epilepsy society

Timeline


Skippings Farm in Chalfont St Peter.


The Chalfont 'colony' was based on the theory that an outdoor life and intellectual and physical activities were "a very great help in the restoration of nervous equilibrium, and in the occasional cure of the disease." (Sir William Broadbent)


THESE WORKSHOPS WERE ERECTED
IN MEMORY OF
LIEUTENANT ALAN SAVILE MICHOLLS,
4TH (QUEEN'S OWN) HUSSARS
WHO WAS KILLED IN GREECE ON APRIL 7TH 1941.
AND
CAPTAIN GILBERT VIVIAN MICHOLLS,
17TH/21ST LANCERS.
WHO WAS KILLED IN NORTH AFRICA ON APRIL 9TH 1943.

Over the years, the numbers of residents rose, peaking at around 580 in 1942.

Residents at Epilepsy Society had to deal with rationing and regular call ups for World War Two.


We've received multiple visits from the Royal Family over the years, including our patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Diana, Princess of Wales.

Late 1800s

At the end of the 19th century, epilepsy was largely misunderstood and stigmatised. Employment prospects for people with the condition were virtually non-existent. Many ended up in the workhouses or asylums of Victorian England.

It was against this hostile environment that a pioneering group of neurologists took the revolutionary step to found a 'colony' for people with epilepsy where they could work. And in 1892, they chose Chalfont St Peter to establish what would become a beacon of hope for people with epilepsy.

Epilepsy Society is one of the oldest charities operating in the UK today.

Early 1900s

By 1900 the site at Skippings Farm provided seven homes for 90 men and over 40 women. Employment was key, as was fresh air and nutrition. And the peer support of meeting others with epilepsy for the first time, meant that for many people, their seizures improved dramatically. And in between seizures, people with epilepsy led 'normal' lives.

Mid 1900s

The Second World War saw 13 bombs drop on Epilepsy Society's land. Men at the 'colony' manufactured concrete blocks and women made magnetos for aircraft. The centre became a refuge for evacuees with epilepsy.

Post-war, numbers living at the centre peaked at around 580 men, women and children. And although the centre was not taken under the wing of the new National Health Service, it continued to blaze a trail with cutting-edge medical facilities including a surgery complete with an x-ray machine. By the 1950s, new seizure drugs became available and the diagnosis of epilepsy improved thanks to our first electroencephalogram (EEG).

Late 1900s

By the late 1960s, the centre became known as "The Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy". Homes were modernised and employment options improved. The emphasis moved towards empowering people admitted on a short-term basis, to resume their lives outside.

These radical changes helped ensure the Society continued to lead the way in the medical care and rehabilitation of people with epilepsy.

The EEG department was updated with the latest diagnostic equipment. And a research unit began investigating the side effects of medication. Numerous scientific papers were published by the medical team.

Present

Our vision today is a full life for everyone affected by epilepsy. Like our founding fathers, we are still pushing forward the boundaries of the treatment of epilepsy. We use the very latest diagnostic techniques including genomic sequencing, neuro-imaging and Artificial Intelligence to understand better the causes of epilepsy and how to treat it. Our goal is to find the right treatment, at the right dose, from the point of diagnosis. By 2042 – our 150th anniversary – we want to have epilepsy beaten.

And, of course, we continue to provide high quality residential care for people with severe epilepsy and associated conditions, as well as advocating for those with epilepsy.

Our vision is to be at the forefront of research and medicine, ensuring future generations are free from the life changing effects of epilepsy.

Today

World leading research

The ultimate goals of our current research are to spearhead personalised treatment and to incorporate genomic diagnosis into the NHS for people with epilepsy.

