

Fundraising Cyclist Takes on Shetlands Cycle Challenge for UK Forces' Mental Health

Monday 19 June, 2023

After epic rides around Scotland, the Pyrenees and Wales,

78-year-old ex-Marine Jonathan Thomson is heading further north this year.

On Sunday 18th June a team of four intrepid cyclists will set off from Northern Scotland on a dramatic 7-day, 750 km bike ride around the Orkney and Shetland islands - all to raise much-needed funds for UK veterans' mental health charity, PTSD Resolution, through the [Just Giving](#) website.

Founded in 2009, PTSD Resolution provides therapy for forces' veterans, reservists and their families. Therapy is free, effective and delivered both promptly and locally through a UK-wide network of 200 therapists - with treatment also available online or by phone.

The charity is a 'lean' operation with no salaried staff or assets, yet it has had well over 3,500 referrals to date. Therapy is delivered across an average of six sessions, with 78% of cases seeing an improvement in reported symptoms to the point where no further therapy is needed.

This will be Jonathan's fourth cycle ride for PTSD Resolution, and his fundraising total is currently sitting at an impressive £75,000. With a standard course of therapy costing the charity £750, and delivered for free, Jonathan has helped up to 100 veterans out of the darkness:

"Too many of our veterans suffer the evil effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD," he says. "This wrecks their lives and deeply affects those of their families and close friends. It is also a major cause of suicide."

Joining Jonathan on 'Shetland '23' will be Jim, a former naval pilot; Matt, a former Royal Marine; and Jez, an ex-Marine and an amputee. The route will take the team from Forsinard in the Scottish Highlands to the northernmost point of Shetland - coinciding with the Longest Day on 21st June.

The 7-day schedule includes a great deal of island-hopping - 10 ferry crossings, with one overnight - and some very complicated timings. Bikes will be laden with all their kit as the team will have no support and very little backup. "We are not the youngest team on the road either," Jonathan says. "When we start, we will be 78, 73, 64 and 42."

All costs are covered privately by the team, so all funds raised will go directly to PTSD Resolution.

Training for 'Shetland '23' has been underway for months and is intensifying as the date draws closer. "Cycling 100km or more in a day is not difficult - but doing so for seven days causes tiredness to build up," Jonathan says.

"If we are to achieve our goal, we have to be fit, strong and well prepared, which means we train at least four days a week, sometimes for 3-4 hours. So 'Shetland '23' is indeed a challenge!"

"Getting fit and strong enough is a bit like baking a cake - an uncertain business and one never knows whether all is well until the day comes."

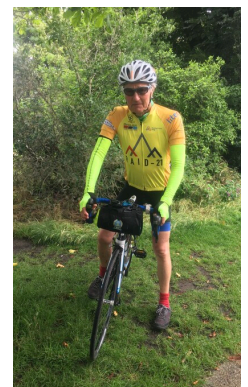
Since his 2020 solo cycle around the north coast of Scotland, Jonathan's expeditions have steadily gained momentum. In 2021, he was joined by fellow cyclists for 'Raid '21', a gruelling journey across the Pyrenees from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic - and last year a team of four cycled the length and breadth of Wales.

This year, the 'Shetland '23' team are hoping to hit a new fundraising record.

"PTSD Resolution is a remarkable organisation that deserves our support," says Jonathan. "Please help me support them."

"All funds raised are used to support their therapy and outreach programme. They provide essential treatment for the pernicious condition of PTSD - thereby also helping families, friends and colleagues."

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"It would be terrific if you found you could support this enterprise. All expedition costs will be met privately so all funds raised will go straight to where they are needed."

You can help 'Team Shetland '23' help UK Veterans, Reservists & families -

by donating here: www.justgiving.com/page/jonathan-thomson-6

PTSD Resolution CEO, Charles Highett, wishes the 'Shetland '23' team well on their very northerly adventure:

"Jonathan's various challenges have, to date, facilitated the mental health recovery of 100 UK veterans. PTSD Resolution has helped over 3600 veterans, reservists and family members recover their mental health, and we continue to receive an average of 8 new referrals a week.

"Jonathan and his cycling teams display the sort of energy and dedication that enables us to continue in our important work.

"We thank Jonathan and the 'Shetland '23' team as they train and prepare - and ask all potential donors to support this valiant effort as far as they are able."

'Shetland 2023'

CYCLING DAYS	START	FINISH
Sunday 18th June	Forsinard	St Margaret's Hope, Orkney (via Scrabster & Stromness)
Monday 19th June	St Margaret's Hope, Orkney	Kirkwall, Orkney
Tuesday 20th June	Kirkwall, Orkney	Lerwick, Shetland
Wednesday 21st June	Lerwick, Shetland	Brae, Shetland
Thursday 22nd June	Brae, Shetland	Brae, Shetland (via Unst, northern-most point)
Friday 23rd June	Brae, Shetland	Kirkwall, Orkney (via Lerwick, Shetland)
Saturday 24th June	Kirkwall, Orkney	Forsinard (via Stromness & Scrabster)

Please visit the [Just Giving](https://www.justgiving.com) website.

For further information: www.PTSDresolution.org

Company Contact:

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