 1500 likes from members of the public... This is Ray – one of our dedicated volunteers. Ray is out every day currently like many of our volunteers - either supporting the Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex with vital blood supplies, carrying samples for analysis or collecting vital milk for new born babies. We have also now moved to operating day time, meaning we are providing vital support to our NHS 24/7 in this critical time and helping them in their fight against COVID-19.



## Epsom General Hospital

Not only have I been busy with a vast arrange of calls and duties, it was time taken out with Polly and Serv-Surrey & South London Bloodbikes supporting the NHS with the Emergency Services at Epsom Hospital. In attendance were the South East Coast Ambulance HQ - Surrey Search & Rescue - Surrey Police - Mole Valley Beat (Surrey Police) - Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and SERV Surrey & South London in the form of me and Polly, it was a privilege to be invited and to pay tribute to our NHS heroes.



## **Still in lockdown**

On duty with SERV - Surrey & South London yesterday riding Polly, taking urgent Blood and Platelets for William Harvey Hospital in Kent, and for once, I didn't get wet ☹️ Since the lockdown British Petroleum (BP) have been incredible in providing Polly and all our emergency vehicles with free fuel during this crisis. It's made an incredible difference in helping to bridge our funding gap, a huge thank you to BP.





## June – Lockdown Continues

This was a moving story of Kelly, Jamie, Tayah and Ayla a family who were directly supported by us. SERV SSL were introduced to Kelly and her family during lockdown. Kelly gave birth to beautiful little Ayla, who was born prematurely at 31 weeks at Royal Surrey County Hospital Maternity Unit. Soon after the birth Kelly was told that she had tested positive for Covid-19 and needed to isolate from her baby. The journey was already hard enough but to leave baby Ayla in hospital and return home was incredibly difficult and emotional.



Dear Ray & Serve,  
It's hard to express in words how thankful we are for your kindness and support. You enabled us to find light in a dark situation and make something that seemed impossible, possible. Thank you so, so much for delivering the milk to our little princess Ayla, helping her grow strong and healthy. We will never forget and will be forever thankful! XXX  
Same, Kelly - big sis Tayah + Ayla Rai



The nurses had told Kelly that they would like her to continue to express breast milk so that Ayla could benefit from all of the protective factors that it offers to give her the best fighting chance. As Kelly was unable to travel and her husband, Jamie was also isolating for medical reasons, on Polly our volunteer Ray collected the expressed milk from their home twice a day and delivered it to Ayla at the Special Care Baby Unit. This service was provided for four weeks, completely free of charge. The family subsequently named the baby in honour of me in recognition of the service given by SERV SSL over those 4 emotional weeks.

## Middlesbrough to Royal Surrey County Hospital



Again, I'm at Brooklands Museum volunteering on the Vanguard an aircraft project, but Chris Butlers calls and asks if I could assist in a coordinated transfer of urgent samples from James Cook Hospital in Middlesbrough to Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford. Riding up to London Gateway Services on the M1 Motorway to meet the rider from Herts and Beds Serv, to take the 3 urgent samples.

It's a very wet day out on the Blood bike – rain so hard that reduced visibility and with roads partially flooded, made my part a tricky 120-mile round trip, but I'm in my usual wet environment.

It took four SERV groups, Cleveland and North Yorkshire, Leicester and Rutland, Herts and Beds, and finally Surrey and South London. At nearly 300 miles, and hours of riding and driving, in the wettest conditions from start to end, it has been completed according to the times that were committed.

Along with the four controllers keeping a watchful eye from their warm armchairs, it's a good job by everyone, and thanks to all, Blood bikers, doing together what they do best, and free.

### Liza – R.I.P Baby

I opened the email request from the Milk Bank at Queen Charlotte Children's Hospital to collect a donation of Human Milk from a Lady Named Liza who resided in Bow, East London. Reading the request, I noticed that this was her first donation and at the end of the request was the words RIP Baby. Sadly, having done a number of these type of requests before, I knew this was going to be an emotional rollercoaster and that I needed to ensure that this assignment would be treated with the utmost care and attention.

