

# NOC life

Summer 2008 [www.noc.nhs.uk](http://www.noc.nhs.uk)



## Let's dance!

Members of the Crossover Dance Company performed a special dance called Triptych in the hospital's new main atrium. The unique group, which spans the generations and includes a wheelchair-user, are regular visitors to the NOC.

# Welcome to **NOClife...**

You are reading the first edition of NOClife, the new newsletter for anyone interested in Oxford's Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre. We hope you find it informative and would welcome your views and ideas. Please send them to [enquiries@noc.anglox.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@noc.anglox.nhs.uk) We aim to publish the next edition in autumn 2008.

If you would like this information in large print or help in another language, call 01865 738126.

## Open MRI staff praised in new book on claustrophobia

Staff at the NOC's 'Open' MRI unit have been complimented for their efforts to help claustrophobic patients.

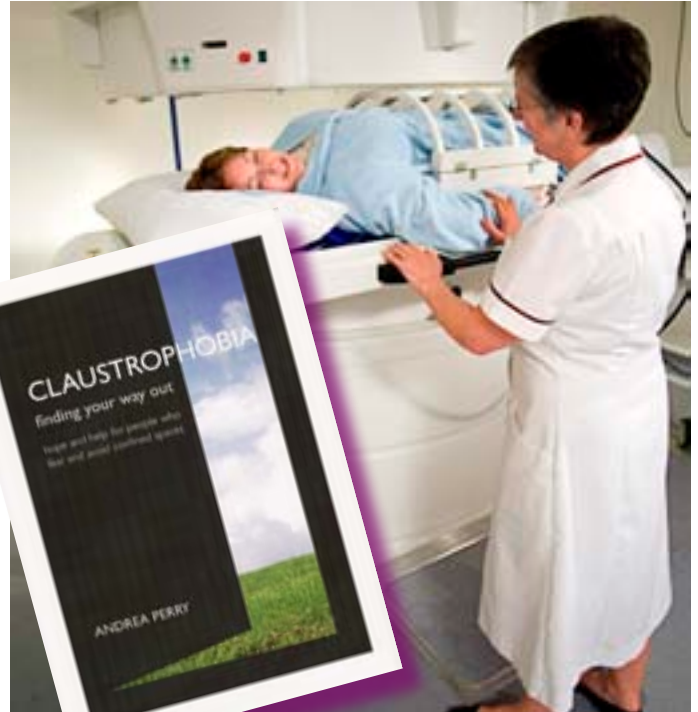
Ten per cent of the population experience claustrophobia in confined and crowded spaces such as lifts, car-washes and enclosed scanners. When a patient is too anxious to complete a scanning procedure, it can be distressing for the individual and costly for the service.

Author Andrea Perry visited the hospital while researching her book 'Claustrophobia – Finding Your Way Out' (Worth Publishing 2008).

She describes NOC staff as "friendly, responsive, and reassuringly matter-of-fact", adding that they "go out of their way to make the experience (of being scanned) as comfortable and easy as possible".

She noted that staff highlight the importance of helping people to relax, and to feel in control at every stage of the process.

The 'Open' MRI differs from conventional scanners in that it is open-sided rather than enclosed like a tunnel. The design is also better for children and larger patients.



■ The NOC has installed a new £1.5m whole body MRI scanner this year. It offers improved image quality and quicker scanning times. As a result more patients are being seen and waiting times are coming down.

## WHAT WE DO

The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre is an internationally recognised centre of excellence, providing routine and specialist orthopaedic, rheumatological and neuro-rehabilitation services to the people of Oxfordshire.

Our patients include people needing a new hip, shoulder or knee, those with severe back pain or sports injuries, children with curvature of the spine or cerebral palsy.

Also on site is the renowned Oxford Centre for Enablement which provides a wide range of services for people with long-term conditions and disability.

## Discussions continue to resolve NOC's future

The future of the NOC has been in the news lately after it was determined that the Trust in its present organisational form cannot provide the financial stability required to progress to Foundation Trust status. This is partly due to the national payment by results (PbR) tariff under which we receive payment for our specialist orthopaedic work.

We are now working with South Central Strategic Health Authority (SCSHA) to explore alternative business or management models for the NOC. Our over-riding priority is to ensure that any decisions secure the future delivery of our specialist musculoskeletal and rehabilitation

services – some of which are not routinely provided anywhere else in the country – and preserve the clinical excellence in our research and training provision of our clinicians and staff. We are committed to wide engagement with our patients, the public, stakeholders and our staff on possible options, and expect any decision on the NOC's future organisational form to be informed through full consultation. There is no suggestion that the NOC is a poor performing trust – the NOC has no deficit and has consistently achieved a financial break-even position.

