

# Turning Points

Steeper Newsletter Issue 10 2018





# CEO message

## Paul Steeper

Welcome to our latest issue of Turning Points.

Empowering individuals to take back control of their environment is not always an easy task, however with our specialist assistive technology products and services, we have been creating independent living solutions for clients for over thirty years now. Read the full story below on how we have achieved this.

In this issue we are also pleased to share with you highlights from the specialist diabetic service in Leeds, the dedicated service award scheme that recognises the people within Steeper and our charity program for 2018.

We hope you enjoy this next issue, and please do share any feedback to [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).

Best wishes,



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We would love to hear from you!  
Please send your feedback to:  
[marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com)

## Dedicated service awards

Significant career milestones are something celebrated here at Steeper and this year saw the launch of the Steeper dedicated service awards.

Proud of our people and the work that they do, this year 131 eligible employees received the dedicated service award. All employees received a certificate and for those who reached the 20, 30, 40 or 50-year milestone, a Steeper plaque, loyalty gift and additional holiday were gifted as a special thank you from the company for their continued service! For more information on career opportunities at Steeper Group please visit the website.

## Steeper exhibits at OT World 2018, Leipzig



With over 21,000 visitors to OT World and 570 exhibitors, the event highlighted new developments and innovative technologies that have been pushing the boundaries of prosthetics, orthotics and rehabilitation. The Steeper stand showcased the new S-Charge System which provided delegates with the opportunity to flex the new S-Cell batteries. Alongside this our custom silicone range proved to be as popular as ever with the high definition realism and exceptional finishes attracting attention from patients and distributors alike.

Joining the Steeper team was a select number of our clinicians who attended to gain invaluable insight into the global industry, new products, techniques and innovations on the market. *"We all get caught up in our day-to-day work in our centres, so to get to see and appreciate our profession on an international level is a real eye-opener. The opportunity to talk to prosthetists from around the world, discover new and interesting products and learn new techniques is an amazing experience."* Stephen Cox, Steeper Prosthetist.

*"For me, attending OT World was both a privilege and an opportunity. The technological advances on display were ground breaking and inspirational; the way that we deliver prosthetic and orthotic services in the future will be radically different. Scanning and 3D printing technologies are advancing at an astonishing pace and fully customised sockets and orthoses are now within reach. OT World was a truly unique opportunity to see and experience all that is on offer for the O&P world."* Vicky Jarvis, Steeper Prosthetist.

The conference also provided great insight for the orthotics team who were there to meet with new and existing suppliers and to identify gaps in the market. *"OTWorld didn't fail to deliver! The show operates at the highest level and is the international stage for innovation in orthopaedic technology."* Richard Thomas, Head of Business Development. The event also helps to inspire future generations with an abundance of students attending. As a recent graduate, Connor Mumford was there to help the orthotics team and found it, *"amazing to see the innovation and enthusiasm from around the world within our diverse field of work."*

To watch the highlights, please visit our Facebook and Twitter pages.

## Steeper Assistive Technology: Providing independent living solutions to clients since 1983



Since 1983, we have been designing and installing award-winning environmental controls and communication solutions to fulfil the needs of individuals across the UK. Our independent living solutions can be tailored to any requirement, providing freedom and peace of mind not only to our clients but to their wider support network too. Our comprehensive range of products and control systems are all designed to change lives for the better; ranging from door entry systems and curtain closure devices, right through to complete home automation and communication packages. Two of our long-term clients Jon and Nicos have both benefited from our products and services. Read how assistive technology has made all the difference to their lives.

Self-taught mouth artist Jon (pictured above), was left paralysed at the age of 17 after being involved in a motorcycle accident. Since 2004 he has been fully independent within his home through the use of Steeper assistive technology, which includes door openers, intercom systems, and automated light switches. However, the most important solution for Jon has been the evoassist – our environmental control app which allows him to automate all of the peripherals throughout his home quickly and easily with his iPad. As a result, he is able to dedicate more time to creating breath-taking pieces of art in his studio, comfortable in the knowledge that he has an assistive technology system that provides him with the independence he strives for.

