



**CONVINCED:** Raymond Knox was so convinced of the merits of the treatment he decided to set up the clinic in Moira

## Treatment provides hope and can really transform lives

A BRITISH engineer and an ex-British international athlete are the men who have brought TAMARS to Northern Ireland.

Robert Taylor, an engineer from Cornwall invented the TAMARS equipment, which is proving to be a revelation in the battle against back pain, while Raymond Knox from Waringstown went to see the treatment at work and was so convinced of its merits he decided to set up a clinic in Moira, Co Down to deliver it.

Robert has spent almost 20 years looking at the dynamics of the spine and applying the scientific principles of engineering to develop the PAM machine, which works on the spinal column, to increase mobility and suppleness.

The equipment basically consists of a clever computer software, which controls a bionic handset.

The hand has four pneumatic fingers, or pistons, which stimulate those joints in the spine which have gone stiff back into action, by rotating them and gently removing curves and twists in the spinal column.

The handset has different levels of power – the lower levels being more gentle for the more painful conditions or weak backs.

The handset also has three different modes for working the spine:

1. Spasm: relaxing the muscles.
2. Reflex: stimulating the spinal reflexes
3. Mobilise: counter rotating the vertebrae.

Spasm and mobilising are techniques applied by practitioners such as chiropractors and osteopaths, but the difference is that the TAMARS handset – imitating the hand of a practitioner – can work at 25 times the speed of a human – with extraordinary results.

Raymond Knox has brought in two of the bionic tools to Moira, where local physio Hilary Stoddart has received specialist training from Robert and is working with patients three times a week.

The plan is to expand and have other physios working in the clinic.

Raymond said: "I read about TAMARS nearly three years ago and spoke to physios and osteopaths at the time to try to get them to bring it in here, but no one was interested.

"In the end, I sent a friend, who had severe curvature at the top of his spine and was ready to give up work due to the pain, over to England for treatment.

"He had been diagnosed as needing major surgery, but there were risks involved in that. There seemed little hope for him, but, after a number of TAMARS treatments, his back became almost normal again."

He continued: "I then went across for treatment myself and saw others being treated for various types of problems and I became so convinced in it I inquired with Robert about bringing it to Northern Ireland."

He continued: "Robert spent time with Hilary showing her how to use the machine and it is an ongoing process learning the range of the things you can do with it. It needed a bit of patience.

"We then opened the clinic in December and, through word of mouth, have had more and more patients and we are seeing some spectacular results.

"We do not want to exaggerate the benefits, but the majority of patients report improvements in their condition – some are really transformed.

"We have had people come in who have completely lost hope. They have been severely stooped over and after a few treatments they are actually gaining height as their spines straighten.

"We are not claiming miracle cures but we are saying this treatment can bring major relief for many people.

"It does not heal damaged backs, but it puts in place the conditions for the body to begin healing itself."

# Backing the use of a bionic hand for pain

Back problems have grown dramatically in the UK over the last 30 years.

Now a new high-tech treatment known as TAMARS – which gently straightens the spine, improves posture and back mobility – is providing positive results for sufferers in Northern Ireland.

**STEPHEN DEMPSTER** – a slave to his sore back – has tried the treatment and found it worked



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IF you have suffered from back pain for years, you may have given up on ever finding a cure.

Been to the doctor, the physio, the chiropractor?

Tried acupuncture, or herbal remedies?

Popped the pain-killers and anti-inflammatory tablets and

eventually settled on long periods of just not moving?

If so, you are not alone.

The statistics surrounding back pain are startling and it is a problem which is growing year by year: 80 per cent of us are expected to suffer some sort of back problem in our lifetime.

14 million visits to the doctor a year in the UK are back related. £480 million is spent every year by the health service treating back pain. 120 million days' sick leave are taken by people suffering a back complaint and £5 billion is lost to UK industry and business because of sickness related back problems.

Cynics may note that back pain also creates a multi-billion pound industry of its own – with chiropractors, osteopaths, physios, surgeons, and others all profiting.

Businesses may note the financial costs to them.

But for those particularly affected, the reality of a back problem can be a life which is severely restricted, miserable and depressing.

