

Press Release

11th June 2015

Drivers in train-ing for European charity cycle trek

Train drivers set to cycle across seven countries to raise money for Breast Cancer Care

Two Birmingham train drivers are preparing for a European cycle ride this weekend, travelling over 660 miles from Tamworth to Switzerland to raise money for charity Breast Cancer Care.

Phil Read, age 46, a CrossCountry train driver from Tamworth, decided to embark on the impressive journey across Europe to show his support for his wife Vicky, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2014, and raise money for the charity that supported them.

The impressive six-day bike ride starting on Saturday 13 June from Phil's home in Tamworth will take him, and fellow train driver Jake Medley, age 45, across seven countries before crossing the finish line in Stechelberg, Switzerland on 18 June.

Spending an average of eight hours a day cycling, and travelling uphill for almost 30,000 feet - higher than Mount Everest - the two drivers will be cheered on in the support car by Phil's wife, fellow train driver Tim Mudd, who's sister is currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer and Tim's wife Sue.

Phil has been training hard for the ride, saying: "My wife has been through so much on her way to recovery and shown so much courage that it spurred me on to do something to show her how proud I am. I decided to use my passion for cycling in a productive way - raising money for a charity that provides invaluable support to women and their families.

"We have been on a 14 week intensive training plan which involved 12 hours of cycling a week. At the start, I set myself a target to cycle to the furthest destinations that CrossCountry drivers serve from Birmingham. So far, I've made it to Manchester, Bristol and Cardiff. I cycled to Bournemouth last year, which was 158 miles, and Stansted Airport which was 125 miles."

After cycling from Tamworth to Hull on 13 June, the duo will board the ferry to Belgium and travel through Holland, Luxembourg, France, and Germany before reaching their final destination. They are also hoping to have a live tracking facility in place so supporters can monitor their progress in real time via Facebook.

Acknowledging the support already received, Phil added: "Jake and I would like to say a huge thank you to those who have helped us along the way, including my parents and fellow driver Paul Grater, whose wife is also battling breast cancer. They have kindly contributed towards our travel costs. We also wouldn't be doing this without sponsorship from CrossCountry, and we wouldn't have been able to fully equip our support car without the help of Sytner BMW Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield Trailer Centre."

The drivers have already raised over £4,000, and all the money raised is going directly towards Breast Cancer Care. For more information, and to show your support you can visit their Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/tamworth2switzerland.

-ENDS-

For further information, please contact Kelly Mortlock or Becky Riffle on 020 7025 7522 or email crosscountry@grayling.com.

Notes to editors

The CrossCountry network is the most extensive passenger rail franchise in Britain. Stretching from Aberdeen to Penzance, Bournemouth to Manchester and from Stansted to Cardiff, it calls at over 100 stations. Based in Birmingham, CrossCountry connects seven of the Britain's 10 largest cities and delivers 295 services every weekday, equating to some 33 million passenger journeys a year.

For further information on CrossCountry services visit crosscountrytrains.co.uk or follow them online via Twitter at @crosscountryuk, Facebook.com/crosscountrytrains and their student Facebook page, Facebook.com/studentraildeals.

CrossCountry bookings

Passengers can buy tickets for any rail journey in Britain, with any train company and with no booking fee at crosscountrytrains.co.uk or via the free CrossCountry Train Tickets app.

Download the app by visiting your app store or by texting TRAVEL to 87080.