Similarly, Nicos, (pictured right) was born with cerebral palsy and as he has got older has become unable to use a normal wheelchair. However keen to remain independent, he had an assessment with Steeper to select the most suitable products to aid him in his day-to-day life. His engineer advised that a chin strap switch and the ACTIV 500 attached to his wheelchair, would be the best solution and would enable him to control the assistive technology in his home. Able to move freely around, make phone calls, and change the TV channel has seen Nicos become an ACTIV 500 user for many years, empowering him to remain in control of his life.



For all the latest AT news don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

## Ella Rose Dove at the LPC

Steeper Group's private clinic, The London Prosthetic Centre, recently featured the story of Ella Rose Dove, a below knee amputee who is literally rewriting her story after recently securing a book deal.



Ella pictured with the custom silicone prosthesis.

Ella's story began in May 2016 when a fall whilst out running led to her right leg being amputated. After two years, and expert treatment from Abdo and the team at the LPC, Ella's approach to life and mindset means that she is now achieving things she never thought possible. With her prosthetic care in capable hands at the LPC she has had time to focus on her career and as such has gone from strength to strength. She continues to write for Good Housekeeping and Prima and alongside this, Ella has achieved her lifelong dream of becoming an author after signing an exclusive new book deal.

For more information on The London Prosthetic Centre and Ella's story please visit [www.thelondonprosthetics.com](http://www.thelondonprosthetics.com).



## Paediatric footwear by Steeper



Selection of paediatric footwear from DeNovo, Reed, Pedro & Calzamedi

Over recent years, we have partnered with a variety of market-leading paediatric shoe manufacturers to supply the very best range and provide children with a choice of styles, designs and colours to help with their development. The overall aim is to provide children with shoes that will increase their stability and give them the confidence to reach significant milestones as they grow. On a more technical level, our orthotists commonly prescribe paediatric footwear to improve biomechanical alignment therefore reducing soft tissue stress and pain along with increasing activity level.

Our experience within the field means that we are well equipped to not only supply shoes but also to repair and adapt, enabling children with even the most problematic feet to be fully catered for. Over time, our expert technicians have seen trends develop. Whilst black is still the most popular colour (ideal for school), patent fabrics and sole patterns make the shoes much more child-friendly. Road testing a range of styles from our paediatric footwear range is our resident shoe expert, Max Riley (pictured above).

For more information on our full range of paediatric footwear please contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).

## Patient listening event at Portsmouth Enablement Centre

Listening to patient feedback is something that we take very importantly. On the 15th May, the prosthetists and physiotherapists at Portsmouth Enablement Centre held a listening event to give users of the prosthetic service the chance to express their views, provide feedback and to identify ways of ensuring a continuous improvement plan for the Portsmouth centre. We had a great response, with 17 patients and families plus 8 staff members attending the off-site event.

*"The feedback was very useful and enlightening with issues that seem fairly insignificant to us, appearing to be major concern to users of the service. We have taken all the issues onboard and categorised as: to be addressed straight away, over the next few months or over the longer term. We are privileged to have a wide selection of users that are proactive in ensuring that the Portsmouth Enablement Centre is the best that it can be and we look forward to implementing changes."* Steve Parker, Manager - Portsmouth

## Steeper charities of the year 2018



After the success of our charity program in 2017, and with a large number of charities put forward for 2018, this year, we have chosen 12 charities, one for each month that we will be fundraising for. As part of our fundraising, each month our employees dress down and donate to our charity of the month. Our Harold Wood centre has come up with an innovative way of taking part by adding something to their uniform. In May the team elected to all wear a moustache in support of Prostate Cancer UK!

For more information on our charity partnerships please contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).



## Improving diabetic care within the Leeds specialist diabetic clinic

The Diabetic Limb Salvage Service is one of many pioneering initiatives helping to improve diabetic footcare within Leeds. Working in partnership with the NHS, Steeper orthotist Tanmeet Kaur is part of the multi-disciplinary team treating all diabetic patients with a foot ulcer.

Over the last decade, the number of patients with diabetes has risen by 150%, and with the condition growing at a particularly high rate, diabetes is now one of the world's most common long-term health conditions. As a result, the demand for specialist services within the NHS has grown and specialist clinics similar to the one at St James' University Hospital in Leeds have been vital in reducing the pressure on community care. Designed specifically to treat higher-risk patients and those with more complex cases, the limb salvage service's primary aim is to educate patients in ulcer care, enabling them to effectively control their diabetes in the long term.

