

New Collaborative Links for the Society in Canada



Professor Graham Smith (in ice hockey gear) and Professor George Borden



Society Chairman, Professor Graham Smith recently visited Canada where he linked up with Professor George Borden, recently appointed to The Society of Sports Therapists' Executive Committee. Whilst there, he spent time at the University of Windsor where he was seeking to develop an opportunity for a graduate from one of the Society's collaborative Degree programmes to visit Windsor and gain some experience in a Canadian Collegiate environment.

Professor Borden is a long time associate of both The Society of

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Sports Therapists and the University of Windsor. He was particularly keen for Professor Smith to meet up with two highly experienced members of the athletic therapy staff Kathy Harvie and Dave Stoute, both of whom are based at the University of Windsor, Green Shield Canada Sports Therapy Clinic.

Professor Smith said:

'Kathy and Dave have 18 and 20 years of experience respectively. I was keen to see the centre as I had heard so much about it. I also felt it would be an ideal place to learn about how to deal with injuries in sports, where the problems are exacerbated by equipment worn by the participants e.g. Ice Hockey and American Football. These sports are particularly relevant as these are 2 rapidly developing sports in the UK.'

For Professor Smith, the equipment room proved a source of great fascination: He said:

'One of the most interesting and insightful parts of the visit was spending time in the equipment room looking at all of the different types of helmets, gloves and pads that both ice hockey players and footballers wear when training and competing.'

'It was also fascinating having the opportunity to talk with Dave and Kathy about the inherent problems that



Dave Stoute, Professor Graham Smith and Kathy Harvie

they have to deal with if someone is seriously injured and wearing this kit. For

example, if a footballer has a suspected neck injury do you leave his helmet on or take it off? If they have a severe chest injury and they are wearing heavy padding how do you get to the site of the injury to assess it? These are every day occurrences that they have to deal with which, until you see, feel or wear the equipment, you never consider.

'Consequently as part of Sports Therapy it becomes an important role, especially for anybody working in these sports. To have had the opportunity to sit and talk with two highly respected athletic therapists was a fantastic honour.'



The University of Windsor has excellent sports facilities which, although by North American college standards are not considered massive, they are still facilities that we rarely see in the UK. The football arena and athletic track are of such high quality that they were used for the Canadian Track and Field Olympic trials before Beijing – an event in which George, Kathy and Dave were all involved.

Professor Graham Smith said:

'Because of its geographical position, a lot of the facilities are for indoor sports with ice hockey being one of their key areas. My visit coincided with the Lancers, the University of Windsor ice hockey team, enjoying a very successful season. The Spitfires are the professional ice hockey team in Windsor and they are also keen to give the sports therapist, lucky enough to be selected to visit Windsor, a chance to experience life in the fast lane of this sport. This is a fantastic link that Professor George Borden has been able to develop and take forward for us.'

'Whilst in Windsor I also had the opportunity to visit a brand new and inspirational multidisciplinary sports medicine centre which had recently opened. The Loaring is owned, run and managed by Charlotte Loaring, a physiotherapist with not only vision but a sports pedigree of her own. She comes from a family known throughout Canada for its sporting excellence; her grandfather was a competitor in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Besides having space and being well equipped and planned, the centre is staffed by Physical Therapists, Athletic Trainers, Massage Trainers and various professionals from the health and fitness industry. This ensures that the patients have access to a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary care to help them on the road to recovery.



Professor Graham Smith and Charlotte Loaring

For the last part of Professor Smith's trip both he and Professor Borden travelled to Toronto

to visit the David L MacIntosh Sports Medicine Clinic at the University of Toronto.

Professor Smith said:

'This clinic prides itself on being the first ever Sports Medicine Clinic in Canada and for any 'anoraks' reading this, David L MacIntosh was the orthopaedic consultant who designed the MacIntosh knee replacement.

'The clinic has been open for 60 years! So who says that Sports Medicine is a new discipline. Whilst there, we were hosted by Agnes McKowski, who is the current chair of the Canadian Sports Physiotherapy Association. She gave George and myself a detailed and comprehensive tour of the facilities and the City centre campus of the University of Toronto. The sports stadium, the campus and all the facilities we visited were in the heart of Toronto city centre but still created the feeling that you were in a self contained environment in its own grounds. Once again this clinic is a multi-disciplinary facility which is highly respected, covering the broad spectrum of physiotherapy. It would have been great to have had the opportunity to spend more time there and I hope I will get the opportunity to do so in the not too distant future.'

For Professor Smith and The Society the trip is hopefully the start of a new journey. He said: *'I was extremely grateful that George, through his network of contacts, had been able to set up this visit to Canada. It was a stimulating, interesting and motivating trip– we hope that it will now be the catalyst for future trips and reciprocal links between The Society of Sports Therapists, the University of Windsor and Athletic Therapists in Canada*



Professor George Borden, Agnes McKowski and Professor Graham Smith

'I believe that there are significant similarities between the Canadian trained Athletic Therapists and members of The Society of Sports Therapists and both have a lot that they could teach and learn from each other professionally and politically. I also found it fascinating that the Athletic Therapy Department at the University of Windsor was referred to as a Sports Therapy Clinic – even as far back as 1995. Hence my thoughts that we have a more symbiotic link than I would have ever considered possible, prior to making the trip.

'A special thanks to George for setting up the trip, to Dave and Kathy and her husband John for their hospitality and to Charlotte, Agnes and everyone else for making me feel so welcome.'

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