



## Press release

11 November 2015

### **Beijing Biddies to hit the road again for Arctic challenge**

Less than two years after driving to Beijing in just 29 days for charity the self-styled Beijing Biddies are taking to the road again...this time driving non-stop from Cumbria to the Arctic Circle.

For their latest challenge in aid of the UK's two leading cancer charities, Edwina Sorkin, aged 70, and Kate Sleath (65) will team up with three other women as they attempt to drive 2,700 miles to the Arctic Circle in the toughest winter conditions.

Helen Stobart (50), Liz Tinkler (49) and Kerrie Ellison (44), all from Cumbria, will join forces with the Beijing Biddies to drive through Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway as they head for Nordkapp, 350 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

The Beijing Biddies Arctic Challenge will raise money for Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support.

The team will set off from Carlisle on February 24, 2016, in two Volvo XC90 cars that have been provided by Carlisle-based Lloyd Motor Group, sponsors of the challenge.

However because of unpredictable weather conditions and possible road closures due to snow, they have no idea how long the trip will take. Temperatures may dip to -40 during the journey and the sun stays below the horizon during the day in winter months.

“Our aim is to drive there without any overnight stops,” said Edwina. “At all times we will have two people driving, one person navigating and two people resting or sleeping.

“We’ve been told that when a road closes because of bad weather, drivers pull over and wait in a queue for the snow plough to come through, which can take a few hours or a couple of days. It’s going to be tough but that’s the challenge.”

Edwina, who runs luxury guesthouse Cheskin House in Newbiggin-on-Lune, near Kirkby Stephen, has spent months planning the trip and finding three new teammates. The key to the success of the next project was finding the right people who could commit to undertaking the challenge and the rigorous training in the run-up to it.

She said: “I am delighted that Helen, Liz and Kerrie are taking up the challenge. They are all hugely enthusiastic, adventurous and experienced fundraisers and they each bring different strengths to the team, so Kate and I feel very lucky to have them on board.”

Kate Sleath, from Wetherby in West Yorkshire, has admitted that she struggled at times on the road trip to Beijing. However, having completed the challenge she knows that it takes more than just a spirit of adventure.

She said: “I know from experience that you need grit and determination to succeed against all the odds and we have certainly found that in Helen, Liz and Kerrie!”

Cancer Research will use the money to support the [Add-Aspirin phase III trial](#) that they are funding with the National Institute for Health Research. The study, which will run for up to 12 years, aims to find out if taking aspirin every day for five years can stop or delay cancers that have been caught and treated at an early stage from returning. A staggering 11,000 patients will be recruited who have recently had, or are having, treatment for bowel, breast, oesophagus, prostate or stomach cancer.

Macmillan will use the money raised from the challenge to help make sure that people affected by cancer get the support they need as they face the toughest fight of their life. There are 2.5 million people living with cancer in the UK today, and as more people live longer with their cancer, this number is set to grow to 4 million by 2030.

Natasha Patel, Cancer Research UK local fundraising manager for Cumbria and North Lancashire, said: “Edwina and Kate’s last challenge was one of the most interesting we’d come across but with their journey to the Arctic they’ve come up with something even more testing to continue to raise funds for Cancer Research UK and help us to drive forward our life-saving research. We wish the Beijing Biddies and their new recruits the very best of luck with this exciting challenge.”

Sue McDonald of Macmillan Cancer Support said: “At Macmillan, we are thrilled to continue our involvement with the Beijing Biddies. The forthcoming challenge will really test their mettle whilst raising much needed sponsorship to help local cancer patients who often find every day a challenge!”

Gary Horn, Lloyd Volvo head of business, said: “We are delighted to be supporting such an exciting challenge and two important charities.”

Watch the team being interview about the challenge <https://youtu.be/DemgfOt5h5o>

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**Caption 1:** All wrapped up against the elements are: back (L-R) Helen Stobart and Kerrie Ellison; front (L-R) Liz Tinkler, Edwina Sorkin and Kate Sleath.

**Caption 2:** Raring to go are: in car (L-R) Kate Sleath and Kerrie Ellison; front (L-R) Liz Tinkler, Edwina Sorkin and Helen Stobart.

**(Individual head and shoulder shots of the team are available on request.)**

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**Notes to editor:**

**About Cancer Research UK**

- Cancer Research UK is the world’s leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research.

- Cancer Research UK's pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.
- Cancer Research UK receives no government funding for its life-saving research. Every step it makes towards beating cancer relies on every pound donated.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last forty years.
- Today, 2 in 4 people survive their cancer for at least 10 years. Cancer Research UK's ambition is to accelerate progress so that 3 in 4 people will survive their cancer for at least 10 years within the next 20 years.
- Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK's vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 0300 123 1022 or visit [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

### **About Macmillan Cancer Support**

More than one in three of us will get cancer. For most of us it will be the toughest fight we ever face. And the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder.

But you don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way. We are the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling you which benefits you're entitled to. The volunteers giving you a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The community there for you online, any time. The supporters who make it all possible.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support