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Jubilee Garden launched at National Gardening Show

A specially designed rehabilitation garden for spinal cord injured patients in the South and South West of England is to be launched at a reception at the National Gardening Show on Friday 3 September 2010.

The 'Jubilee Garden', which is being funded by the Southern Spinal Injuries Trust (SSIT), will allow for horticulture to be used as an integral part of the rehabilitation programme at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre in Salisbury as well as providing an important outdoor social area for patients.

Each year around 100 patients are admitted to the Spinal Centre in Salisbury for specialist care following a spinal cord injury. Patients come from all over the South and South West of England and the average stay is nine months. At present there is a limited range of recreational facilities available to patients and when families visit during weekends there are few areas of the Centre where they can spend time together. The Jubilee Garden will allow patients to develop an interest in gardening and in so doing maximise their potential independence.

Rosemarie Castle, Head Occupational Therapist at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre commented: "To have an accessible garden at the Spinal Centre will be an invaluable asset and we look forward to using horticulture as an integral part of our rehabilitation process. Patients will aim to improve balance, build stamina, and increase movement and strength of their limbs through purposeful activity in the garden while also gaining enormous therapeutic benefits from being outdoors and away from the busy clinical world of the ward."

SSIT Trustee and Consultant Spinal Surgeon David Chapple commented: "We hope that the Jubilee Garden will become a place of sanctuary for patients during their long stay at the Centre and that it will help them develop and enjoy new skills. We are confident that the Jubilee Garden will improve the quality of life for patients being treated there."

A first draft of the design for the Jubilee Garden will be unveiled at the National Gardening Show reception. Tracy Wilson MBE, an independent horticultural advisor, lecturer and broadcaster, is heading up the design team and will work with Consultants, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Patients to produce the final design for the Jubilee Garden.

Donations to the Jubilee Garden appeal can be made via the SSIT website: www.ssit.org.uk

Further information from Sue Hall

e: sue.hall914@btinternet.com

t: 01252 323914/07769 953 537

Editor's Note: The Southern Spinal Injuries Trust (SSIT) is a regional charity set up to support the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre and people with spinal cord injury living in the South and South West of England. Since its formation in September 2006 SSIT has provided £120,000 worth of equipment for the Spinal Centre and £115,000 in grants for individuals to fund specialised equipment.