Uniquely, this service combines the expertise of doctors, podiatrists, orthotists and surgeons, enabling patients to receive the very best treatment for ulcer care. Having all services within the same clinic also makes it convenient for patients attending and as a consequence, the clinic has a vastly reduced Charcot consolidation rate compared to the national average. This reduction can also be attributed to the unique casting method developed by clinicians and modified through patient consultation within the clinic.

The LOCC (Leeds Orthotic Contact Cast) delivers a gold standard in casting and combines orthotic biomechanical knowledge with a custom cast, resulting in higher levels of patient compliance and improved ulcer healing times. Unlike similar casting techniques, the LOCC uniquely helps to reduce ulcer pressure by evenly distributing the pressure around the leg. In addition, the cast significantly reduces ankle movement which has a positive effect on healing. For increased protection and to keep patients in a full foot cast mobile, a Steeper Stock Cast Boot is then fitted. With a wider width, this boot easily accommodates bulky casts and provides additional support and comfort for the patient. Available on a short lead time, stock braces are most commonly used within the diabetic clinic as any delays are critical and can make a significant difference to the outcome of the patient's limb. Therefore, having quick, scheduled and on-time deliveries, along with a well-established customer relationship is essential in the successful running of the clinic, something that Steeper is very proud to be part of.

As more of the population are diagnosed with diabetes, treatment of the condition has steadily increased over the years. Along with an improved awareness, clinicians and community nurses within Leeds are trained on a regular basis by specialists including Steeper orthotist, Tanmeet. The training covers topics from shoes to feet, helping to spot symptoms early and reducing the severity of the outcome. Running alongside the clinic and training days are two other unique services within Leeds - a community podiatry team and foot protection service. Both of these have proven to be a vital link in helping reduce numbers at the diabetic clinic and within the community.

For more information on the Diabetic Limb Salvage Service and our orthotic presence within the clinic at St James' University Hospital, please contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).





## Steps to relieving phantom limb pain



With phantom limb pain affecting between 50-80% of amputees, treatment techniques and wellbeing advice are continuously being explored to assist in maintaining a comfortable lifestyle. Phantom limb pain symptoms take on many forms, with some people experiencing mild 'flashes' of irritation, whilst others suffer from continuous severe pain. As a result treatment is difficult, as its effectiveness varies for each individual. The most common treatments include medication, acupuncture, mental imagery (imagining using your missing limb), Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS), and silicone liners containing metallurgical fabric - such as the Össur RELAX Range. This fabric acts as a shield against electro-magnetic waves which are widely considered the trigger for phantom pain, therefore offering a long-term remedy.

Whilst patients trial the best solution for them to relieve their symptoms, looking after and monitoring the residual limb on a daily basis is key - as it reduces the risk of any further irritation or infection occurring which may result in being unable to wear a prosthetic limb. Here are some helpful tips on how to care for your residual limb:

- Do not wear your prosthesis overnight, instead allow the skin to rest. The limb can then be washed with warm water and mild antibacterial soap, and then dried thoroughly.
- Wearing a metallurgical knitted sock, for example the Relax Night Care Sock, can reduce skin irritation, relieve phantom pain and absorb perspiration. However these must be cleaned daily and changed as the swelling in the residual limb changes.
- Check the limb every day for signs of infection, for example if it is warm, tender, swollen, or if any redness after removing a prosthetic does not go away after 20 minutes. Seek medical advice from a GP or Rehabilitation Centre if there is a suspected infection.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle and seek advice on diet and exercise. Looking after remaining limbs is just as important as looking after those that have been lost.

These fundamental steps are a simple way of helping to reducing pain within the residual limb, allowing individuals to lead a fulfilled and healthy life. Please contact your prosthetist immediately if you experience any pain or discomfort within your residual limb.

For more information on how the Össur RELAX Range provides significant therapeutic effect in around 80% of amputees affected by phantom pain, contact our customer service team on [customerservices@steepergroup.com](mailto:customerservices@steepergroup.com) for a brochure, or take a look at our website [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com) for further details.

