

1 Ashmour Gardens
Rumford Essex RM1 4RH

7 March 2007: 6 weeks' post-op

Dear Barbara and Stephen

When I first rang the company and chatted with Stephen, my reaction was "Poland!! ~~for 28 days!!~~ I could never do that." After receipt of all the details and some reflection on the matter, it occurred to me that there was absolutely no reason why I shouldn't go. I considered other options but the great attraction of Krakow was the intensive physiotherapy offered. Together with my total fear of MRSA or other infections on offer in this country, my decision was made. Within a fortnight of decision time, I was on my way. Just enough time because I had to do all the organising from the basic 'was my passport still in date?' to 'were my nighties decent enough to be seen in?', with no spare time to get the collywobbles.

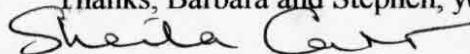
Everything that was promised was done. From the pick up at my house by Trevor with airport assistance all the way to the plane, taxi to the hospital, 4 weeks' stay to the same care all the way back to my home, everything went like clockwork.

From day one the doctors, physios, nurses and ancillary staff worked as a team to give me good care. Henryk (butler and taxi driver), Renata (patient liaison) and Maczyk (physio) were my heroes for the 4 weeks and then there was Magda and Pieter and Jerry ... I could go on. They were all terrific and with the excellent English of Renata and Maczyk and the amazing sign language of Henryk, I managed fine. The physio, 'Magic' by name and nature, made me work hard in the gym every afternoon, and my Polish extended to 'Dobra dobra' (which he told me means 'get lost!' and I hope it is nothing worse) which I used on occasion when he urged me to work even harder. But he got me walking without a stick, to the delight of my family when I got back home. Dear Renata and her husband, Milosz, were the best of carers and I do hope to see them again one day when I return to Krakow as a tourist.

Dr Francuk who had overall care of me always explained every single procedure in his perfect English (he must be a poet in another life somewhere) and Professor Pachalski presented me with a book on Krakow and delighted in telling me the history of the beautiful city. Take note, there were mammoth hunters in the place where the hospital buildings now stand. We'll have to take his word for it! I took photos of the people and my surroundings. Together with my diary and the gift from the professor (I got everyone to sign the book) and, of course, MY BRAND NEW POLISH KNEE I can look back and congratulate myself on making a good decision.

The food was plentiful and I was fortunate in that I found it almost always absolutely delicious. And the laundry was washed and ironed to perfection.

Thanks, Barbara and Stephen, you are doing a great job.



SHEILA CARR (with apologies for mistakes in Polish name-spelling)

P.S. Why did all the female physios look good enough to be film stars?