I rode through Heavy Rain and traffic to East London, and after knocking the door, it was opened by Liza. After I introduced myself and knowing from my previous training in the field of Victim Support within the Police Force, I decided to engage her in conversation and this ultimately led on to the death of her baby. I was on the doorstep chatting for approximately 20 minutes before leaving with the consignment of Milk.

I attended on several more occasions over a couple of months until her donations ultimately stopped. Each time I picked up her milk we would talk extensively about her baby Mikaeal and moving on. On the last occasion she said that I had brought her back from the depths of depression to where our chats had helped her heal and feel some level of sanity had returned to her mental wellbeing.



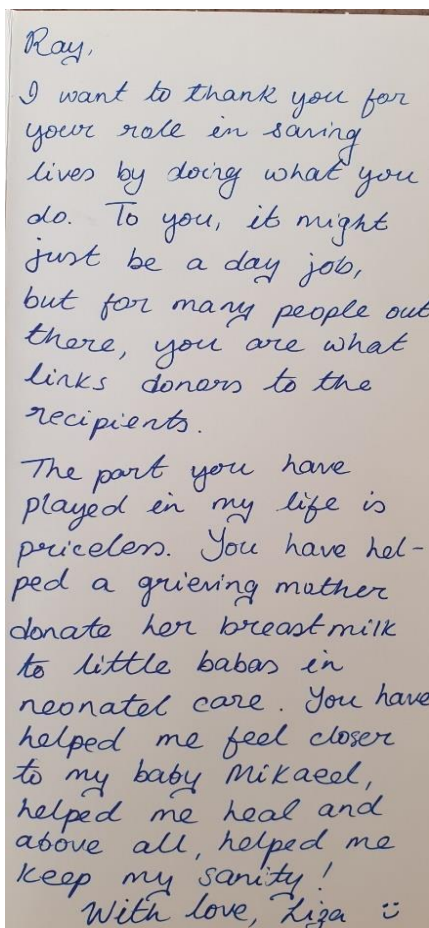


After packing her final donation and wishing her all the best moving forward, she said wait, I have something for you, its nothing too much but just a little something for all I had done over the months for her. She gave me a small wrapped box and a card.



After thanking her and saying goodbye, I rode with a lump in my throat all the way to the Milk Bank at Queen Charlotte Children's Hospital in Du Cane Road, W12.

I opened the box when I got home and found a 'Thank You' Mug specially commissioned by Liza and a card that almost had me in tears. A follow up text from Liza was in my text message inbox.



I was really surprised when you said this never happened before. I know it's a job to you, but as I said in the card, it is so much more than that for women who donate their milk.

For me, it was an experience I went through because I lost my baby to stillbirth. I never knew milk banks existed and I would never have even thought of doing anything like this, if Mikael wasn't taken from me the day I gave birth to him.

What you do is nothing short of bringing people HOPE. After the loss I suffered, knowing something good can come out of something so traumatic meant the world to me.

It was the sole reason I got out of bed in the mornings. Everything that came with expressing and sterilising the bottles gave me a purpose. As you can imagine, carrying a baby for 9 months and not bringing him home can have a horrible effect on a person. I was in a very dark place.

So when I started "drying up" a few weeks ago, I felt guilty that I couldn't do anything to help anymore and I thought about how you'll still carry those bags into the hospital and how you'll continue giving those babies a fighting chance for survival. I needed you to know that what you do makes a world of difference, to the donors and the recipients. For some, it's a matter of life and death and I just thought you should know that you're appreciated.

I wish you all the best for the future and I pray our paths cross again. If we do meet again, drinks are on me!

An excellent example of how Serv Surrey and South London have supported Children Hospitals. In this case Queen Charlotte, with sick babies or mothers in need of urgent Human Milk donations and with the incredible diversity, knowledge, experience and an extreme willingness to help those that need it most, Serv Surrey and South London volunteer riders and Drivers have delivered not only a very efficient service but also a very personal one to those that needed it the most.