To read more, go to:  
[www.noc.nhs.uk/aboutus/FutureoftheNOC.aspx](http://www.noc.nhs.uk/aboutus/FutureoftheNOC.aspx)



## Glove gives patients a helping hand

Patients are benefiting from a unique spring-loaded 'glove' that helps them regain the use of a partially paralysed hand.

Patients undergoing rehabilitation at the NOC's Oxford Centre for Enablement following a stroke or head injury are among those being introduced to the SaebFlex arm training programme.

The 'glove' - developed in America - has proved highly effective, even for patients who were advised that their chances for improvement were virtually non-existent.

In one case a patient was able to type, get dressed and even begin to learn to play the guitar after six months of regular treatment.

NOC Senior Physiotherapist Jo Pierce said: "It's a relatively new rehabilitative tool that, as yet, is not widely used in this country.

"The results that can be achieved are really impressive and we're excited at adding this tool to our therapies. It's good and useful when used with the right patient but it's not appropriate for everyone."

## Patient Nicola says thanks

Nine-year-old Nicola Hamblin gave the Orthotics Department at the NOC a cheque for £1,354 earlier this year following a fantastic fundraising effort.



Nicola with Principal Orthotist Paul Horwood

Nicola was diagnosed with scoliosis at the age of seven. She wears a spinal brace made at the NOC for all but one hour every day.

Scoliosis is a potentially life-limiting condition which affects three to four children out of every 1,000 in the UK. It causes the spine to become deformed through an 's' bend curvature and sometimes, as in Nicola's case, twisting as well.

Nicola raised the funds through a number of initiatives including giving a talk about her condition.

The money will be spent on child-friendly orthotic equipment.

## Forum reflects on four years at the NOC

The NOC's Patient and Public Involvement Forum (PPIF) represented the interests of patients, carers and the wider population for over four years. PPIFs are being replaced by Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) following a Government rethink.

Forum members attended induction courses and served on a number of committees including infection control, research and development, patient information strategic review and older people's steering group.

PPIF Chair Eva Blacklock said: "The Trust recognised our role and gave every assistance to ensure that we achieved our objectives. We feel that the Trust has given us total support in the work we have had to do and that we have gained their trust and respect in every way. The NOC has an invaluable reputation for its patient care, for the work they accomplish and the dedication of its staff."



## MEET THE TEAM:

### ■ Shirley Giles Health Care Assistant Ward F

Shirley is the hospital's longest-serving member of staff. She started work in 1970 as a cleaner, making the transition to care about nine years ago.

She said: "The best thing about working at the NOC is the friendship. I get on really well with my colleagues and enjoy caring for patients and then seeing them go home."

She said the ward provided strong support in both their professional careers and personal lives.

## NOC leads national study into shoulder injury

Oxford clinicians have been awarded almost £2m to investigate the best treatment for a shoulder injury. Shoulder tendon tears of the rotator cuff muscles are one of the most common causes of shoulder pain and disability.

The UK Rotator Cuff Surgery Trial is being run by the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedic Surgery (NDOS) at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre with the Health Services Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen.

It is led by NOC orthopaedic specialists Prof Andy Carr and Mr Jonathan Rees, along with Jane Moser, a clinical physiotherapy specialist.

Over the next five years more than 600 patients at 70 centres across the country will take part in the study. Three different methods of treatment will be assessed:

- arthroscopic (keyhole) repair
- mini-open repair
- non-surgical treatment using a programme of rest and exercise

Prof Carr said: "The clinical evidence regarding rotator cuff tears is limited and often conflicting and so this trial has been commissioned to answer these questions."

They have been awarded £1.97m from the Health Technology Assessment programme, part of the National Institute for Health Research.



## Patients give NOC a vote of confidence

Nearly nine out of ten patients receiving treatment at the NOC have rated their care as excellent or very good. The Healthcare Commission national patient survey published in May placed the NOC in the top group of hospital trusts for many key areas. It featured in the top 20% in 34 of the 50 categories. More than 600 NOC patients completed forms after their treatment. Highlights included:

- Third best nationally for providing separate single sex accommodation (96%; national average: 82%)
- 87% rated the overall care they received as excellent or very good (national average: 75%)
- 87% said they were always treated with dignity and respect (national average: 78%)

Trust Chief Executive Jan Fowler said: "We are

delighted with the results which clearly reflect the efforts and excellence of our staff. Most of our patients gave the care they received the highest possible rating."

