



LE TOUR – ONE DAY AHEAD RIDERS SEE THE IMPACT THEIR FUNDRAISING WILL HAVE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BLOOD CANCER

- Geoff Thomas and the Le Tour – One Day Ahead riders meet Professor Charlie Craddock for a tour of the Centre for Clinical Haematology (CCH) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and see the impact their £1million fundraising target will have in the fight against blood cancer
- The Le Tour riders and George Lineker, blood cancer survivor who is cycling London to Paris: Inspiring the Revolution with Geoff Thomas, were then put through their paces in a Wattbike training session

Inspired to ride

Former England footballer and blood cancer survivor Geoff Thomas, seven of the Le Tour riders and George Lineker, met with Professor Charlie Craddock at the Centre for Clinical Haematology (CCH) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham (QE) last week to find out where the funds they aim to raise through completing Le Tour – One Day Ahead and London 2 Paris: Inspiring the Revolution will go.

Geoff and the team's fundraising efforts will go towards boosting the life-saving work carried out at the CCH at the QE, where Professor Craddock treated Geoff. The £1 million Geoff aims to raise through Le Tour – One Day Ahead will increase the Centre's ability to deliver pioneering treatments for blood cancer patients at this international centre of excellence in Birmingham.

How £1 million can save lives

Professor Craddock showed the riders around the CCH's treatment rooms where they had the opportunity to see the latest high-tech equipment being used, as well as meeting the clinical nurses who are instrumental in delivering treatments. They also had the opportunity to see the personal touches such as specially commissioned artwork inspired by blood cancer patients, which helps create a positive environment for patients during treatment.

Professor Craddock reinforced that a cure for all blood cancers can be found in Birmingham within the next 30 years and Geoff and the riders are now fully determined to raise funds to hasten this progress.

Following the tour of the CCH, Le Tour rider Hayden Groves said it had been a 'humbling and inspirational day' whilst fellow rider Dom Goggins said he had had a 'humbling morning witnessing where the funds raised will go – straight to patients.'

In 2003 Geoff Thomas 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.

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Six months after his treatment, Geoff set himself the challenge of cycling the Tour de France 2005 route two days ahead of the race. This year, a decade on, Geoff will revisit the challenge and cycle the Tour de France route again. This time, one day ahead of Le Tour, and with a group of up to twenty participants, Geoff will complete the ride and raise £1million for Cure Leukaemia.

Put through their paces with Wattbike

Geoff, seven of Le Tour riders and George Lineker were then put through their paces by Le Tour sponsor Wattbike, with a training session in the QE atrium.

George Lineker, the son of England footballing legend Gary, is also a blood cancer survivor, and will be showing his support for Cure Leukaemia by cycling London 2 Paris with Geoff, along with Geoff's former teammates Ian Wright, John Salako and Mark Bright. England under-20 manager Aidy Boothroyd and broadcaster Jill Douglas will also be taking part.

The team had the opportunity to compare training programmes and fundraising stories and also welcomed new riders Simon Gueller, from Ilkley, and Phil Upton, from Birmingham, to Le Tour - One Day Ahead.

Speaking after the session, Geoff Thomas said "It has been an emotional day coming back to the CCH and introducing my fellow riders to Charlie and the clinical nurses. Seeing first hand the impact the £1 million we aim to raise will have has further cemented our commitment to achieving this challenging goal. We're excited to have Simon and Phil join the team and I'm looking forward to riding Le Tour with the level of camaraderie and support demonstrated today."

Click here to find out more about the impact Geoff and the team's fundraising could have on fighting leukaemia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRe6EJt0QmY>

Donations to Geoff's challenge can be made through his JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/Geoff-Thomas-2015

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

For more information about Le Tour – One Day Ahead got to: www.beforethetour.com

For more information about London 2 Paris: Inspiring the Revolution go to:
www.L2Prevolution.com

For more information about Wattbike please visit the website www.wattbike.com/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 nine 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

Founded in 2003 by patients and clinicians, Cure Leukaemia helps to bring pioneering drug and transplant treatments to blood cancer patients throughout the Midlands. The charity helps finance the world class Centre for Clinical Haematology at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham in order 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, Dudley, Stoke-on-Trent, Worcester, Coventry and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

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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 funds work at 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 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.
4. 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.
5. Leukaemia is the most common form of childhood cancer, with most children diagnosed under the age of 5. Drugs trials will help increase survival rates of children with leukaemia.
6. A specialist research nurse costs £40,000 per year to fund.
7. For every £1000 donated, Cure Leukaemia can leverage £10,000 worth of free drugs, meaning any funds donated work 10 times as hard.
8. Over the past decade Cure Leukemia nurses have helped treat over 4,000 patients with blood cancer across the region.
9. Each year over 30,000 people are diagnosed with blood cancer in the U.K.
10. Cure Leukaemia supports work aimed at identifying patients most likely to benefit from particular forms of new drug and transplant therapies with the aim of providing tailored and effective treatments for blood cancer patients

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About the Centre for Clinical Haematology (CCH)

The CCH provides a specialized and integrated outpatient facility for patients with blood disorders and cancers, and currently comprises a suite of eight consulting rooms, space where blood samples can be taken as well as provision for pharmacy. In addition, there is a quiet room for patients and families to use should they need time and space before leaving the Centre, often with the support of a nurse or counsellor. The Centre also houses offices for consultant, researchers, nurses, bone marrow transplant nurses, research nurses, data managers, and administration and support staff. The CCH now houses the largest adult stem cell transplant programme in the UK and was recently cited as a model of translational medicine centre by the Prime Minister, David Cameron. The £1million fundraising drive will create the potential to deliver stem cell transplants to outpatients and novel new treatments and drugs.

About Wattbike

The Wattbike is the indoor bike of choice for elite athletes, the health and fitness sector and the home fitness market. Developed in association with British Cycling, the Wattbike remains the first and only indoor bike to be endorsed by cycling's premier national governing body.

The Wattbike's on-board performance monitor enables the accurate measurement of over 40 performance parameters. Combined with a fully customisable ride setup and the feel of riding a real bike, it provides the user with a highly effective and efficient power-based training solution.

Today, the Wattbike is used by the world's top cycling federations including Great Britain, Australia, United States and France, in addition to professional teams and elite athletes in all cycling and triathlon disciplines.

Other sports have also adopted the Wattbike as a cross-training tool and is used by many Premiership football clubs, Premiership Rugby, Rugby Football Union, Rugby Football League, Formula One drivers, England Hockey, GB Rowing, British Sailing, English Institute of Sport and UK Sport.

<http://www.wattbike.com>

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