

FEATURES

Passage to India for successful op



Karen Holman back on her bike after two knee operations in India (Picture order no. 0500763)

A Feljham woman was featured on national health TV for becoming a health tourist to the other side of the world. She was one of the patients interviewed in India in a recent edition of ITV's Tonight with Trevor McDonald news series about her experiences. She was interviewed by Trevor McDonald as well as South Coast Radio.

She went to India for an operation on her left knee, was treated within two days of her arrival, had her right knee operated on as well, and flew back with a change in spare from £5,500.

The alternative, she was told, was an indefinite wait for treatment on the NHS for a total of £20,000 for private treatment in this country when she could see a consultant.

Karen (89, of Roundo Avenue, said: "I travelled out on my crutches and came home with my leg back - I can't even start again the active life I love - walking, running, cycling, tennis, going to the gym, plus of course, my voluntary position is to be without knee pain."

"I should not have to travel that distance for treatment but I felt it was something I had to do. Should I sit at home and be in pain or go out and do something?"

"But I feel sad about having to do something away from my local NHS."

Her knee problems began three years ago. She tore a cruciate ligament in her left knee while setting it back through a hole in the plaster through private medical insurance.

In recent months, the pain became so intense she thought she had torn the ligament again. Her GP referred her to a consultant who would be an indefinite wait for NHS treatment for routine non-urgent surgery.

She tried to return to her previous life but was told that there would be a month before an appointment, with any action even further

away. Private cover was not available at this time.

But she and her husband, John, read a newspaper article about a man who had flown to India for back surgery.

They were able to book on the essential and the UK company that facilitated the trip - the Taj Medical Group - through the insurance.

By KEVIN SMITH
Picture by MALCOLM McCUSKEY

Their minds were detailed when she was advised when to see a consultant and emergency department at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester on crutches for help, because despite she was symptomatic. But she had her GP, and recommended she kept taking painkillers until she was able to walk.

It was only a matter of days from then before the Taj Medical Group obtained the consent of a top consultant at the Apollo Hospital in Delhi to operate on her.

He made himself available to speak to her at the hotel and the complete free of charge. The flights were booked and the operation was taken straight to the hospital. Tests were carried out immediately, with the operation on the second day.

It was so successful in terms of pain relief that when the right knee flared up shortly afterwards from the strain of compensating for the damaged one, it was not long before she was back on her feet.

Karen said the standards of medical care were second to none. The Apollo Hospital is a world-class international accreditation to prove it is equal to the best in the world. Standards of hygiene and cleanliness were superb, she said.

NHS in Chichester said the patients were assured of treatment in line with government targets. "Waiting lists have never been shorter," she said.

"Generally, we have met all the national waiting list targets, such as the maximum waiting times of nine months for hip and knee operations, and the maximum waiting times of 17 weeks for outpatient appointments."



Left to right: Chairman of WSSCC, Margaret Johnson, Chairman of the Lodge Hill Trust, Penny Hardwick, and Trevor James, Lodge Hill trustee and financial adviser. (Continued picture)

£1 freehold handover for Trust

By PETER HOMER

YOU CAN'T buy much for a pound these days. In a bid to attract more of the successful West Sussex residential education centre has managed to buy the centre's freehold for just that amount.

The county council has signed over the freehold of Lodge Hill, near Pulborough, to the Lodge Hill Trust, which was set up in 1988 for the venue in 1988.

Since then, the centre has been going from strength to strength with the number of visitors more than doubling to around 26,000 per year.

A new £1m meeting hall capable of holding 230 people will also be open at the centre in 2006.

Margaret Johnson said: "Lodge Hill is a really hard work of the trust to expand and develop the outdoor and indoor experiences which are very much a part of the handover of the freehold."

Trust chairman Penny Hardwick, of Chichester, said: "The trust is very grateful to the county council for the handover of the freehold."

The Taj Medical Group Limited
Tel: 0800 1076 360
www.tajmedicalgroup.co.uk

Indraprastha Apollo Hospital,
New Delhi, India's first and only
Internationally (JCI, USA) accredited
hospital.

Top Surgeon – Dr Yash Gulati
Sr. Consultant Division of Spine Surgery
& Division of Joint Replacement,
Orthopaedics

THE TONY AWARD-WINNING WEST END AND BROADWAY MUSICAL COMEDY

GRACE KENNEDY LESLEY JOSEPH DOMINICA STEELE

MODERN MILLIE

BASED ON THE OSCAR-WINNING FILM STARRING JULIE ANDREWS

THE MAYFLOWER THEATRE

Tue 4 – Sat 15 October

TICKET HOTLINE (023) 8071 1811

BOOK ONLINE www.themayflower.com