

850-mile cycle for Manchester man in memory of his twin and his dad

Friday 29 August, 2025

A man from Manchester, who lost both his twin brother and his dad to cancer, is taking on an epic 850-mile cycling trip with his wife to raise vital funds for two charities.

Joe Travers, 31, and his partner Jules, from Chorlton, are aiming to complete the bike-packing expedition they've named 'Tour de Travers' in 16 days in memory of Joe's twin brother Sam, who had a brain tumour, and his dad Stephen, who had prostate cancer.

Having set off from Rotterdam, the Netherlands, they'll peddle alongside the River Rhine until they summit the renowned Tour de France peak Alpe d'Huez where they plan to scatter Sam and Stephen's ashes.

Getting there involves cycling up 21 hairpin bends, but it's a poignant location because the Travers family narrowly missed achieving the climb when they took part in previous cycling challenges together.

Joe explained: "Alpe d'Huez is a famous Tour de France climb that we always dreamed of tackling together. We were so close 12 years ago, but due to bad weather we were forced to reroute.

"Sam and I then planned to scatter some of Dad's ashes at the top following his long fight with prostate cancer, but due to Sam's own illness - brain cancer – it wasn't possible. So now it is mine and Jules' turn to fulfil this wish and carry both Sam and Dad to the top – third time lucky!

"We'll be bike-packing the whole trip - taking everything we need on our bikes and mainly camping along the way with the occasional hotel stop for some respite as we go through Holland, Germany and France.

"I am so proud to carry their ashes and scatter them at the top. This ride has so much meaning to me but also gives me a chance to reflect on memories of spending time with my twin and my dad."

Sam, who was married and had two sons, was just 30 when he died in June 2024, 13 months after his dad Stephen passed away aged 63.

Sam's symptoms began with a month-long migraine and then an eye test showing something pressing against his optic nerve. A scan confirmed that it was an aggressive brain tumour which he nicknamed Chunky!

Surgery to remove it was successful and Sam was due to have immunotherapy, but the tumour recurred within five months.

Joe explained: "To look on as you lose a loved one to something like a brain tumour is heart-breaking but we really want to help in any way we can by raising money towards the brilliant research that The Brain Tumour Charity funds to find new treatments and early detection, to save other families from this heartache in the future!

"If there is one thing I can take from this situation, it's just how precious life really is. This is why we are taking on this challenge - to bring more awareness for both these difficult to detect cancers, and to bring some light from the dark! It's what they both would have wanted."

Lily Finlay, Community Fundraiser for The Brain Tumour Charity in the northwest of England, said: "We are hugely grateful to Joe and Jules, and wish them the best of luck on their cycling challenge. Malignant brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of the under 40s, and it's only through the incredible fundraising efforts of people like them that we'll change this shocking statistic in the future."

To support Tour de Travers' fundraising efforts for The Brain Tumour Charity and for Prostate Cancer UK see: <https://www.justgiving.com/team/tour-de-travers>

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