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Spinal surgeons support Horatio's Garden
Dartmoor Cycle Challenge takes place Sunday 27 May 2012

Top spinal surgeons from the South West of England are lending their support to Horatio's Garden, the pioneering rehabilitation garden planned for the region's specialist spinal centre, by taking part in a charity cycle challenge organised by the Southern Spinal Injuries Trust (SSIT).

The Dartmoor Cycle Challenge, which takes place on Sunday 27 May, will bring together spinal surgeons and their former patients, families and friends for a three-distance event starting and finishing at the River Dart Country Park in Ashburton, Devon. People with spinal cord injury will be able to take part thanks to the all-terrain wheelchairs being provided by Mountain Trike.

All funds raised through this event will support Horatio's Garden at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre in Salisbury. This innovative project will create a place of tranquillity and beauty for patients to enjoy while being treated for this most devastating of injuries.

Horatio's Garden is named in memory of Horatio Chapple who had planned to study medicine and was a volunteer at the Spinal Treatment Centre. Horatio helped with research that identified patients' needs for a garden.

David Chapple, Consultant Spinal Surgeon at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre and SSIT Trustee, is leading the Dartmoor Cycle Challenge. Fellow surgeons from Taunton, Exeter, Plymouth and Bristol have already signed up to join him on the challenge.

David Chapple commented: "This is SSIT's first major fundraising event outside the Salisbury area and it's wonderful to know that so many are keen to support this important project. Horatio's Garden will undoubtedly help improve the quality of life for those who face long stays in hospital following a spinal cord injury."

The Dartmoor Cycle Challenge will sweep through the Dartmoor National Park, linking villages and attractions along the way. There will be three different distance loops, offering a challenge for all levels of experience and ability. Serious cyclists can sign up for the 61-mile ride which has some challenging hill climbs that require plenty of stamina and a genuine lust for adventure; the 21-mile ride follows the same route until Dartmeet and then continues with some steep climbing towards Widcombe-in-the-Moor. A one-mile route for wheelchair users and younger children will take place within the Country Park.

The event will be organised and fully supported by Discover Adventure. Registration for adults costs £30 with a minimum sponsorship target of £50. Entry for wheelchair users is £10. More information, including online registration, is via the SSIT website www.ssit.org.uk

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Editor's Notes:

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 in the South and South West of England.

Horatio's Garden Appeal is being led by the Southern Spinal Injuries Trust.

Cleve West, one of the UK's leading contemporary landscape designers, is designing Horatio's Garden and work will start in early spring. The second phase of the appeal will see the addition of a greenhouse to enable gardening to be used as part of patients' rehabilitation therapy.

To view the first video blog for Horatio's Garden Appeal please click on the link below:

<http://www.ssit.org.uk/ssit-page.php?pageID=34>