## Delivering paediatric sports prostheses

In April it was announced that a further £1.5 million was being invested into sports and activity prosthetics for children. The fund, which has already supported more than 220 disabled children will enable more children to access sporting prostheses, including running blades, as well as supporting research and innovation to improve prosthetic technology for the future. In the announcement, two patients, Ollie Bauert and Maisie Catt from the Prosthetic Rehabilitation Centre at the RNOH in Stanmore, told Sky News how it felt to be fitted with activity blades for the first time. To watch the full video, visit the Steeper Facebook and Twitter pages.



## Upcoming events

The second half of 2018 is full of interesting local and national events that we are attending. Don't forget to like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn to view our stand pictures first!

**26th September** - Wales Amputee Rehabilitation Study Day

**26 - 29th September** - AOPA National Assembly, Canada

**12 - 13th October** - ISPO UK MS, Southampton

**19 - 21st October** - Reach Family Weekend, Bristol

# 12:08

## Friday 27th January

was the moment that **Leon** stood unaided for the very first time. After routine back surgery left Leon with a severed spinal cord, he was faced with a long rehabilitation process to enable him to gain any sort of function. After being referred to the orthotics department at Portsmouth Enablement Centre. Leon met with orthotist Frank, and after discussing all the treatment options, Leon was prescribed bilateral KAFOs custom made by Steeper. Designed with his biomechanical deficits in mind, his KAFOs are tailored to his exacting needs, giving him extra support and control. With the support of his orthotist and with his own sheer determination, Leon has defied all the odds and is now able to stand unaided.





# Case Study

## Leon Bunce



### The story

On 7th December 2011, Leon Bunce had routine surgery on his back but complications meant he was left with a severed spinal cord and paralysed from the waist down.

The severity of the damage was unclear at the beginning, but after several months in hospital and in excruciating pain, Leon was finally told that the damage was permanent and that he would require long-term rehabilitation to learn how to deal with his condition and gain as much function as possible. On being discharged from hospital, Leon was a full-time wheelchair user, something that he hated more than anything. Going from being over 6ft 3 to being sat down all day, he hated the way people looked down at him. Not only that, he now felt that he could no longer go anywhere as there are so many restrictions for disabled access. Going for a pint with his friends was something he enjoyed, but with steps to get into most places and disabled toilets hard to navigate, it became hard work.

Fed up with life as he knew it and wanting to do something, he asked his GP for a referral to the orthotics department at Portsmouth Enablement Centre.

### The solution

At his first appointment, Leon talked to Steeper orthotist, Frank about his goal of wanting to be able to stand again. After plenty of discussions and after analysing the various different options, it was decided that a custom-made bilateral KAFO would be the best option for Leon. However, with the severity of his condition, it was not going to be an easy process.

Leon's bilateral KAFO was custom made by Steeper and was designed based on his specific biomechanical deficits. As such, providing him with the exact level of control and support he needs in both his knees and ankles. Only a few

weeks after his initial assessment, Leon was fitted with his orthosis. Not knowing what to expect, his first reaction was that "they are very white." But eager to try them out he put them on for the first time. His new KAFOs fitted well to his legs and with the support from Frank and Hannah, Leon stood for the first time.

"From the outset, it was always going to be difficult, Leon has a severely severed spine and if I am honest, I was not sure at the beginning whether he would ever be able to stand. But there was a chance and in order to give Leon the best possible outcome, we recommended that along with his orthosis he perform simple hip flexion exercises on a daily basis. Building up his strength and aligning his hips properly has helped him tremendously and as a result, he can now stand unaided." Frank Frankovitch, Leon's orthotist.

### The turning point

Standing for the first time, taking all of his energy, was the moment when Leon realised he had achieved something he never thought he would be able to do. His ultimate goal was to be able to stand and achieving this at his first fitting gave him the strength to continue and push himself even further. Continuing with his exercises and using his bilateral KAFOs daily, Leon has built up the strength to be able to stand unaided. After being constrained to his wheelchair, he is now able to stand in his kitchen with a cup of coffee, making more of a difference to his life than he ever imagined.

Whilst he has a long road of rehabilitation in front of him, with the help of his Steeper orthotists and his custom-made bilateral KAFOs Leon has proved that with the right help and support around you, you really can achieve anything you set your mind to.

**To find out more about Leon visit [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com)**