

Teenager critical in hospital

A teenager was last night still fighting for his life after being involved in a car crash.

The 17-year-old was described as critically ill in Leeds General Infirmary after being transferred from Bradford Royal Infirmary following the crash at 5.35pm on Sunday.

The Bingley teenager was trapped in a Citroen Saxo after the crash at the junction of Saltaire Road and Victoria Road in Saltaire.

He was cut free by firefighters and two other people were also taken to hospital.

● A man in his 40s was in a stable condition last night in the intensive care unit at BRI after being injured in a separate accident on Sunday.

He was struck by a 4x4 vehicle nose-diving through a garden hedge at Primrose Bank, Gilstead, Bingley. He is in BRI with serious injuries.

The woman driver of the Freelander was shocked but unhurt.

Witnesses to either accident are asked to contact Keighley Police on (01535) 617059.

Man injured

CRASH: A male driver was taken to Bradford Royal Infirmary with serious injuries after a collision between a Citroen Saxo and a Range Rover at 5.30pm yesterday. Police cordoned off the road after the accident at the junction of Saltaire Road and Victoria Road in Saltaire. Firefighters had to cut the man free from the Citroen. His woman passenger was also injured and taken to hospital.



Robert Duckworth, 25, survived a horrific car smash thanks to the generosity of strangers giving blood

The Daily Mirror has joined forces with the Missing Type NHS Blood and Transplant campaign to highlight the vital need for new blood donors.

Yesterday we took the unprecedented step of dropping the 'W' and 'O' from our front page logo to raise awareness of the worrying decline in new donors coming forward.

This makes it more difficult to ensure there will be enough blood available to save the lives of patients with cancer, blood disorders and those needing emergency surgery in the future.

One person who owes his life to donors is 25-year-old Robert Duckworth, who lost more than half the blood in his body when he was involved in a near-fatal road accident in 2007.

TOUCH AND GO

He suffered a serious head injury and lost six pints of blood - more than three litres - after his car was hit side on. The average adult has between four to six litres of blood in their body.

But luckily for Robert, from Leeds, the accident happened directly outside a fire station, where there was an ambulance and staff on hand to resuscitate him. He was taken to the

intensive care unit at Leeds General Infirmary, where it was touch and go as to whether he would pull through.

"I lost six pints of blood at the scene of the car accident and was in a medically induced coma for four weeks - I was full of tubes and constantly having blood transfusions," explains Robert.

PATIENTS RELY ON YOU

With the support of his "fantastic" medical team, he eventually regained consciousness.

But his injuries were so severe that the 17-year-old had to learn to walk and talk all over again.

And it was only the start of his reliance on vital blood donations.

Ongoing problems and his traumatic head injury meant he needed a further two operations.

In all, Robert received nearly 25 units of blood - and there is no doubt in his mind that they played a vital role in saving his life.

"I've had to learn to walk and talk again, which has been a massive challenge," he says.

"But without the professional care that I received and those blood transfusions - which were only possible thanks to generous people donating their blood - I certainly wouldn't be alive today."



MISSING LETTERS

Yesterday's Daily Mirror front page



Each blood donation can help as many as **3 people**

Less than

4%

of adults are currently donors...

New charity shop opens its doors



A charity which prides itself on its strong local links now has a new presence in the heart of Kington. Sue Ryder Manorlands, which already operates a charity store in Cavendish Street, has launched a smaller "boutique-style" outlet in the Airedale Shopping Centre. The charity's latest venture opened its doors at 23 College Walk on Thursday. Assistant manager Emma Nixon is pictured (left) with manager Mary Higgins.

IN BRIEF

Youth club

Gomersal Junior Youth Club meets from 4.30pm until 6pm at St Mary's Parish Church, Spen Lane, Gomersal, tomorrow

Miracle cyclist's effort

Man who survived horror crash rides from Lands End to John O'Groats

by Chris Tate T&A Reporter

The family of a Bingley teenager put in a coma by a horror car smash feared he might not see his next birthday.

But Robert Duckworth made a miracle recovery from injuries he suffered when his Citroen Saxo was struck side-on by a Range Rover in 2007.

