

# brave Josie

**BANGOR** will today (15th) welcome a brave woman who is sailing around the UK - despite having a brain tumour.

Josie Phillips (37) and her husband Roger sailed their Contessa 32 yacht, called Nordlys, into Bangor Marina yesterday (14th) and today will meet representatives of the charity, Brainwaves NI.

Such is the extraordinary nature of this visit, Bangor Marina is offering the couple a free berth for the duration of their brief stay.

Josie, a doctor at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, has set herself a challenge with three primary objectives: sail anti-clockwise around the coast of the UK, raise awareness of brain tumours and, at the same time, collect around £20,000 through sponsorship for Brain Tumour Research ([www.braintumourresearch.org](http://www.braintumourresearch.org)).

Maggi Whyte and committee members from Brainwaves NI will be there to welcome Josie today at 2.30pm. Says Maggi, "We are truly inspired by Josie's bravery and strength in the face of her brain tumour. Her journey shows real strength of character and gives other patients and their families hope in a time of sadness."

"We are so pleased that she has chosen to visit Northern Ireland and we would hope everyone contributes so that she can reach her fundraising target of £20,000 for Brain Tumour Research."

Brainwaves NI is a charity dedicated to providing support and information to those people affected by a brain tumour. If you would like to speak to someone, please contact their dedicated phone line, 9335 3995 or visit [www.brainwaves-ni.org](http://www.brainwaves-ni.org)

Josie's challenge comes after being diagnosed with a brain tumour in 2004, following five years of unexplained symptoms. Josie later faced devastating news - the tumour became malignant in September 2008.

Her prognosis then was given as between 12 to 15 months to live. But Josie and Roger, who has just completed a PhD, were determined to make the most of life. They began to focus on a challenge for when she was sufficiently healthy - to sail 2,000 miles around the coast of Britain.

Having set out from their home port of Ipswich on May 13, Josie and Roger first sailed up the east coast as far as Inverness in Scotland. They then passed along the Calcuttian Canal with its breathtaking scenery, enjoying spectacular views of Ben Nevis and the narrows of Neptunus's Staircase of eight locks, before



**Roger and Josie with their yacht Nordlys, a Contessa 32. They are visiting Bangor today (15th) to raise funds and awareness for the charity Brainwaves NI.**

reaching Oban.

After their visit to Northern Ireland, Josie and Roger will sail southwards through the Irish Sea and around the south coast of England, before arriving back to Ipswich. Subject to weather conditions, they expect to complete the challenge in approximately four months.

They're dividing their voyage into 'legs' so they can hold brain tumour publicity events in the major marine centres to which they are due to berth.

Marinas are helping them to minimise expenses by providing free berthing and many companies are offering the loan or gift of specialist equipment and clothing. All other costs are being covered by Josie and Roger and any donations made will go directly to the Brain Tumour Research charity.

To keep abreast of events, track their progress online on [www.contessa32.co.uk](http://www.contessa32.co.uk)

Josie's motivation for this challenge follows various "awake" craniotomies (brain surgeries) to try to remove the tumour, as well as radiotherapy and chemotherapy and she is now only too aware how little is known about brain tumours.

The statistics speak for themselves: 16,000 people each year are diagnosed with a brain tumour and more children and people under the age of 40 die of a brain tumour than leukaemia or any other cancer.

While the five year survival rate for many cancers is over 50% and rising to over 90% for some cancers, for brain tumours the five year survival rate is just 14%.

Against this background, it may be shocking to learn that brain tumour research receives less than 1% (0.7%) of national cancer research spending in the UK.

Josie's positive attitude impresses everyone she meets, yet she is aware of her uncertain future.

One small quote from the Brain Tumour Research website [www.braintumourresearch.org](http://www.braintumourresearch.org) describes the feelings of Josie, Roger and their wider family: "Whether malignant or benign, both patients and carers are living with a time bomb..."

Josie continues, "Brain tumours can affect anyone, and there is no way of preventing them because their cause is unknown. Living with an incurable disease is extremely difficult - I try to carry on as normally as possible."

"We hope that funding for brain tumour research will give hope to others in the future."

Brain tumour research is still very much in its infancy, with very little known about the behaviour of tumours, their effective diagnosis and treatment. Jet alone finding a cure. Research is woefully underfunded yet desperately needed to bring hope to thousands of brain tumour patients and their families.

Sponsorship and sailing details at Josie's Sail Around Britain can be via her website [www.contessa32.co.uk](http://www.contessa32.co.uk) or Josie's Just Giving page [www.justgiving.com/roundbritainwithabraintumour](http://www.justgiving.com/roundbritainwithabraintumour).

Research or by sending a cheque payable to Brain Tumour Research to and named Josie Phillips to Brain Tumour Research, The Business Centre, Padbury Hill Farm, Padbury, Buckingham, Bucks MK18 2BN.