

Newsletter

Issue 3 | January 2010

SSIT raises money to provide extra equipment, over and above that provided by the NHS, for the patients cared for at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre (DoCSTC). The Trust also benefits people with spinal cord injuries living in the South and South West of England by funding essential equipment which helps them lead an independent life.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, in 2009 we provided £37,000 worth of equipment for the DoCSTC and £57,000 in grants for individuals.

We now face our biggest challenge to date, providing funding for a rehabilitation garden at the DoCSTC. The Jubilee Garden Appeal needs to raise £100,000 and we can only achieve this with your help. Please read on to find out more and help us support this appeal.

Jubilee Garden Appeal

Our appeal aims to make life better for patients at the DoCSTC by providing a specially designed rehabilitation garden. Suitably adapted for wheelchair access, the Jubilee Garden will encourage rehabilitation and wellbeing through gardening as well as providing an important social area outside the hospital environment for patients and their families.

On a visit to the Spinal Centre, HRH the Earl of Wessex unveiled a foundation stone for the Jubilee Garden, marking the start of this exciting project.



Why a garden?

The average length of stay for a patient in the Spinal Centre is nine months. During their rehabilitation phase, most patients are able to move around in their wheelchairs independently but there is a limited range of recreational facilities available to them. When families visit during weekends there are few areas at the Centre where they can spend time together in peaceful and pleasant surroundings.

The Jubilee Garden is an exciting and worthwhile development for both social and therapeutic reasons and we are grateful to SSIT for their ongoing support and help with this project.

Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive of Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

The Jubilee Garden will serve both as an important part of patient rehabilitation and as a social area. As such we envisage that it will become a milestone in the life of the DoCSTC.

The Jubilee Garden will:

- be wholly accessible to wheelchair users
- provide a space for rest and relaxation, in a natural environment
- include raised vegetable and herb beds for use by patients as an integral part of their rehabilitation
- allow patients to develop a skill that they can continue when they return home
- include a patio for families and staff to enjoy.

Please support the Jubilee Garden Appeal.

Visit **www.ssit.org.uk** to donate online or for suggestions of how you can get involved.



FUNDRAISING FOCUS

Santa Fun Run at Longleat



Over 300 Santas of all ages and abilities joined top heptathlete and Gladiator Lucy Boggis at Longleat for the first SSIT Santa Fun Run raising over £6,000. The sun shone and festive music filled the air while Lucy led the warm-up on the steps outside Longleat House. Santas stretched and jumped and even did the can-can! Lord Bath, donned a Santa hat, and started the Run. "It's wonderful to see so many Santas here at Longleat," he said, "and I'm delighted that you are supporting such a worthy cause."

With that message, the Santas set off, some racing others jogging and plenty walking the route through the Longleat Estate with dogs (some dressed in Santa jackets!) and pushchairs. At least five spinal cord injured people joined in the festivities wheeling themselves around the route.

We are hugely grateful to all those who helped make this event such a success and in particular to Lord Bath for choosing SSIT as Charity of the Year 2010 thus enabling us to do the event. Special thanks go to Lucy for taking the time to get involved and helping promote this event and also to those who helped sponsor the event with time or money. Our thanks go to **The Bath Arms in Horningsham** and **Gerald Simonds**, and to **Orangements** in Mere for providing the music and PA system, to **3tr fm** who helped promote the event, and to **3rd Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment** who gave up their free time to help with the manning of this event.

A Big Thank You to everyone who took part in this event – some travelling from as far away as Cornwall – and to all those who donated.

We are hugely grateful to all those who helped make this event such a success and in particular to Lord Bath for choosing SSIT as Longleat's Charity of the Year 2010.

Need help or want to get involved?

If you, or your family and friends would like to get involved with SSIT, or you have any needs that we can help you with, then please visit our website to find out more www.ssit.org.uk

Alternatively you can contact us by post: **SSIT, 21 Chipper Lane, Salisbury SP1 1BG.**

Lulworth Castle Abseil



Over 120 brave volunteers abseiled down Lulworth Castle in Dorset at the end of April 2009, and raised over £17,000 for SSIT – an incredible result! The abseil was the first major fundraising event for the charity to take place outside Wiltshire.

SSIT Trustee Graham Waterton was among the first group to descend the 70ft tower. "I was delighted to support the event," said Graham, "and I admire everyone who undertook the challenge, many of them abseiling for the first time."

Our thanks go to the **Weld family** for the use of the castle, to the **Royal Artillery Recruiting Team** for their time, expertise and sense of humour, and most of all to our volunteers who undertook the challenge giving time, money and showing sheer guts to take part in this event. Well done to you all!

Full details of our 2010 abseil will be on the website soon.

Thank you to ...

... the **Salisbury Inner Wheel** for supporting SSIT in 2009 and raising £1,500; **Sandroyd School** for nominating SSIT as their charity for the summer term of 2009. A Pre-Prep sponsored cycle ride and a summer party raised £1,400; **Veda Soopramanien** and her helpers who raised over £450 with their **Hat & Handbag Bonanza**; **Bristol University Polo Club** for raising over £770 ... and to all the many others who have generously supported SSIT.

East Farm, in Codford, Wiltshire was the venue for a midsummer **Charity Clay Shoot** and SSIT was lucky enough to be one of the benefiting charities. 25 teams took part in this sell-out event helping raise over £8,400 for SSIT. Our thanks go to Jennifer Stratton for hosting and organising such a successful event.

SSIT was delighted to be a beneficiary of the prestigious **Red Carpet Ball** at Thruxton in June last year. This glamorous event, organised by Clare Macnamara, resulted in a donation of over £4,500 to SSIT. Thank you to the organisers for choosing SSIT and to those attending for helping raise the funds.