And six years later - with 14 metres of platinum wire in his brain - he has cycled from John O' Groats to Lands End in ten days to raise cash for the hospital who saved his life.

Mr Duckworth was 17 and had only passed his test two weeks before the accident, which happened in Saltaire as he drove up Victoria Road to the notorious Saltaire Road junction.

"He didn't see the junction because of the trees and was hit by a Range Rover coming down from Saltaire roundabout," said his sister Alison Duckworth.

"Robert suffered severe brain damage from the impact and spent four weeks in an induced coma. He was



CHALLENGE: Robert Duckworth on his cycle ride. Above, an X-ray showing a dark lump of platinum wire around an artery to stop his eye bursting due to blood

transferred to the neuro intensive care unit at LGI where he spent four weeks fighting for his life.

"We were told he may not survive and if he did he would need a lot of support for the rest of his life and may never be the same person again.

"But he made an incredible recovery, including having 14 metres of microfine platinum wire being bound round a brain artery which was flooding his right eye with blood."

Mr Duckworth went on to gain a degree in 3D design at Falmouth University and now works as a designer for a packaging firm in Durham.

His parents Ken and Julie, of Gilstead, shadowed Robert and friend Sam Barton in their motor home during the marathon 10-day ride, which has raised at least £1,000.

Mr Duckworth, 24, said: "After the accident the doctors said I wouldn't be the same person and would struggle

with things, but I'm pretty much back to normal now."

His fundraising website is at justgiving.com/robduckworth e-mail: chris.tate@telegraphandargus.co.uk

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Miracle man's run challenge

Robert, 25, in recovery from crash injuries bids to raise £3k

By Chris Tate

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A MAN from the district who survived a horrendous car crash will continue his amazing recovery by taking on a gruelling half marathon this May.

Gilstead man Robert Duckworth, aged 25, had passed his driving test only two weeks before the crash on Saltaire Road when his Citroen Saxo was hit by a Range Rover.

The 17-year-old suffered severe head injuries and had to learn to walk and talk again after the near fatal incident in 2007.

"I don't remember much about the crash or what followed, but I know I'm lucky to be alive," Mr Duckworth said.

"I lost six pints of blood at the scene and the paramedics must have performed a miracle



CRASH: Runner Robert Duckworth who learned how to walk again

to bring me back to life. From there, I was rushed straight to the Neuro Intensive Care Unit at Leeds General Infirmary and placed into an induced coma.

"It really was touch and go whether I'd pull through or not."

Mr Duckworth spent four weeks in a coma and was kept alive by a tube to help him breathe and a gastric feeding tube. He also needed several blood transfusions and came close to requiring brain surgery.

He said: "The pressure in my

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head had become so great that doctors felt they had no option but to operate.

"On the day it was due, I suffered a nose bleed which forced doctors to cancel the procedure.

"Looking back I think that worked in my favour because any kind of neuro surgery is risky and there's no way of knowing if or how I would have recovered.

"It wasn't long after that day that I started to show some signs of improvement and after four weeks in intensive care, I woke up."

Weighing just six stone, Mr Duckworth was then transferred to the hospital's high dependency unit to continue his recovery.

"The team at the Neuro Intensive Care Unit saved my life and then they helped me come to terms with what had happened," said Mr Duckworth.

