

# Points Turning

Steeper Newsletter Issue 06 2017



Steeper  
exhibits  
at BAPO

*"My personal challenge was  
finding my own image again."*  
- Charlotte Hannibal

Tommy-Ray  
helps raise the profile  
of Plagiocephaly

**Steeper**  
embarks on  
next turning  
point...

# CEO message

## Paul Steeper

### Our next turning point at Steeper

I am delighted to announce that Steeper has started 2017 with an exciting new turning point. John Midgley and I have acquired Steeper Group from our private investors, Dunedin. I invite you to read our full announcement inside.

In this issue of Turning Points, we continue to share the progress and stories of our patients who are at the core of everything we do. In this issue, we spotlight on Charlotte Hannibal whose confidence has improved with the help of her new silicone hand from the Steeper Silicone Clinic and coinciding with the recent Plagiocephaly awareness day we are privileged to share Tommy-Ray's story.

As you can read, we are currently all hands on deck as we embark on our relocation to a new site and our exciting future for Steeper Group.

I hope you enjoy this next issue, and please remember to follow us on social media for the latest, most up to date news.

Best wishes,



## Steeper prosthetics as artistic inspiration

Prosthetics and technology are frequently a hot topic in the media, and is an area in which the younger generation are becoming more and interested in. Over the last few months, Steeper have been involved with helping to inspire the next generation of potential engineers and prosthetists, from primary school through to college ages. Here's a snapshot of our recent visitor.

In a previous issue of Turning Points, we featured Steeper Project Engineer, Julie Tasker for the 'Women in Engineering' campaign.

Following this, Hollie Bevan, a sixth form student at Benton Park School with an interest in the prosthetics industry, visited Steeper and met with Julie to gain a better understanding about prosthetics products, function and aesthetic appeal, to form the foundation of her art project.

Amazed by the developments and the range of prosthetics, particularly the realism of the custom silicone, Hollie left Steeper with an increased interest in undertaking a Prosthetics and Orthotics degree course to start her future career.



*"It looks so real! I have never seen a hand that is so lifelike - it's a fantastic sculpture and the details are amazing."*

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We would love to hear from you! Please send your feedback to:

[marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com)

## Embarking on our next turning point...

Steeper is delighted to announce that two members of the existing executive board of directors, Paul Steeper, CEO and John Midgley, Finance Director, have acquired the business from UK mid-market private equity firm, Dunedin. For many years, Steeper has been owned by private equity firms, and by Dunedin since 2005. This particular investment and support received from Dunedin has been vital in enabling the company to grow to its current position in the market.

As part of the agreement, the company's award-winning bebionic area of the business has transferred ownership to German prosthetics company, Ottobock.

Almost 100 years ago, Steeper was founded in the 1920s by Paul Steeper's late grandfather, Hugh. The company initially set out to provide prosthetic limbs to veterans of the Great War, and since then has expanded across prosthetics, orthotics and assistive technology - with a focus on creating significant turning points in individuals' lives through exceptional clinical services and award-winning products.

Paul Steeper and John Midgley's combined 40 years' experience at the company will ensure a smooth continuation of the business. John Midgley said, "For many years, Steeper has been owned by private equity firms, which has enabled the company to grow to its current position in the market. We are delighted to be moving forward on a new journey from this strong base. Both Paul and I have been long-standing members of the executive board of directors, and are confident and excited about what the future holds."

Paul Steeper added, "We have enjoyed our time with Dunedin and greatly appreciate the support we have received. We are now looking forward to the future as we seek to further strengthen our existing positive relationships with customers, our distributors and our suppliers, and continuing to provide the best products and services to the industry".

We are currently in the process of relocating our existing Unit 7 site in Leeds to our new Steeper Headquarters which will complement and support the excellent work of our dedicated centres around the country.