Paul Gould, a patient at the DoCSTC, left the Centre in the spring of 2009 and returned to work at **Dorset Works Organisation**, part of Dorset County Council. His work colleagues collected £4,000 and presented it to SSIT as a thank you for all the care Paul had received. Huge thanks to all who donated – we are very grateful!

Individual Funding

SSIT continues to provide support for spinal cord injured people in the region. Here are a few of our recent beneficiaries:



Louise Pilgrim was funded with a lightweight wheelchair. She commented: "This chair will be an immense help now that I have returned to full time work and will alleviate the terrible back pain that I have been suffering for many months."

Part-funding for a power wheelchair was provided for **Sue Brotherwood**. She was delighted: "The power chair will give me a new lease of life. Thank you all for your generosity and that of all your contributors."

SSIT provided funding for an all-terrain wheelchair for **Lorna Cherry**. "Thank you for enabling me to access terrains and activities that have been closed to me since my spinal cord injury in 2000."

Geoff Holt's Atlantic Challenge



As we go to press, Geoff Holt, a patient of the DoCSTC in 1984, has just become the first quadriplegic to sail the Atlantic single-handed. The 3,000 mile journey took him a month to complete, across some of the most hostile waters in the world.

Geoff, an experienced sailor before his accident, became the first disabled person to sail single-handed around Great Britain in 2007. His overriding desire in attempting his Atlantic voyage was to inspire others to do something positive with their lives.

He commented: "It's not about being disabled. It's not about sailing the Atlantic Ocean. It's about demonstrating that disability need not be a barrier to achieving something positive in your life"

We congratulate Geoff on his incredible achievement and are delighted that he has agreed to give a fundraising talk about his Atlantic trip in 2010. Full details, including ticket information, will be available on the website in due course.

Sainsbury's local Charity of the Year



In June last year we were delighted to learn that Sainsbury's store in Salisbury had chosen SSIT as their official partner charity for the year. Store Manager Paul Jones commented: "The work that SSIT does clearly touched the hearts and minds of our customers and colleagues. We are delighted to be able to support them and in so doing, we can give something back to the local community."

Sainsbury's has already raised over £2,500 for SSIT with a number of inspired sponsored events. We are very grateful for their continued support.

Shop online and help fundraise with easy fundraising

easyfundraising
.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who shops online via easy fundraising and raises money for SSIT. For those unfamiliar with the system, visit the website www.easyfundraising.org.uk/ssit and follow the simple instructions. All the major online stores are listed and will give a free donation at the time of purchase. It really is so simple!

KEEP AN EYE ON
OUR WEBSITE

www.ssit.org.uk

for additional fundraising
events for 2010.

Funding for the DoCSTC

In early 2009 SSIT funded a unique **Patient Call and Entertainment System** for the Centre. Here's what people have said about it:

Sally Mathieson, founder of SSIT spent nine months in the unit in 2006. She returned for a short stay last summer and was able to test the system. "Not only is it much quieter at night, but without the cumbersome televisions around each bed, there's so much more space. I'm really pleased that we were able to fund this."

Lead Nurse Anne Seaman commented: "The new system has completely transformed the atmosphere on the wards. It's become a very calm environment. Patients can get to sleep easily and not be bothered by a neighbour watching television."

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An **advanced Pressure Imaging System** was funded by SSIT. The system measures pressure on the body where it is in contact with a wheelchair cushion. Because wheelchair users may be seated in the same position for many hours a day the skin becomes vulnerable to pressure ulcers. Pressure ulcers present a significant threat to patient health and may result in bed rest for many months to allow them to heal. As such the benefits of this new system are immeasurable.

Matt Fiddy, Outpatient Technician, commented: "This new system gives us a visual map of an individual's entire seating area. The system provides a picture of the effectiveness of the pressure relieving cushion and an understanding of how limited body movements can help to relieve pressure. This is key to patient wellbeing and quality of life."

SSIT is working with us to give people coping with the extraordinary tragedy of paralysis the chance to re-experience the fundamental things we all take for granted. The improvements SSIT makes to the quality of life of these individuals, by helping with funding, are profound – they are a lifeline to patients and staff.

Melissa Benyon,
Superintendent Physiotherapist.

Who's who at SSIT?



David Chapple is the Consultant Spinal Surgeon for the DoCSTC. He was appointed Consultant Orthopaedic and Spinal Surgeon to Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust in 2001 and has been a Trustee of SSIT since the charity was formed in 2006.

David trained as an undergraduate at St Thomas's Hospital, London and as a Specialist Registrar at St George's Hospital London. Before becoming a

consultant at Salisbury he worked in the Spinal Injuries Unit in Adelaide, Australia as a Clinical and Research Fellow.

We hope that the Jubilee Garden will become a place of sanctuary for patients during their long stay at the Unit and will also serve to help them develop new skills.

David feels passionately about the positive role SSIT can play in enabling and facilitating patients with spinal cord injuries to rebuild their lives. The Jubilee Garden Project was initiated by him. He commented: "We hope that the Jubilee Garden will become a place of sanctuary for patients during their long stay at the Unit and will also serve to help them develop new skills. People with spinal

cord injury experience a dramatic change in the way their time is spent. Hobbies, such as gardening, will be an integral part of their rehabilitation process.

The ultimate aim of this project is to stimulate a life long interest in gardening which will continue to grow after leaving the unit."

David is planning a fundraising cycle tour around the SSIT region in June 2011 and is looking for any cyclists to join the team. If you are interested, please contact info@ssit.org.uk