A truly humbling experience.

**20<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

My current charity Bike Cedar Tree was exchanged for the new SERV Surrey & London Blood bike, a brand-new Yamaha FJR 1300, the new bike was named Simon ...



The Story of Simon.... In June 2019 Simon Palmer, Dad, husband, son, brother and dear friend to many was sadly killed in a motorbike accident.

In Simon's memory funds were raised to purchase a motorbike for Blood Bikers, a voluntary organisation that provides a FREE out of hours medical transportation service to the National Health Service delivering blood and other medical supplies.

This service literally saves lives, and benefits the NHS considerably each year, by making no charge for over 75,000 deliveries a year for things like blood (red cells), platelets, plasma, serum, surgical instruments, patient's notes, X-rays, Human donor milk and MRI scans.

Our motto "We might be having the ride of YOUR life" - The target of £17,000 was achieved and this bike was purchased and named after Simon.

### **12<sup>th</sup> March – Holly's Last Breast Milk Run**



Blood bike Simon in action - this was a lovely lady who I supported over 6 months – The following was from her Facebook page. - Zeke turns 6 months tomorrow and so I'm no longer allowed to give to the milk bank. This morning my final donation was collected, bringing my total to 24 litres of breast milk donated to St Peter's NICU.

Ray Semmens Thank you Ray! You've been a superstar and I'm so pleased you were able to find this!! 😊😊



I started this diary in April 2019 after the fantastic donation of Polly and felt the need to keep the Northern Polytechnic Lodge up to date with a diary of what a difference it had made to the lives of others. Over this period, I have found myself at the scene of 3 nasty accidents, including taking control at the scene of a fatal accident - been on many a fundraising event for Serv and Since the lockdown been on call every single day and probably helped the NHS save lives and make a difference to others,

From taking the first COVID sample in January 2020 to date, personally I have:

- Been on call **Every day / night** since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 – (over 15 months)
- Ridden in excess of forty-six thousand miles, in all extreme of weathers
- Been on over 1000 runs / call outs / Air Ambulance trauma blood Support
- Taking over 1300 Covid-19 Samples, Blood, Platelets, Human Breast Milk and packages to Hospitals and other medical facilities

These included transfers from other blood biking groups, Attending many private homes, picking up Breast milk, Samples and this included assisting victims of the Covid-19 virus take samples to the hospitals to be tested as a matter of urgency, it's been absolutely exhausting at times but knowing you have made a difference to other people's lives is an incredibly worthwhile and rewarding experience.

One particular run was in fact, a first for me. As a regular Platelet and Plasma donor (117 to date) I took my own Platelet donation that I had donated a couple of days previously from Tooting for a very sick Cancer patient at the William Harvey General Hospital in Kent, how cool is that...

The runs and undertakings shown above are just a tiny window into what I have been up to with Serv–Surrey & South London Bloodbikes supporting our incredible NHS through delivering Human Milk donations, Blood, Plasma, Platelets, Tissue Samples, urgent paperwork / documents, Surgeons operating tools etc and indeed from January 2020 taking Coronavirus samples to Public Health England for urgent testing, and supporting the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance in supplying nightly trauma blood.

I love riding motorcycles, and since leaving school I have always undertaken volunteering and Charity support and currently Volunteer for Macmillan Cancer Support, Teenage Cancer Trust, Motorcycle Outreach, Brooklands Museum and a few other charities – so what better way of giving back a little something by riding the blood bike to deliver to those who desperately need it what is essence is a lifesaving service by Serv S&SL..... it's a fabulous feeling ....

Want to know more ... <http://www.servssl.org.uk/>



**SERV Surrey & South London**  
**Blood Runners**



SERV SURREY & LONDON

## WE'RE RECRUITING!

Every night we deliver life saving blood and medical products to hospitals in your community.

We are looking for volunteers for a variety of roles, including car and bike drivers, controllers and fundraisers.

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