The move to this facility will allow us to create our 'centre of excellence', gather all staff in one attractive location by consolidating all existing business functions currently located within units 6, 7 and 11; improve efficiency between manufacturing and office operations, and ultimately deliver the highest levels of service to customers across our Orthotic, Prosthetic and Assistive Technology business areas.

For over 25 years, we have had a strong holding in Leeds, something which we are proud of and intend to continue with. Our new property is situated close to the M1 and is easily accessible by both car and public transport, being within a mile from Hunslet Trading Estate. The site at Intermezzo Drive offers a flexible and open space that will effectively accommodate our requirements for all group manufacturing and administrative functions. We will retain the current Unit 7 facility for the duration of the project so we can transfer all processes in a controlled and managed fashion.

Throughout the planning, we have and will continue to work closely with Leeds City Council. We are delighted to thank Leeds City Council and the LEP for financially supporting this move with grant assistance, as they recognise the significant impact our work has on the wider community in Leeds and nationwide.

We are excited about the benefits that these positive developments will bring and are confident of a bright and prosperous future. For further details or enquiries, please contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).



Artist Impressions of Steeper HQ





*“Every child deserves a head start in life and Steeper Clinic are with you every step of the way, providing the best treatment for your baby.”*

Pictured: Tommy-Ray (above)  
Kate & STARband graduate (opposite)

Almost half of all babies under the age of one are affected by plagiocephaly, a condition more commonly known as ‘flat head syndrome’. However, with very little know about this condition and the treatments available, finding the best care and advice for your baby can be difficult. In a bid to raise awareness, World Plagiocephaly Awareness Day has taken place on Tuesday 4th April to highlight

this little known condition that affects so many babies in the UK alone.

For most babies, the head shape will often improve by itself over time naturally, however, in those more severe instances, there are a variety of different options available; with the most successful and popular treatment being the STARband™ cranial remoulding orthosis. Whilst most cases are not a major cause for concern, research has shown that there are possible links in moderate to severe cases to an increased risk of developing problems with visual tracking, mandibular asymmetry, auditory threshold insufficiency and developmental delays.

### What is the STARband?

Clinical Specialist and STARband Cranial Educator, Kate Chauhan, explains more about the condition and why the STARband has proved successful for numerous babies.

“Deformational plagiocephaly, more commonly known as “flat head syndrome”, is a common condition and occurs when external force causes a baby’s head to take on an abnormal shape. It is characterised by flattening of one side of the back of the head and can be noticeable from birth, or can present itself in the first few months of life. The STARband works by gently redirecting the head growth to improve proportion and symmetry. You may recognise the STARband as a ‘baby helmet’ and it is a plastic foam lined, custom moulded device designed to gently correct the shape of your baby’s head. The band is evaluated and adjusted on a regular basis by an orthotist, to precisely guide growth throughout the entire treatment programme.”

There can be a number of different causes of head shape deformities within babies. The most common is deformational plagiocephaly. Encouraging babies to spend increased time on their tummy may help to alleviate some of the deformity and will also help to build strong neck and back muscles. However, in cases when ‘tummy time’ is not enough the STARband will help encourage a natural and healthy head shape.

### Treatment at Steeper Clinic

At Steeper Clinic, our approach is simple: earlier detection, increased awareness and education for parents. For one little boy, STARband has made a remarkable difference. Here, his mum talks about his journey and his experiences at Steeper Clinic;

When Tommy-Ray was just three months old I noticed his head was an odd shape so mentioned this to the nurses. They explained that it was normal and would rectify itself. As Tommy-Ray began to grow, his head shape worsened. I mentioned this to the midwife and health visitor several times, I was told it was due to the way he lay, and advised to re-position his head whilst sleeping. I tried this, but it made no difference at all. Once Tommy-Ray began to hold himself upright, I noticed his head always dropped to one side, I



used toys and played games to encourage him to turn his head but he continued to struggle and after speaking to his paediatrician, Tommy-Ray was diagnosed with torticollis (tight neck muscles) and as a result he was also diagnosed with Flat Head Syndrome.