epilepsysociety.org.uk/research

Neuroimaging

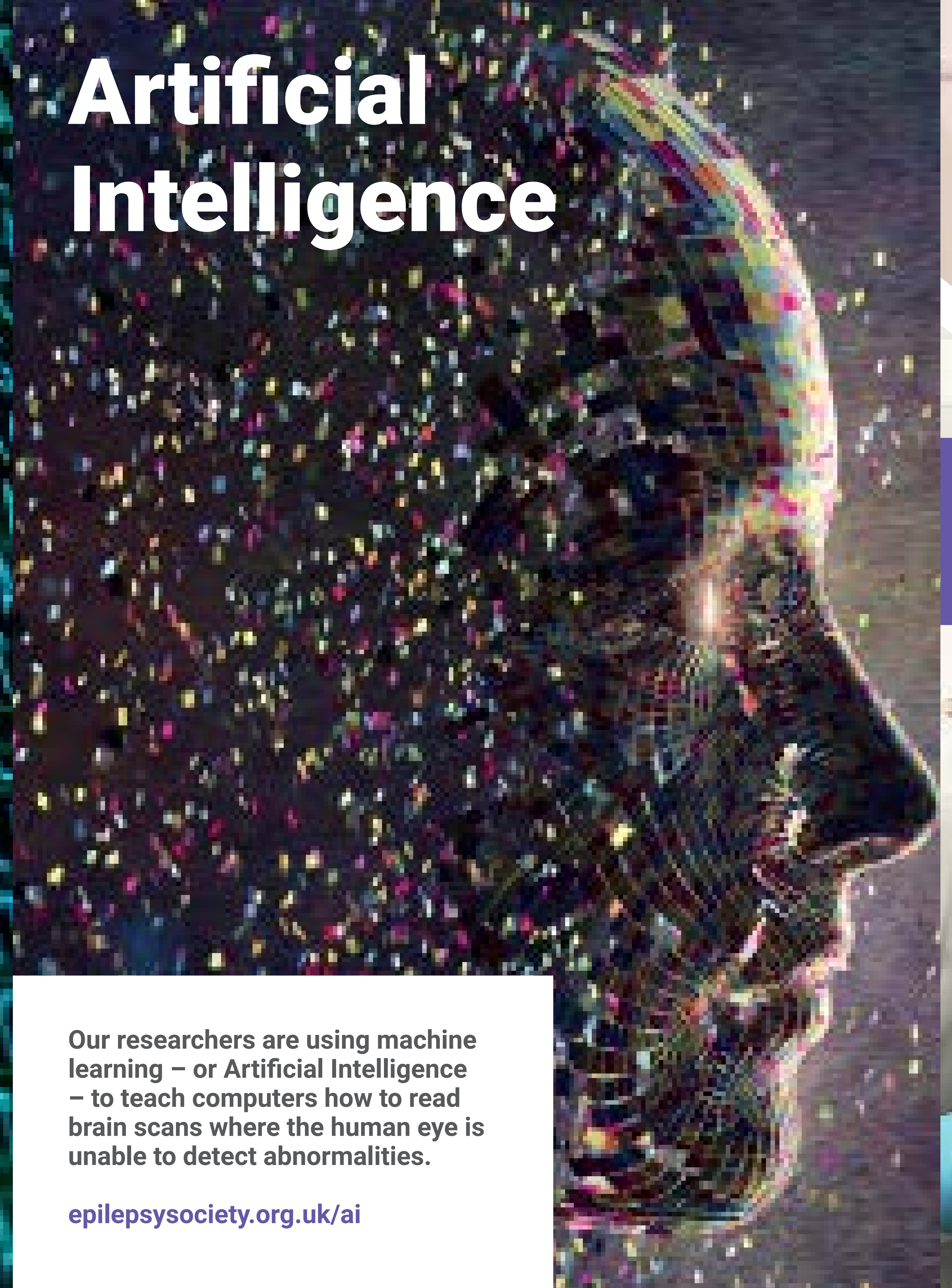
Funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Department of Health, EpiNav™ (Epilepsy Navigator) enables more sophisticated and accurate brain surgery for epilepsy, increasing the numbers of people who can become seizure free.

epilepsysociety.org.uk/neuroimaging

Unlocking the code through genomics

Genomic medicine has the potential to transform the way we care for people with epilepsy. We believe that whole genome sequencing will help us to unravel the way that genes contribute to the different types of epilepsy.

epilepsysociety.org.uk/genomics



Artificial Intelligence

Our researchers are using machine learning – or Artificial Intelligence – to teach computers how to read brain scans where the human eye is unable to detect abnormalities.

epilepsysociety.org.uk/ai

The future

Our mission will always remain the same – ensuring everyone affected by epilepsy has the best opportunity for a full life. We will combine our cutting-edge research, our leading awareness campaigns and our specialist medical care to ensure this happens.

epilepsy society

Helpline
01494 601 400

Monday and Tuesday 9am to 4pm,
Wednesday 9am to 7.30pm.
Confidential, national call rate.
Information and emotional support.

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epilepsysociety.org.uk

/epilepsysociety

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