

Sussex man to paddleboard across English Channel in daughter's memory in huge charity challenge

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A Sussex man is preparing to paddleboard across the English Channel to raise funds for children's cancer research in memory of his 10-year-old daughter.

Jamie BartlettBundy, from Hassocks, is taking on the challenge in memory of Pearl, who passed away in 2017 after being diagnosed with a form of bone cancer called Ewing sarcoma.

Jamie, and his wife Rachel, later set up #PearlPower, a Special Named Fund at CCLG: The Children & Young People's Cancer Association, which has raised more than £125,000 for research into finding kinder, more effective treatments for all types of childhood cancer with poor outcomes.

Along with his brother, John Bartlett, 56, of Garsington in Oxfordshire, Jamie took on his first punishing paddleboarding adventure in 2023, covering 100km from Scotland's west coast to its east during Storm Babet. Now, the pair are hard at work in preparation for their second 'Paddle4Pearl', which they'll undertake the week commencing 4 August.

The 26.5 nautical-mile slog, which they hope will raise more than £10,000 for the fund, will be a test of the brothers' physical and mental endurance, and while Jamie acknowledges the scale of the task ahead of them, he said he's "looking forward to seeing how much I can push myself".

In addition to his regular paddle training, which has included hours upon hours out on the sea in all conditions and a session with GBSUP, the organisation responsible for organising national paddle boarding races, Jamie has been immersing himself in a tough new fitness regime, designed to prepare him for withstanding whatever's thrown at him during the crossing.

Jamie, who runs his own carpentry business, said: "I've been working hard, training every day in some way, running or swimming.

"The morning routine is definitely getting harder, trying to fit everything in alongside work and life.

"The challenge itself is physical and mental, so it's about being prepared to take on whatever hits us.

"One of the hardest parts will be being out for such a long time, unable to come in for lunch, with land so far away.

"I want to make sure I've got enough in the tank to be able to do it on a really tough day and have a little bit left over. We don't be falling over at the finish line. We want to be making sure we're standing proud at the end."

Jamie, who will have just turned 50 when he takes on the challenge, added: "I know it'll be hard. But after seeing what my daughter and all those other children go through, and still smile, I feel like I'm piling in significance when compared to them.

"[And] of all the people I'd want to do this with, it's my brother, with him being with me throughout Pearl's illness. His strength is something I rely on, and vice versa, and his mental support, and his being with me, is vital.

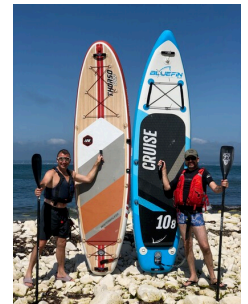
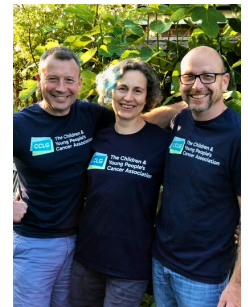
"John has also done other long-distance challenges in aid of #PearlPower, and his experience and insight gives me strength that we can do the crossing."

The money raised by #PearlPower has been able to support CCLG in funding two groundbreaking research projects, with the family having met some of the researchers involved. Knowing how the funds they raise will be used will drive the brothers on during their challenge, said Jamie.

"Rachel and I have met with the scientists that we've put money towards, so you can see what's going on," he said.

"We know what it's doing and to see that it's making a difference is remarkable. It's tangible and a driving force as well. I think it makes us get up and keep going." "We're changing people's lives: children's lives, their parents' lives, their brothers' and sisters' lives. Their grandparents' lives."

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Jamie began to paddle after his daughter's death, having been gifted a board by Rachel and son, Milo. He said that being out in the calm of nature, for hours at a time, has been a "place to find acceptance", adding: "When you're out on these long paddles, you're just there with your own thoughts, with no interferences, coming to terms with things."

Having documented his paddleboarding journey on social media to help raise vital awareness of childhood cancer and the desperate need to find new treatments, Jamie has been inundated with well-wishes and support.

He said: "I've had some lovely messages from people saying they're really enjoying watching my journey and coming along with me, seeing what I'm up to. It's heartwarming."

Vicki Brunt, CCLG's Head of Fundraising, said: "We're wishing Jamie and John the best of luck for their incredible challenge. We can't thank them enough for their efforts, which will help us change the future for children with cancer."

Follow Jamie's challenge at <https://www.instagram.com/paddle4pearl/> or to donate visit www.justgiving.com/page/paddle4pearl2025

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