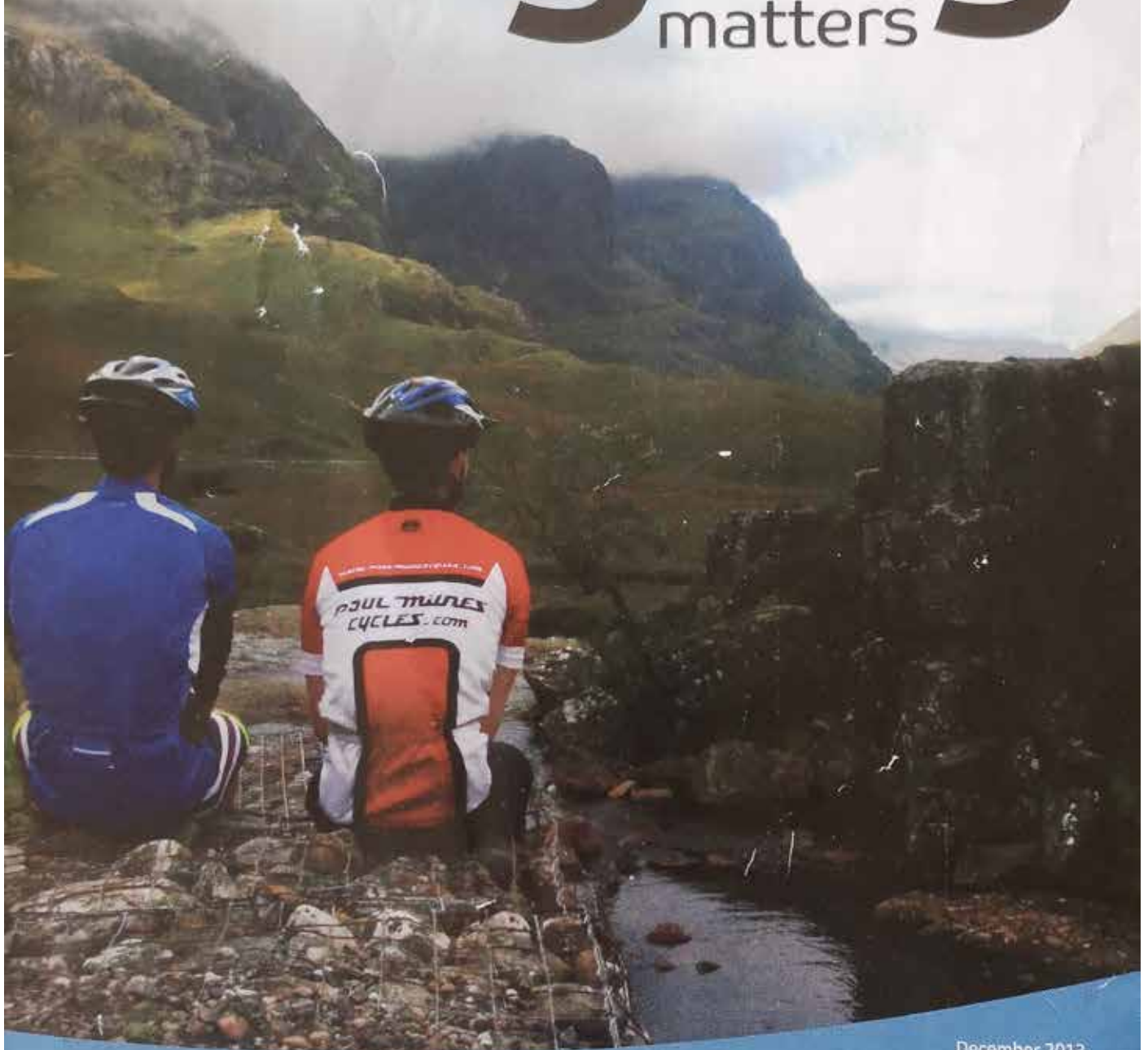
Mr Duckworth, who now lives in Chester, will be one of thousands of runners taking on the Chester Half Marathon on Sunday, May 17 and plans to raise money for the department that helped him.

To help Robert hit his target of £3,000, visit justgiving.com/robduckworth

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December 2013

Back in the saddle

The ups and downs of cycling the length of Britain for charity

Family fun
HOT PICKS

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Riding to recovery

How Rob Duckworth went from intensive care to 1,000-mile bike rides

by Rob Duckworth
Community contributor

I am a survivor, a miracle. When I was younger I was in a horrific accident that nearly took my life. I was told that if I woke up I would not be the same person and would be in a wheelchair for the rest of my life. A 17-year-old boy whose life was fixated around sport being told he would never be able to walk again, can you imagine? But I woke up, and after a struggle and many more battles I turned back into my normal sports-loving self, able to carry on my normal life.

