



Newsletter: August 2014

How it all started



On the night of 16th January 2013, a few days before his 18th birthday, in dark, freezing conditions, Tom Church's life changed permanently when he was involved in a horrific car accident resulting in the loss of his left leg above the knee.



Thanks to the excellent care he received in Aintree Hospital Critical Care and Trauma Ward and later in Whiston Hospital, St Helens, he has made an astonishing recovery.

He could have given up, spent the rest of his life feeling sorry for himself and resigning himself to never taking part in sport again.

Not Tom. He had been inspired by the 2012 Paralympics and scoured the internet to find out how to get back into sport. There were so many inspiring stories. He decided that not only did he want to achieve his own personal goal of returning to sport, but he realised that there were many others just like him. He wanted to do something to help.

He also realised that if he managed to return to sport, his fitness level would improve, reducing his dependence on the National Health Service.

As a result, of his incredible determination, bravery and refusal to ever give up, he and a few people close to him set up the "Tom Church Foundation" on 23rd February 2013, becoming a Registered Charity on 10th May 2013. The Foundation aims to help Tom and others like him to return to mobility and in that, reach their full potential.

WHY SET UP A CHARITY ?

Why is there a Foundation to do the work that the NHS already is and should be doing ?
Simple – the NHS is doing a fantastic job – the picture above was taken at a Liverpool Hospital.

It is the finest healthcare institution on the planet – but it has time and resource constraints.

Time is not something we have a great deal of as an amputee seeking a return to some kind of mobility.

As a young person, and a recent amputee, it is vitally important to be exercising and moving the residual limb as much as possible.

Also, the faster a person is given the right prosthetic (so they don't develop "bad habits"), the better the prognosis for future mobility.

So – the charity compliments the excellent work of the NHS and not only brings forward the timescale for fitment of prosthetics, but facilitates the provision of more "intelligent" ones.

PROGRESS TO DATE

TOM

Thanks to many hundreds of very generous people, organisations and charity fund raising events, in November of last year, within a few days of an incredibly successful 'Tom Church Foundation Inaugural Winter Ball' held on 8th November 2013, organised by Lindsay and Tony Carr, (which raised over £21,000), he was fitted with the very latest prosthetic leg at the London Prosthetic Centre in Kingston upon Thames.

The Ottobock 'Genium' knee and energy storing foot (shown in the picture below) enable Tom to walk normally and eventually run !

Tom is pictured left with Abdo S. Haider of the London Prosthetics Centre. Abdo is one of the country's leading prosthetists and here we see him making final adjustments to Tom's 'Genium' knee joint prior to him taking a 'test drive' on the new limb !



So successful has the limb been that within only a few days of receiving it, on 25th November 2013, Tom played his first round of golf, carding a respectable 102, only 10 months since his accident...!

TOBY

Toby is a young lad who is a brilliant footballer ! He's only 10 years old, so we cannot share his full identity or print a picture, but he needed a prosthetic arm, having been born with a missing forearm and wanting to look like the other children. When we first met Toby, his



language is football – he ‘talks’ through his skills and has been signed by a local team.

A shining example of a young person who simply doesn’t let life interfere with his enjoyment and enthusiasm to help others – another inspirational person.

Of course, the Foundation said ‘yes’ and in June, this year, Toby received his new arm and was no longer embarrassed in front of his friends !

We will bring you more updates as they come in and we are permitted to print.

RESEARCH

Shh.... It’s a secret !

No, seriously, we as a foundation are privileged to be involved with Manchester: Integrating Medicine and Innovative Technology (MIMIT™) as part of a vast team of companies and intellectuals who are pushing the boundaries of prosthetic technologies to make easier to use, more convenient and more functional. These are early days, but we seriously hope to make a difference not only to the people we help directly through the foundation, but to thousands who will benefit from the innovations that we are involved with.

AND FINALLY

The charity exists to help people - particularly young people - recent amputees, who could return to sport given the right help and equipment.

Our founder, Tom, wishes to lead the way and be an example to those who follow. Its much easier to have someone helping you who can truly say ‘yes... me too..”

So – why is sport so important to us ?

Its simple - Helping people post amputation to either return to sport or even take part in sport for the first time has well proven health and fitness benefits not to mention the psychological benefits of achieving against the odds. ie: it not only benefits the individual, but it saves the Health Service money by maintaining a high standard of health.

When the London 2012 Paralympics introduced their strap line “Meet the Superhumans”, little did we know how true that phrase actually is.

Tom is documenting his own journey back to mobility, into sport and sharing each key step via social media – Facebook and Twitter.

Also, the Foundation has a simple, “signposting” website that shares the details of the Foundation as it develops – it also has links to the social media feeds:

www.tomchurchfoundation.org and
www.tomchurchfoundation.com

So Many Events

The fund raising has taken on a life of its own and the British public have been and are being fantastic. If you check out the Facebook Page and Twitter feed accessible via the websites above, you will see just how many amazing events have been held, ranging from a Charity Golf day to a Toddler Triathlon, The Great North Swim, Assault Courses, the massively successful Winter Ball, the list goes on...

We will never, ever stop saying ‘thank you’.

So ... Thank you !! and please keep supporting us ! We will try to help – one person at a time...