

## TESTIMONIAL FROM MRS JOYCE BOTTOMEY (Poland 12 Sept to 27 Oct 2004)

In 1995 I had a right knee joint replacement under the NHS. By 2001 I was suffering pain in my left knee, which became more severe in 2002. I was unable to see an NHS Consultant for about six months, so I paid and went to see a Consultant privately. He diagnosed that I needed a left knee joint replacement. I waited until 2004 by which time I was now experiencing pain in my right knee as well. I saw him once again and he said it was time to go ahead with surgery on my left knee and I probably needed surgery on my right knee to re-line the patella. I queried when I could have the surgery carried out, and how much it would cost. He suggested that he could endeavour to get NHS bed but do the operation himself, the cost would be £8000 for just my left knee, instead of £18,000 in the private hospital. It finally became obvious that getting a bed under the NHS proved as difficult for him as it was for me. If he had put me on the list at this time, it was a two year wait.

A complimentary copy of SAGA magazine was sent to us, and we saw an advert for a company called "Barbara Thurgood & Co." who were able to arrange joint replacement without waiting! We telephoned, from then on we were helped at every step and all the arrangements were made for us. We were shaken at first that I would have to travel to POLAND, but we need not have worried.

The Consultation cost £50 and I saw Professor Franczuk in a hotel in Croydon on 3rd September, he was able to communicate in English, and confirm the diagnosis of a new knee joint in my left knee, the right knee gave him some concern on seeing the X-rays, he confirmed patella repair but was not sure if he would have to replace the joint as well.

We then met with Steve and Barbara Thurgood who made arrangements for me to go to Poland on 11th September. I paid their invoice in the sum of £7,950 which was for 28 days joint replacements package - knee revision surgery. A chauffeur driven car picked me up from my village in Devon, whisked me to a hotel in Croydon, the next morning I was driven to Gatwick for a Polish Airlines flight to Krakow. At the Airport I felt like royalty, the care was wonderful. Arrived in Krakow (still accompanied by Steve and Barbara) and was driven to the hospital, some twenty minutes outside Krakow.

I was very nervous. I was given a room which was very clean (strikingly so) with my own bathroom, TV, Video, library of books and Video Tapes. The nurses were very kind, but with little English, they liked to practice with me. Doctors, of which there were many, were superb. The Professor saw me and said they had decided to wait a week before surgery, during which time they worked hard on my right knee to test the joint. On 30th September I had surgery on my right knee. The patella was relined and general cleaning of joint, but no joint replacement, the Professor came to see me and to tell me the news and suggested that I wait for a few days, when he would undertake replacement of the knee joint in my left knee. On 30th September, I underwent this further surgery. It would mean more time in hospital, but I agreed, and I was charged nothing further.

By this time I had met other English patients and all were delighted with the care they had received through Barbara Thurgood. Free laundry service was provided, and a mobile phone on which our family could call us any time.

During the whole of my time in hospital, Renata the Administrator employed by Barbara, visited me at least twice a day. She shopped for me, dealt with my emails and post but most of all talked and comforted me. I was also visited by Barbara when she was in Poland.

I spent a further period in the hospital, receiving exercise and treatment from the physios, I was transferred to the Rehabilitation Unit on 15th October.

After extensive physio and exercise, walking and climbing stairs, I was discharged on 27th October, I was escorted back to England by Barbara and Steve after some six and a half weeks in Poland.

On 4th December I had a further consultation with the Professor in London, free of charge, and he was extremely pleased with my progress and told me to live my life fully, he plans to see me again in March, 2005.

I cannot say enough with regard to my care and treatment, it was superb. Barbara and Steve are doing a magnificent job, and I strongly recommend anyone who is waiting for joint replacement to get in touch with them. I have also offered that Barbara may put people in touch with me for a chat.

MRS JOYCE BOTTOMLEY (11th December, 2004)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Bottomley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.