The reason I survived is all thanks to staff at the Leeds Neuro Intensive Care Unit, who cared for me and helped me gain the strength to wake up. They made my life a miracle. I got a second chance, I got given the opportunity to live on. From this, I wanted to live my life to the fullest, using the legs that I nearly did not have to make a difference and imprint on this world.

I wanted to give something back to Leeds Neuro Intensive Care Unit so I decided, with a friend, to take on an extreme challenge, to cycle the length of the UK in 10 days, raising awareness and funds for the unit. Just a small way to say thank you. After nine months of intense training the big day finally arrived. Saturday, September 22, the start of our adventure and I couldn't be more excited.

Day 1 – John O’Groats to Lairg

We began by having our photos taken by the John O’Groats signpost, our task ahead illustrated clearly – Land’s End 875 miles.

It was a horrible morning, miserable and as dull as they get. As we started cycling the wind and rain began to make things difficult. It didn't stop us taking in the unique landscape, although it was so barren. It was a special experience to be cycling past the north coast of Scotland, setting out on our first leg of a long journey. After 47 miles we stopped for lunch at a place called Bettyhill, where the views become a bit more interesting and beautiful.

Already my backside and one knee were killing me. I was beginning to think: "How the hell am I going to be able to keep this up for 10 days? Especially in weather like this." Nevertheless I carried on regardless and tried to enjoy the beautiful terrain as best I could.

We finished up in a place called Lairg having covered 95 miles. Our reward for a hard day's work was a lovely meal, hot chocolate and a massage. On to the next day.

Day 2 – Lairg to Gairloch

Today was definitely a better day. I wasn't convinced I was going to finish at first, as I was aching all over. We cycled down to Bonar Bridge and it was pretty much flat and downhill all

the way. After a few hours of cycling, everything began to loosen up and I felt a bit stronger on the bike.

From Bonar Bridge we cycled to Inverness. The views were amazing, the hill climbs weren't too bad either, which was a pleasant surprise.

The longer we cycled my aches and pains became a distant memory. I felt like I could last the day and enjoy the experience a bit more. After we crossed the bridge we arrived at Loch Ness, which was huge. Another amazing sight. After Inverness I was in my element, I didn't expect views so incredible. I was gobsmacked. The sun came out and the winds died down dramatically, plus all the roads were flat. It was amazing, I was in awe and I loved every moment. I hope every day is like this. 120 miles covered.

Day 3 – Gairloch to Balloch

I was so tired from the day before that I slept like a log and seriously didn't want to get up. The thought of going out on my bike was the last thing on my mind.

As I started to move around a bit I found even more aches and pains, especially in my thighs. When I got on the bike, I didn't realise how ridiculously sore my backside was, it was terrible. Again I was thinking about how I was going to be able to get through the day. I knew we had a hard day's riding ahead over Glencoe.

We cycled through Fort William following a road that took us right to the bottom of the dreaded Glencoe climb.

I thought that the hills would be steeper, but they were only gradual which wasn't too bad in the end. I couldn't believe the landscape, again I was blown away. It really was turning into the trip of a lifetime. The winds were much stronger over the highlands, but it wasn't so bad as the landscape made it



All smiles at the start of the journey, Rob and Sam point towards Land's End, only 1,000 miles to go

Photo courtesy of Rob Duckworth

all worthwhile. After climbing 1,000 feet we dropped down an incredibly steep hill to Loch Lomond. I thought that we would be able to get back to the camper van by four, little did I know how big the lochs are. They become quite annoying as they just seem to go on and on and on into the distance. I was so happy after we got off the loch. Eventually we arrived in Glasgow and met the camper. Some 94 miles covered today, not a bad effort.

Day 4 – Balloch to Lockerbie (Hoddon Castle)

Today was a horrible day. We had to cycle through Glasgow and it was a nightmare. Cars everywhere, stopping and starting. People pulling out on you, I did not like it one bit.

I also had my first road traffic incident. We were cycling down a main road and a car pulled out on Sam. He braked sharply, I didn't have time to stop and went straight in the back of him. I fell straight off my bike, hitting the floor with a big thud. This really frustrated me and Sam, as we were so used to the beautiful landscape around Scotland. We knew we had to do this to move further down the country. The roads were incredibly busy and we ended up on the M8 by mistake.