So when a new method of treatment appears on the market, it is worth checking out.

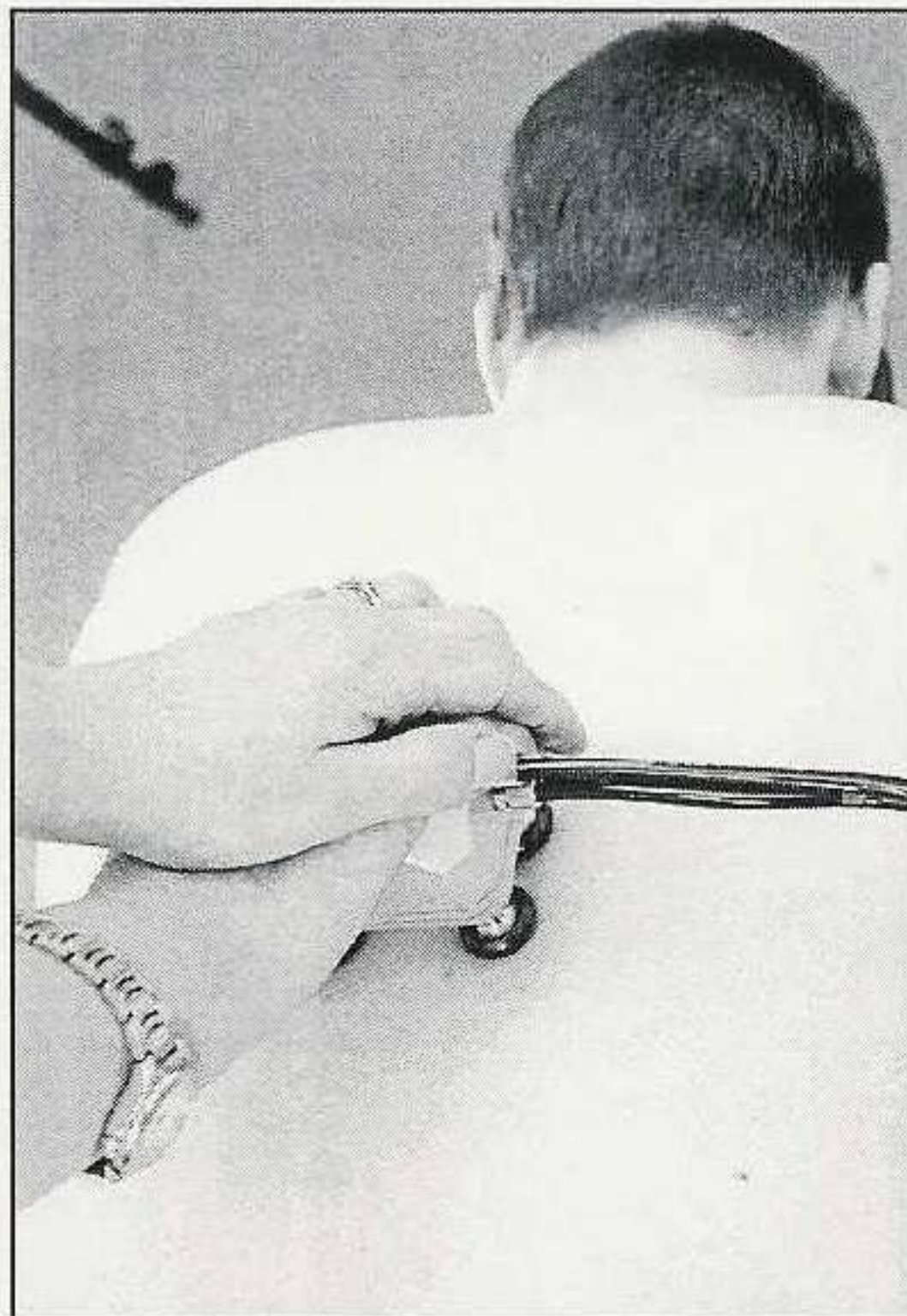
Which is what the News Letter decided to do when it heard about Technology Assisted Micro-Mobilisation And Reflex Stimulation (TAMARS) – a treatment which has recently become available at a new private clinic in Moira, Co Down, and has been offering sufferers hope, relief and positive results in the battle against the pain.

