

# Friends undertake charity cycle for Marie Curie



Five friends who met when they did a charity bike ride through the Rocky Mountains in Canada have teamed up for another challenge by cycling unsupported from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Fifty two year-old painter and decorator Gordon Smith who was born and brought up in Wester Drylaw will join Roy Munro from Edinburgh, Linlithgow couple Scott and Louisa Cockburn and Liisa Chadburn from Lincolnshire, for the one thousand mile journey to raise money for the Marie Curie Hospice.





Gordon has done work periodically at the hospice over the past fifteen years, and during that time he has always been impressed by the work of staff there, so when his lifelong pal Stevie Inglis died of cancer, he decided to help raise much needed funds.

As he was a keen cyclist, he decided to ride the 400km (249 miles) route which involved climbing 6785 feet in the Canadian Rockies. Whilst doing this, he became friendly with the others who will accompany him on the current venture.

Since then, he has continued to raise money organising various charity events at Easter Road, home of Stevie's beloved Hibs, but after watching record breaking long distance cyclist Mark Beaumont's recent escapades on television, he was inspired to get back on his bike.

Gordon told the Edinburgh Reporter:- "I was brought up in Wester Drylaw Drive and Stevie was from Wester Drylaw Place. We've mucked about together since we were 14 or 15. Two year ago Stevie lost his fight with stomach cancer and I lost a very dear friend at an age that was just too young. It was a very sad experience and a reminder that sometimes we can take so much for granted

"I've worked as a painter and decorator at the Marie Curie Hospice, on and off for 15 years, and I have always admired the work done by the doctors and nurses there. When Stevie died, it prompted me to try and raise money for the hospice. I don't have the wonderful skills of the nurses doctors and other staff that make a place like Marie Curie tick, but I can ride a bike.

"I've always admired Mark Beaumont and followed his career so I decided to do Lands End to John O'Groats, which is a must for serious UK cyclists. I intended to do it alone unsupported, but when Roy heard about it, he wanted to do it as well then the others did likewise."

Roy (35) is a caretaker / photographer at George Heriot's School, and is originally from Kinross, but now lives in Leith. He also has a good reason for supporting the charity, as he explained:- "I became involved in fundraising following the death of my big sister Lynn three years ago from cancer. Lynn was only 37 when she passed away in the Marie Curie Hospice. I haven't done anything on this scale before. The Rockies was the biggest to date but I am confident that we will manage in ten days no problem."

Liisa (37) a fitness instructor from Lincolnshire was keen to get on the road. She said:- "I can't wait. I'm excited and nervous, but it will be OK when we get the first couple of days over with. People think it will be no problem as I am a fitness instructor, but we usually just tell people what to do and we don't have to do it ourselves."

Scott (27) and Louisa (31) actually got engaged during the Rocky Mountains adventure two years ago, and were married last year. They will spend their first wedding anniversary on the road. The couple are both secondary school teachers, Scott in Larbert and Louisa in Dunfermline. Scott said:- "The Marie Curie is a fantastic charity. I have been at coffee mornings there and we are more than happy to contribute." Louisa added:- "It wasn't quite the way I thought I'd be spending my wedding anniversary, but it's an adventure and I am looking forward to it, apart from sleeping in the tent!"

The group hope to do the journey in 10 days, averaging 90-100miles per day. They start tomorrow, Sunday 8 July 2012, and hope to reach Edinburgh on Friday 13 July before finishing four days later.

Although the group will carry everything they need themselves, Gordon was quick to thank others who have provided logistical help. He said: "So far we have raised £7748.68 but we hope to reach £10k although I appreciate that money's tight for everyone these days. I would like to thank Short Garage in Dalkeith who have provided us with the use of a minibus to transport our bikes and equipment to Land's End and also Pendrich Steeplejacks of Rosewell who provided us with a driver. We would not have been able to do the trip without their help."

Anyone wishing to donate money to this worthwhile cause can do so at <http://www.justgiving.com/thecycle>

Should you wish to follow the group, you can check their current location by clicking on <http://gps.motionx.com/iphone/liveupdates/> and entering 12021 in the channel box.

All the money raised will be spent locally, mostly on nursing hours for patients in the hospice, and also those who need treatment at home.