Bad idea. Cars kept on beeping as us, but there was nothing we could do, we were on the motorway! We had to get off quickly so we took a little shortcut that let us on to the country roads. What a relief.

'The roads were incredibly busy and we ended up on the M8 by mistake'

Today was the most boring and frustrating part of the trip so far. My Achilles tendons started to really hurt after a couple of hours, to the point where I couldn't even walk after getting off my bike. This started to worry me a lot. The only thing to do was to get lots of Deep Heat, ice and rest.

I hope my tendons are better tomorrow for more cycling.



10

Rob and Sam completed the ride in 10 days, which is a fast time for most amateur cyclists.

END-TO-END STUFF

John O'Groats to Land's End is the traversal of the whole length of the island of Great Britain between two extremities in the northeast and southwest. The traditional distance by road is 874 miles (1,407km) and takes most cyclists 10 to 14 days.

The straight-line distance from Land's End to John o' Groats is 603 miles (970 km) as determined from Ordnance Survey grid

references, but such a route passes over a series of stretches of water in the Irish Sea.

Expeditions from John O'Groats to Land's End have been undertaken using numerous forms of transport, and are often organised as charity fundraisers, sometimes involving celebrities. Examples include cricketer Ian Botham's 1985 walk and athlete Jane Tomlinson's 2003 cycle ride.

didn't expect tan marks back when we were riding through the wind and rain of the Scottish Highlands.

After navigating our way through Bristol we cycled towards Glastonbury to find the campsite we were staying at. It took forever following Somerset's small windy roads.

Some 118 miles covered, the most in one day so far.

Day 9 – Glastonbury to Princetown

Glastonbury to Taunton then on to the Dartmoor hills. I was dreading it with my aches and pains flaring up again. I didn't want anything to give way as I was so close to the finish. My Achilles tendons felt like they could snap at any moment. It was awful. The hills were ridiculously steep. We climbed roughly 1,400ft and, impressively, arrived at our destination early, which meant more time for recovery. It's a good job because we are up at five tomorrow for the final push. With 88 miles done today it makes 900 miles in total. Will we reach 1,000?

Day 10 – Princetown to Land's End

The final day of our epic journey. Sam and I both woke with high hopes, knowing that this is our last day on the bike and the end is very close. We woke at five so we would have time if anything went wrong during the day. Dartmoor was foggy and very creepy. It was dark as we set off so we had to be very careful.

I didn't care about my aches and pains any more. I just wanted to complete this ride and enjoy it as much as possible. It was a good job that we had climbed so high the day before, as we could just glide down towards Tavistock. Little did we know that the weather and terrain were about to change drastically.

'I didn't care about my aches and pains any more. I just wanted to complete this ride and enjoy it as much as possible'

From Tavistock, the weather slowly began to turn. It started to rain harder and harder and harder. It was absolutely ridiculous. I hated it and I was soaked to the skin. My mood began to deteriorate as the hills became steeper and we got wetter and wetter. It was as if it wasn't our time to finish this ride. We just had to power on through.

I was in a foul mood when we stopped for lunch. I could see that this weather was going to last all day and the inclines were non-stop. In the end PMA (positive mental attitude) kicked in.

I had to complete this, nothing can stop me. I have been working so hard for this. I can't let the weather stop me. I should just enjoy this.

After lunch my mood lightened. We only had 30 miles left and it was pretty flat. The rain made me ride harder and faster than ever.

We approached signs pointing to Land's End ... this was it, we had almost done it. We had nearly cycled the entire length of the UK. Five miles, four miles, three miles, two miles ... one mile to go. The feeling as we crossed the line was incredible. We were both smiling from ear to ear. We had done it.

Land's End finally. Mum and dad, several friends, Sam's mum and his friends were all there to greet us. It was fantastic, what an amazing adventure. 1,004 miles in 10 days. Done. What's next?



A welcoming sight at the finishing line
Photo courtesy of Rob Duckworth

I do hope I can complete this cycle. I don't want anything to stop me. 107 miles covered today.

