

DRAFT

### ***Double knee replacement patient conquers Shenandoah Mountain***

A Darlington woman and recipient of a double knee replacement has conquered all the odds to climb a mountain in America.

Helen Armstrong, a former child protection officer, completed the feat while holidaying in Washington D.C. – six months after her second total knee replacement surgery, which replaces both sides of the knee joint.

Helen's quality of life and mobility was suffering as she had great discomfort in her right knee. After seeing her GP; she was referred to Mr Anwar Jafri, a Consultant in Lower Limb Replacement and Trauma, at Nuffield Health Tees Hospital and underwent surgery in 2013.

It was then noticed at her one year check-up that she had severe symptoms of osteoarthritis in her other knee and after discussion about the pros and cons of surgery underwent knee replacement surgery.

Six months after the second operation, while on holiday in America, Helen hiked a trail on Shenandoah Mountain.

Helen said: "It was a fantastic personal achievement as I was determined to do a walk of some kind, on top of taking in the sights of Washington D.C., which involved a lot of walking. We were staying at a hotel at 3,500ft, so I decided to climb the rest of the way, which was very challenging and difficult, but I was so proud when I reached the summit.

"I was in incredible pain prior to my first knee surgery, mainly in my right knee, which made me reluctant to go out of the house and it was difficult to do the simplest of tasks. The surgery went well and I thought nothing more of it as my recovery was going well.

Knee replacements run in Helen's family as her mother received one at the age of 85.

Helen added: "I was initially restricted by what I could do following the two surgeries, which meant that I put on some weight, but now I have so much more confidence as I am able to move freely and have lost four stone in the process. It really has given

me a new lease of life, as my legs are now straight for the first time in a while. I can't thank Mr Jafri enough for his ongoing support and physiotherapy, and the mountain climb was for him."

Mr Jafri said: "I am delighted that Helen is no longer in any pain or discomfort and is able to enjoy a good standard of living once again. Knee replacement surgery is a common procedure today with tens of thousands of operations taking place each year"

"Helen's case of having osteoarthritis in both knees is not unusual, her progress has been excellent, culminating in this mountain climb, which is a fantastic achievement. I am delighted that her knee replacements have really improved her quality of life and general health. It has helped her to lose a massive amount of weight and get back to the hobbies that she loves."

## **ENDS**

**Media Contact:** Liz Hands (01325) 363 436

**Editors notes:** Nuffield Health Tees Hospital has established itself as one of the leading providers of healthcare in Teesside, serving patients from Stockton, Darlington, Middlesbrough and the surrounding areas since 1981. It also attracts a number of patients from further afield, including York and Cumbria.

Because Nuffield Health Tees Hospital is a **not-for-profit organisation**, meaning all profits are reinvested into better healthcare and better facilities for patients. Nuffield sees patients from all private health insurers as well as self-funding patients. It also offers treatment to NHS patients in a range of specialities.

Patients have private en-suite rooms with free Wi-Fi couples with matron-led care delivered by experienced and attentive staff. Facilities at Nuffield Tees include a spinal unit, outpatient consulting rooms, free car parking, physiotherapy, an on-site pharmacy along with radiology, imaging and pathology departments.