After a lot of internet research, I came across Steeper Clinic and knew right away that I needed to book an appointment for Tommy-Ray.

At his first appointment, my husband and I were informed that due to Tommy-Ray being 6 months old we were unlikely to see any improvements from repositioning alone and were recommended the STARband helmet treatment to begin as soon as possible.

“Due to the severity of Tommy-Ray’s head shape, his age and the fact his condition was worsening rather than improving, the STARband helmet was the most suitable treatment for Tommy-Ray” Kate Chauhan.

On the day of the helmet fitting we were so nervous that we were going to be upset seeing our baby in the helmet, but all we felt was overwhelming relief, knowing that we were doing the right thing for our son. Since that day, we haven’t looked back. Tommy-Ray managed the transition into his helmet exceptionally well, he slept all night and on his first night sleeping in the helmet he began to roll and sleep on his side, something that he had never done before as he found it too difficult to roll with his head being so flat at the back. After only 10 days, there was a significant improvement in Tommy-Ray’s head shape, the flatness was reducing and whilst it is not about perfection, the improvements have been more than noticeable. Overall, Tommy-Ray’s treatment lasted 6 months and although this seems like a long time, it flew by quickly. We have no regret about opting for the STARband and would 100% make the same decision again.

Since graduating from his helmet treatment, Tommy-Ray has been doing very well and is continuing to fly through his milestones!

### Further Advice

For further advice, or if you are a parent concerned about your child’s head shape, please contact Steeper Clinic on: [enquiries@steeperclinic.com](mailto:enquiries@steeperclinic.com)

# Steeper at BAPO

The 2017 British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists Conference took place on the 17th-19th March and Steeper welcomed delegates to the exhibition stand showcasing the new-to-market lower limb prosthetic MPC solutions; the Kinnex foot and Plié 3 knee.

“BAPO was a great success, the event always attracts interest from industry professionals and is a good place for us to highlight our lower and upper limb offerings.”  
 Carl Chatfield, Product Sales Director.

The BAPO conference theme this year was Pushing Boundaries, featuring a range of speakers including Francesca Martinez, Captain Dave Henson and Megan Giglia who highlighted how they had overcome adversity to push their own boundaries, achieving entertainment and athletic success at the highest level. Attended by prosthetists, orthotists and students, the event consisted of educational lectures, graduate stories and clinical sessions from industry leaders.

The conference also saw the launch of the National Training Programme for Rehab Technicians, enabling Technicians from the industry to

achieve an accredited qualification, in collaboration with Strathclyde University through a distance learning approach.

“The BAPO conference went very well this year and the delegate turnout was high attracting many new delegates, BAPO would like to thank all of the speakers and delegates for making this year’s conference a resounding success.”

Alex Callaghan, Steeper Orthotic Clinical Services Manager and member of the BAPO Executive Committee.

## Training provided for the MPK Package



One of these options, supplied by Steeper to the UK market, includes the new Steeper MPK package. The package includes a Plié 3 full limb build with choice of adaptors, designer fairings, selection of three foot options (the Highlander, Sierra or Kinterra) and a five year warranty.

The Plié 3 knee is submersible and more rugged than ever before with stronger construction. With the most responsive stumble and fall protection, users can instinctively move at their own pace in any direction...even if it's taking small short steps or pivoting in confined spaces. With a more streamlined, intuitive set up, the Plié 3 makes it even easier for prosthetists to help patients expand their freedom.

Over the last few weeks the Steeper team have been offering dedicated Plié 3 training events to help prosthetists and physiotherapists, understand the features, benefits and clinical application of the Plié 3.



Stanmore Plié 3 training day

With hundreds of amputees living in England with above knee limb loss and hip disarticulation, the decision to approve funding via the NHS for Microprocessor Controlled Prosthetic Knees (MPKs) has been welcomed by the industry.

This decision marks the beginning of the implementation of a policy change for MPKs, aimed to improve the quality of limb loss rehabilitation for above knee amputees.