Day 5 – Lockerbie to Kendal

I lowered my seat this morning in an attempt to alleviate my tendon problem. It worked a treat, I was kicking myself as I should have done this before we started. Ah well. We crossed the border into England today. It was a proud moment.

As we cycled a bit further, we entered the Lake District, again the landscape was truly amazing. It reminded me of the Yorkshire Dales. There were lots of hill climbs, lots of ups and downs. I lost count of how many hills we tackled. There was one huge one that I could see looming in the distance, it just became bigger and bigger. I was dreading climbing the thing. I did it though, slowly but surely.

The whole day was a series of very nasty, gradual inclines followed by rewarding downhill rides, looking out over the mountainous vista of the lakes.

We took in Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside and ended up in Windermere. Sam also got his first puncture of the trip. 84 miles covered. On to the next day.

Day 6 – Kendal to Northwich

My bike broke in Lancaster which delayed us from 11:30am until 2:30pm. We'd only cycled 27 miles up to that point.

Nevertheless we still had another 76 miles to cover if we



We've done it. Rob and Sam celebrate by the finishing post at Land's End
Photo courtesy of Rob Duckworth

were to stay on schedule. We didn't get to stop until 8:45pm, absolutely shattered. The cycling was hard and dangerous, negotiating busy main roads in the dark. In the end, 110 miles covered.

Day 7 – Northwich to Knighton

Today was fairly easy going. We basically followed one road for 40 miles, which we covered in less than three hours. We'd also had a bit of a lie-in following yesterday's late finish. High spirits were in the air as we speeded through the Welsh border right down to Shrewsbury.

We then cycled through to the lovely Shropshire hills. The climbs were pretty intense as we dropped down to Clun and from there on it became steeper and steeper. It was very challenging. My legs were on fire.

Time to enjoy a relaxing evening in the pub next door to where we are staying. 84 miles covered.

Day 8 – Knighton to Glastonbury

Had an earlier start today and felt a lot stronger, perhaps it was last night's beer? Cycled through the small narrow roads of Shropshire to Herefordshire then, with a bit of help from Sam and his fantastic navigation skills, we crossed the border into Wales. We rode through the Forest of Dean which I loved.

We were powering up the hills today. My injuries are easing off and the weather was amazing – I'm quite sunburnt now. I

Final thoughts on the ride

Rob Duckworth reflects on his epic journey and thanks those who have supported him so far

So far I have managed to raise an incredible £1,335.20, well over my initial target. That figure is still rising and I still hope to get a few more donations before handing the cheque over. I am delighted to have raised awareness and to have so many people backing me. This wasn't about donations and raising money, but about highlighting the amazing work that the team at Leeds Neuro Intensive Care Unit do.

It seems a small gesture for saving my life, but it's a start. I have used my body to its potential and this challenge showed I am successfully living my life to the full.

I wasn't meant to walk six years ago, but I have just cycled the whole length of the country in 10 days. I think that

is a message to people that anything is possible if you try hard and believe in yourself. The hard work, road accidents, punctures, torrential weather and persistent pain was all worth it to get that rush of pride and achievement.

This was the most challenging thing I have done both physically and mentally, and made me realise what I love. The ride allowed me to reflect on the beauty that this island has to offer and to take in some of it.

Even with all this hard work, I wouldn't have done it without all the sponsors, donations and overall support from friends and family that kept me going and gave me strength on those exceptionally hard days. Thank you to all those who donated and sponsored,

I wouldn't have done it without you supporting me.

I also want to give a special thanks to Julie and Ken Duckworth, for supplying Sam and me with the food and rest we needed.

Julie Barton for her support and lovely food, Nicola Warne and Alison Duckworth for always supporting me the whole way and, last but not least, my companion Sam Barton who was with me 110% all the way with his amazing navigational skills and drive to push me and him through the hardest parts of the ride. I definitely would have been very lost without him.

I also want to thank Leeds Neuro Intensive Unit which saves the lives of others like myself and gives people another chance in life. If anyone would like to sponsor me please visit justgiving.com/robduckworth to continue the ongoing support for the unit.