Jan Fowler,  
Chief Executive





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### Further information:

[oxsport@noc.anglox.nhs.uk](mailto:oxsport@noc.anglox.nhs.uk)

[www.noc.nhs.uk/ourservices/oxsport](http://www.noc.nhs.uk/ourservices/oxsport)

This striking American landscape is on display in the reception area at the Oxford Centre for Enablement until the end of June. The 12 metre photograph 'Anecdotes' was donated to the NOC's art collection by artists Boyd & Evans. Les Evans is a former patient at the NOC. Other artwork on display at the hospital during Artweeks through to the end of June includes:

- **Outpatients Gallery: Emma Reynard**  
Felt works, drawings, paintings and collage inspired by objects found at junk shops and car boot sales.
- **OCE Gallery: Headway clients**  
Paintings and drawings organised by Katherine Pierrepont. Headway Oxford is a charity supporting people affected by brain injury.

All funding for the arts programme has been donated through the NOC Appeal and NOC General Charities.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Around 10 million people in the UK are affected by orthopaedic problems.
- More than 400,000 adults have rheumatoid arthritis.
- 40% of people over 70 have osteoarthritis of the knee.
- We see around **83,000 outpatients** each year. Around **8,000 patients are admitted** for treatment.
- Each year we replace around **740 knees** and **670 hips**.

## It's your choice: see how we measure up

At the NOC we take pride in our excellent services, falling waiting times, skilled and dedicated staff, purpose-built new buildings ... and much more. We aim to be a first-choice hospital for orthopaedic treatment, rheumatology, rehabilitation and disability services. During 2007/08 we exceeded the key national targets around waiting times for patients - a maximum of 18 weeks from GP referral to treatment. Our waiting times are coming down and are well below the national average for orthopaedic services.

We were among the first to achieve the national 18-week waiting target. Faster access to treatment and care is being supported by the new **Choose and Book** system. This national electronic referral service gives patients, in discussion with their GP, a choice of place, date and time for their first outpatient appointment should they need to see a hospital consultant or other healthcare professional. You have the option of booking your appointment in your GP surgery, or over the telephone for one of our clinics.

GPs are able to offer you a choice of hospitals either locally or nationally where appropriate. Other reasons to choose the NOC include:

- We are a specialist hospital employing specialist staff with high skill levels.
- We now run operating theatres six days a week with MRI scanning facilities seven days a week and in the evenings.
- We have one of the lowest infection rates in the country, including MRSA bacteraemia and Clostridium difficile.



Out of the lab...into the clinic:

# Cutting edge

## £1m-a-year to improve links between research and treatment

**T**he NOC has received a major boost by winning major funding to bring scientific breakthroughs out of the laboratory and into hospital clinics.

The hospital has secured £3.75m over four years to research and develop treatments for chronic bone conditions such as osteoporosis and osteoarthritis and advances in joint replacement surgery. It was one of only three hospitals in the UK to be selected by a distinguished international panel of health experts to be Biomedical Research Units (BMUs) in Musculoskeletal Disease.

Working with Oxford University, the NOC's clinicians will be at the forefront of a multi-million pound drive to research musculoskeletal disease. The new Oxford Biomedical Unit will be part of a wider network of 12 BMUs looking at heart disease, nutrition, hearing problems and other conditions under the umbrella of the new National Institute for Health Research.

The NOC's new status reinforces its international reputation at the forefront of research in its specialist field. Dr Tony Berendt, the Trust's medical director, said: "The award recognises that our research into musculoskeletal disease and orthopaedic treatment measures up against international standards of excellence. What is special about the NOC is that there is real integration around the fundamental science of the bone and experienced clinicians who are able to apply new technology and methods in treating patients."

Prof Andy Carr, pictured above, will become director of the new unit. He said research would focus on improving surgical skills, joint replacements and ground-breaking work on regrowing cartilage and tendon, which could ultimately transform the lives of thousands of patients around the world. Disease prevention will be another key area. For example, researchers will be investigating giving pregnant women vitamin D supplements to increase bone strength of babies.

The investment will fund cutting-edge work alongside Oxford University such as using spider silk to repair and regenerate tissue.

“Extraordinary numbers of people get pain because of musculoskeletal diseases such as osteoarthritis which accounts for over half of the reasons for people not being able to go to work.”

Prof Andy Carr, pictured above, director of the new unit

## Continuing to provide the best in children's services

We are providing a comprehensive children's service in conjunction with the Oxford Children's Hospital at the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust. The children's orthopaedic in-patient ward has transferred

from the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre to the Oxford Children's Hospital, following the introduction of the National Service Framework for Children. All children's orthopaedic surgery is now being carried out

at the Oxford Children's Hospital in dedicated facilities with 24-hour access to specialists such as paediatric anaesthetists and paediatricians. The children's unit at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre continues to

provide specialist and routine orthopaedic services to patients under the age of 16 as part of its extensive out-patient and rehabilitation services for children with congenital and developmental musculoskeletal conditions.

## Computer game technology helps Chris cope with his pain

Patients who have lost limbs are taking part in a pioneering trial which uses computer game technology to ease their pain. A sensor similar to that used on a Nintendo Wii is attached to the stump and special software recreates the missing limb and its movements on screen.