The idea behind TAMARS is to treat the cause of back ache, or pain, rather than the area of the ache, or pain itself.

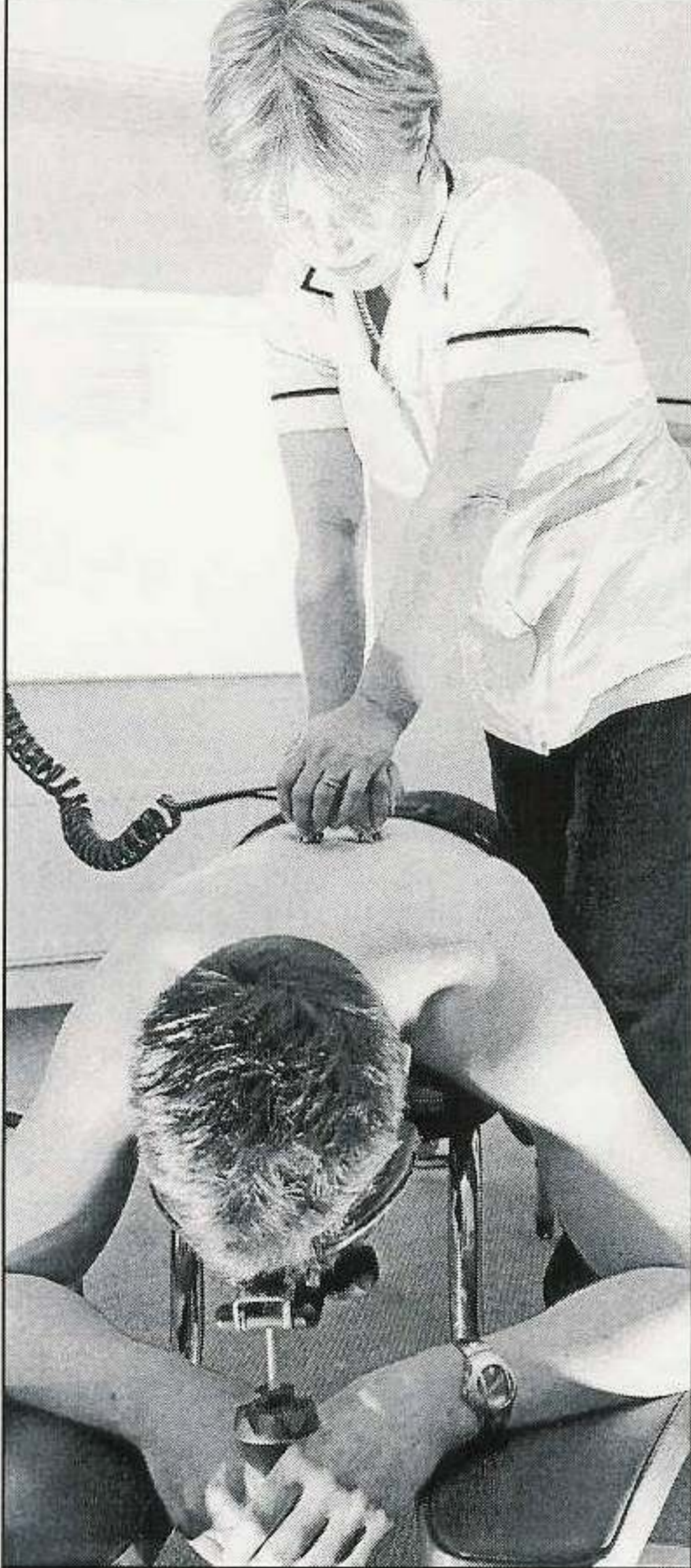
As most back problems occur due to a loss of suppleness and mobility in the spine – the treatment focuses on mobilising and stimulating the spinal column, using a computer software controlled "bionic hand".

All of us, as we get older, bad back or not, are prone to losing mobility in the spine, as joints seize up.

