TOUR DE FRANCE 2015 PLANS LAUNCHED

Former England footballer and Cure Leukaemia patron Geoff Thomas revisits the Tour de France ten years on

Ten years after going into remission from leukaemia, former England, Crystal Palace and Wolverhampton Wanderers footballer Geoff Thomas will revisit the challenge of cycling all twenty-one stages of the Tour de France; this time, just one day ahead of Le Tour 2015. Along with a group of only twenty participants, Geoff will complete one of the toughest physical challenges around and raise £1 million for Cure Leukaemia.

In 2003 Geoff was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia and was given less than three months to live. Following treatment from Cure Leukaemia Co-founder Professor Charlie Craddock, including a bone marrow transplant from his sister, Geoff has been in remission since January 2005.

Six months after his treatment, inspired by cancer survivor and pro-cyclist Lance Armstrong, Geoff Thomas set himself the challenge of cycling the Tour de France 2005 route two days ahead of the race. Geoff succeeded in his 2005 challenge and wrote 'Riding Through The Storm' to chart his physical and emotional journey.

Commenting on the challenge, Geoff Thomas said "Cycling the Tour de France route in 2005 was my way of saying thank you to all those people who had supported me through my diagnosis and recovery. It was an incredibly tough challenge and an experience that will stay with me forever. At that time I had no idea what I would be doing ten years on, but being in such good health and having returned as Patron of Cure Leukaemia I want to get more involved and help to raise awareness and funds that I know will make a direct impact on the treatment of people who are in the same position as I was a decade ago. Revisiting the Tour de France just one day ahead of the professional peloton will be incredibly taxing both physically and emotionally but I'm hoping that my efforts will inspire the public to get behind us and donate to Cure Leukaemia and help us save more lives."

Geoff, and the footballing community, have a strong connection to Cure Leukaemia. The charity is credited with saving Geoff's life and, more recently, the life of former Aston Villa Captain Stiliyan Petrov. Based at the Centre for Clinical Haematology in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, Professor Charlie Craddock has stated that cures for all blood cancers can be found in Birmingham within the next 30 years and Geoff is determined raise funds to hasten this progress.

£1 million raised would be worth £10 million in potentially life-saving drug treatments for the 30,000 leukaemia patients diagnosed in the UK every year and a select group of twenty riders will join Geoff in raising the £1 million, through the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience life as a pro-cyclist, with full rolling road closures and support crew and vehicles.

Tour charity partner:

cure leukaemia for Kids

cureleukaemia the blood cancer charity

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four-day, 500 kilometre cycling challenge: London 2 Paris: Inspiring the Revolution. Both events will be delivered by EDGE, the company Geoff recently set up with cycling events production expert, Dan Solley.

Entries for both events are now open and a number of Geoff's friends and supporters from the sports community are already committed to participate.

To find out more about Geoff's Tour de France one day ahead challenge visit: www.beforethetour.com

To enter London 2 Paris: Inspiring the Revolution, visit: www.L2Prevolution.com

===ENDS===

For more information about Cure Leukaemia please visit the website www.cureleukaemia.co.uk

For more information about EDGE please visit the website www.findyouredge.co.uk

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Notes

- Geoff Thomas's Playing Career – 1982 – 2002. Clubs represented: Rochdale, Crewe, Crystal Palace, Wolves, Nottingham Forest, Barnsley and Notts County.
- Geoff was capped three times by England between 1990 and 1992.
- In 2005 Geoff won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Helen Rollason Award after he raised £150,000 by cycling all 21 stages of the Tour De France, 2,200 miles in total.
- In 2008 Geoff published a biography, 'Riding Through The Storm.'

About Cure Leukaemia

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at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, to fund life-saving clinical trials to treat patients with blood cancer who have exhausted standard treatment options. To date, Cure Leukaemia has helped to treat over 4000 patients by leveraging over £23m worth of revolutionary drugs and funding crucial research nurses to administer these trials.

Without the expert research nurses to ensure patients are constantly monitored and cared for; these trials would not run and patients would miss the opportunity to access potentially life-saving therapies. The aim of Cure Leukaemia is to raise money to fund more research nurses at centres across the Midlands and provide world-class treatment for its patients. Only by funding more nurses in more hospitals, can more leukaemia patients benefit from access to potentially life-saving treatment.

Currently, Cure Leukaemia has nurses at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley, Stoke, Worcester, Coventry, Warwickshire and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Cure Leukaemia celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2013 by launching the Cure Leukaemia for Kids appeal, raised in excess of £125,000 from runners in BUPA Great Birmingham Run and established new corporate partnerships with Deloitte, The Binding Site, OGL Computer and Hotel Indigo.

In 2014, Cure Leukaemia announced new charity partnerships with Logomotif, Stirling Business Solutions Ltd and Elonex Outside Media, raised £50,000 from the inaugural Club Legends Cup at the LG Arena, launched the "Birmingham, let's cure leukaemia" campaign and announced a collaboration with the University of Birmingham for the Bupa Great Birmingham Run 2014.

10 facts about Cure Leukaemia

1. Founded in 2003 to allow patients with blood cancer the chance to trial new potentially life saving drugs not yet available on the NHS.
2. Cure Leukaemia part funds the Centre for Clinical Haematology at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, a world-class centre of excellence in the treatment of blood cancer.
3. The centre has developed the second largest adult stem cell transplant programme in the UK, hailed by Prime Minister David Cameron as an international centre of excellence in haematology.
4. The charity fund a network of specialist research nurses across the West Midlands, to offer potentially life saving new drugs and treatments to blood cancer patients who have come to the end of their treatment on the NHS.
5. The Cure Leukaemia for Kids campaign was launched in 2013 to celebrate Cure Leukaemia's 10th Anniversary Year, with the charity committing to funding specialist nurses at the Birmingham Children's Hospital.

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7. A specialist research nurse costs £40,000 per year to fund.
8. For every £1000 donated, Cure Leukaemia can leverage £10,000 worth of free drugs, meaning any funds donated work 10 times as hard.
9. Over the past decade Professor Charlie Craddock and his teams have treated over 4,000 across the region.
10. Each year over 30,000 people are diagnosed with blood cancer in the U.K.

About EDGE

EDGE was established in 2014 by Geoff Thomas and Dan Solley. With an aim to deliver high-end, professionally organised cycling participation events, the company works with the best brands and suppliers to create near pro-cycling experiences for riders of all abilities and ambitions.

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