Neuro-rehabilitationist Dr David Henderson Slater has been running trials with patient volunteers at the NOC to test the virtual reality system which is due to feature in a TV documentary later this year.

Doctors hope that using it regularly could bring long-term pain relief – potentially benefiting thousands of people nationwide – by ‘persuading’ the brain that the limb is really there. Patients use a virtual pedal to bang a drum pictured on a computer monitor. Those who have lost an arm do a similar exercise involving picking up an apple.

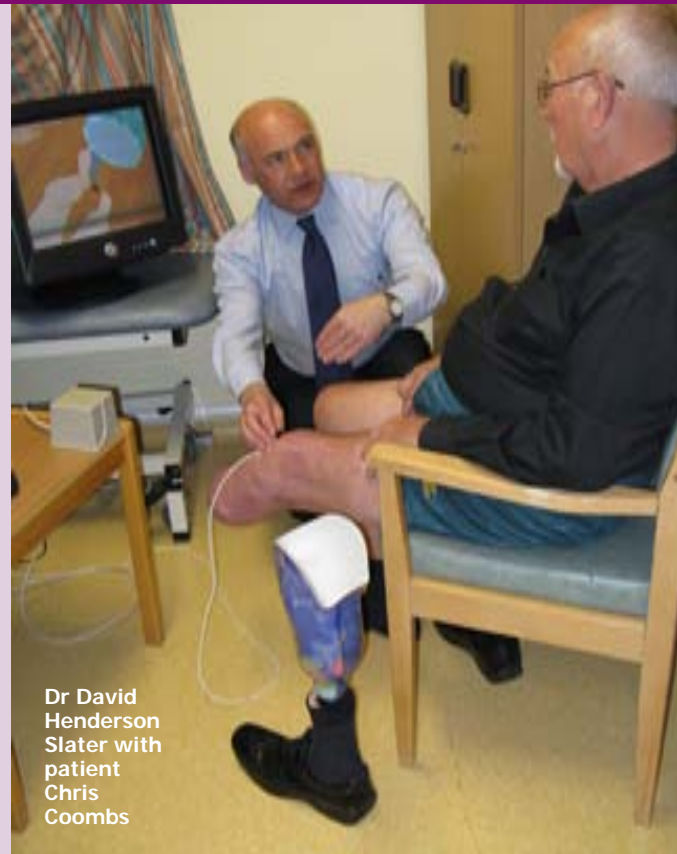
Many people who have had limbs amputated suffer from phantom pain which is constant and untreatable. The causes remain largely unexplained but relate to the

brain trying to work out what has happened to the affected limb. Dr Henderson Slater hopes that if the treatment is started early enough patients may not develop chronic phantom pain.

Dr Henderson Slater is working with a colleague from Poole Hospital, Prof Jonathan Cole, who has developed the virtual reality technology over the last five years. He said: “It senses where you are – a bit like a Wii.”

It is being tested out at the NOC’s Oxford Centre for Enablement and also at Poole Hospital, Dorset.

One of the volunteer patients is Chris Coombs, 67, who lost the lower part of his left leg following a horse-riding accident six years ago. He began to develop phantom limb pain a year ago. Chris said: “I would do anything to get rid of the incessant pain. The night after I tried it I had an unbroken night’s sleep for the first time in nine months. And the next day I was walking around for two-and-a-half hours whereas before I could only stand up for a few minutes.”



Dr David Henderson Slater with patient Chris Coombs

Currently patients can only use the technology in hospital clinics. The designers hope to create a portable system that they can take home and use more often.

■ **Phantom limb pain is experienced by approximately 60 per cent of amputees and relates to damage to neurons in the nervous system. It does not always respond to conventional treatments such as drugs, surgery or electrical stimulation of the brain. Many conventional treatments can also have unpleasant side-effects.**

## YOUR SHOUT!

Air your views on the Trust and its services ... become a member of the

**NOC Network**

Have you got strong views on patient care, parking, information...? The NOC Network is the ideal place to air them.

The NOC Network is an independent group of interested patients and members of the public who are keen to stay up-to-date with the latest developments at the Trust and support patient-focused work. How involved you get is up to you.

**Want to find out more?**

Tel: Caroline Sykes on 01865 737562

### CONTACT US:

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## Fit for the future

Our brand new purpose-built hospital is home to modern wards, clinics and other patient areas.

Patients can expect to enjoy the very best in orthopaedic healthcare in top-class facilities and impressive surroundings.

Visit [www.noc.nhs.uk](http://www.noc.nhs.uk) for regular updates on what's on at the hospital.

Our new hospital buildings were completed in March last year. A new road layout and landscaping have just been finished. The map below shows how to find your way around the site.