It is when other parts of the spine start working overtime to make up for the rigidity and stiffness in the spinal column that other parts of the back are affected by pain, stretched ligaments and excessive wear and



**RELIEF:** TAMARS' approach to back pain, using the bionic hand



**CAREFUL MOBILISATION OF JOINTS:** there is no discomfort in the process itself, which can even be relaxing for the sufferer

tear.

Similar problems are caused by pre-rotated vertebrae (through accident or falls) and abnormal curvatures, such as scoliosis and kyphosis.

If nothing is done further, complications may follow like sciatica, or a prolapsed (slipped) disc.

The TAMARS approach is really about the application of logic. It is based on very simple engineering principles.

The thinking behind the treatment is not new, but the bionic hand is the tool which provides a new way of applying it.

A trained practitioner can use the bionic hand to very gently mobilise all the joints of the spine, until full mobility is restored.

The practitioner is trained to feel the response of every joint to the manipulation and to continuously adjust their touch, to encourage each joint to move.

The patient lies on a special-

ly designed and comfortable plinth, curved to the shape of the spine, with a head rest.

There is no discomfort in the process itself, which can actually be very relaxing, though care has to be taken with people suffering more serious pains and aches.

As the bionic hand works on the joints, it slowly begins to remove curvature and twists in the spinal column, returning mobility and suppleness to those joints and vertebrae which have seized up and are causing trouble.

The result should be a return of mobility and suppleness, which improve posture, offer new looseness that will help ease other back aches and pains and in some severe cases can transform sufferers' lives.



**FEELING BETTER:** former rally driving champion Kenny Culbert opted out of a dangerous operation

# Pain management but no risky surgery brings relief

TAMARS has provided great relief to many who have tried it.

While the Moira Clinic providing the treatment is understandably cautious and warns that it does not provide a miracle cure, the man behind bringing the TAMARS treatment to Ulster, Raymond Knox said: "It has proved successful in the majority of patients we have treated so far."

Among the patients who have praised TAMARS are ex-Irish rugby star Paddy Johns and former rally driving champion Kenny Culbert, who has suffered from back problems which have become more severe over the last five years.

With two prolapsed (slipped) discs he had been in and out of hospital and tried every treatment he could find to alleviate the pain.

"I'm not sure what caused the problems initially, it was just something that crept up on me and got worse," said the 53-year-old from Dungannon.

"The driving may not have helped, or stooping over cars to work, or lying on my back under cars on cold concrete.

"I was at the stage where I could barely get up in the morning. I would get up very slowly, have breakfast and then go on the waterbed for an hour, to get heat in my back. The pain was unbearable at times."

Eventually surgeons were due to operate on him at Musgrave Hospital, Belfast.

"I was in hospital and ready for the operation when the doctor said to me, 'Kenny, you and I are friends now, but I have to warn you that this could go wrong, there is a serious risk,' and I decided that risk was too great," said Kenny.

"I took the safe option, which was to struggle on with the pain and I thought there would never be any relief. I had been

to the physios, chiropractors, all the quacks and taken all the pills and nothing worked."

Knowing Raymond - another former rally driver - Kenny had been made aware of the TAMARS treatment.

"At the time, the treatment was only available by going to Bristol for a week, and, having tried everything else, nothing had worked, so I really didn't have a lot of faith that this treatment would be any different," he said.

"So I left it and then Raymond said he was bringing the machine over. I have had four treatments and I honestly have not felt better in years. It's been amazing.

"I am not cured, I still have problems and have to be very careful what I do and not to lift heavy weights, but I would say I am about 70 per cent improved."

Paddy Johns' problems have had less to do with pain, but more to do with bad posture, which has become more and more of a problem in his job as a dentist.

Now retired from rugby, the 36-year-old former Ireland second row forward has found that stooping over a dental chair all day long has been worsening his problem.

"Although I have not had back pain, I have been increasingly aware of my posture and of the problems I could be storing up for the future, putting pressure on the neck and lower spine" he said.

"My wife is a physio and she was concerned about the curvature in my spine and I heard about the treatment through Hilary Stoddart, who is a friend and decided to give it a go.

"After just a couple of treatments the back had considerably loosened up and the curvature had straightened.

"There is no doubt it has helped and made me feel a lot better."