MPKs will now be funded through Specialised Commissioning by NHS England and will soon be available through Rehabilitation Service Centres to amputees who meet the criteria set out in the policy. With a variety of specialised MPK options available to amputees, the lives of patients could be dramatically improved, especially for those users transferring from mechanical prosthetic knees.

For more information on the Plié 3 knee and the MPK package, please contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).

## 10:07 Friday 12th August

was the moment **Charlotte** regained a piece of her old reflection. After contracting Meningitis and Septicaemia whilst at university, Charlotte was put into an induced coma and spent the next four months in hospital. Whilst lucky to be alive, Charlotte has had all the fingers from her left hand amputated. Struggling with the attention that her hands brought, Charlotte was desperate to find a way to hide in a crowd and disguise her amputation. Now thanks to the Steeper Silicone Clinic and her new prosthetic hand, she can do just this, giving herself the freedom to live her life the way she now wants to.



# Case Study

## Charlotte Hannibal



Steeper Technician, Mark

“As a young woman, you are expected to look a certain way. My personal challenge with this was finding my own image again, and how I wanted to look.”

### The story

Charlotte was a healthy and happy 18 year old, just beginning her business degree at Nottingham Trent University when she contracted Meningitis and Septicaemia.

After a few weeks at university, Charlotte was enjoying her new life: going out and meeting new people, she was having a great time. That was until she awoke on one Tuesday morning with flu-like symptoms. Believing she had ‘fresher’s flu’, she thought nothing of it. Sadly, that was not the case and by Wednesday evening she had been put into an induced coma, where she spent the next three weeks, further spending another four months in hospital. Charlotte will be forever grateful to the team at the Kingsmill Hospital in Mansfield and Nottingham City Hospital for saving her life as many others diagnosed with Meningitis are not so lucky and despite all the after effects, she now has to live her life with, she knows that she is lucky to be alive.

### The solution

Charlotte is now a double transtibial amputee, and has also had all the fingers from her left hand amputated. Coming to terms with her own image has been a struggle for Charlotte and deciding how she wanted to look was a major part of her recovery. In order for her to regain her confidence, Charlotte had a look at different partial hand prosthetics available. However, she felt that none were right for her, instead feeling that they would make her hand stand out more than if she wore no false limbs at all.

Discovering the work of the Steeper Silicone Clinic and the different prosthetics available was a major step in her recovery. Finally, she had found a prosthetic that would help her to hide in a crowd and disappear from the stares. Charlotte’s experience at the Steeper Silicone Clinic has been, “nothing but a pleasure. They have catered to my every desire when creating this prosthetic for me and I couldn’t be happier.”

Charlotte’s hand has been specially crafted by Steeper Technician, Mark. With over ten years’ experience at sculpting silicone hands, Mark took great pleasure in creating this special hand for Charlotte. “Charlotte’s hand is a blend of natural shades and pigments perfectly matched to her skin tone. In consultation with Charlotte, we carefully crafted her prosthetic to match the scarring on her arms, so that the silicone prosthetic looks as realistic and natural as possible. It was a great pleasure providing this hand for Charlotte as we can see the difference it has made to her life already.”

### The turning point

For Charlotte, being able to sit in a room full of people and them not to notice that her hand is a false limb makes her life much easier. On days when she is not feeling that great, she can put on her hand and continue with her daily life, going under the radar and disguising her amputation. However on the days when she is raising awareness of Meningitis and Septicaemia for the two charities that have helped her immensely; Meningitis Now and Meningitis Research Foundation, she is proud to show of her silicone hand and loves the reactions from others when they discover her hand is a prosthetic.

Since her diagnosis, Charlotte’s perspective on life has changed drastically, she now realises that life is too short not to be doing the things she enjoys the most, something she believes everyone should take into consideration.

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

**For further information about custom silicone cosmesis,**  
**contact [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com) or visit**  
[www.thelondonprosthetics.com](http://www.thelondonprosthetics.com)