

News

Norwich doctor's amazing 2,000-mile voyage

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A Norwich doctor battling a brain tumour has made a jubilant return to dry land to complete a 2,000-mile voyage in aid of charity.

Josie Phillips and her husband Roger set sail from Ipswich on May 15 in a bid to circumnavigate the British Isles.

Mrs Phillips, a junior doctor at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, came up with the idea of the Round Britain voyage to raise money and awareness for cancer charities.

The couple docked at Fox's Marina in Ipswich yesterday afternoon having raised an impressive £10,000 for Brain Tumour Research and £3,000 for the Big C cancer centre at Norwich.

Mr Phillips said: "It's gone extremely well. There have been some tough times, but it has been really good overall."

Mrs Phillips, 27, was diagnosed with a brain tumour five years ago and found out last year that it had become malignant. Since then she has vowed to enjoy life and not let the disease stop her from accomplishing some of her dreams.

The couple met several charity representatives and survivors at various stop-offs the along the way, including fellow fund-raiser from Lowestoft, Wendy Savage, who lost her own daughter to a brain tumour.

Liz Fussey, of Brain Tumour Research, said the accomplishment was even more impressive in that Mrs Phillips only started sailing dinghies in 2003 when she met her husband at university, and that the first yacht the couple owned was the Contessa 32 they used on the trip which they only bought earlier this year.

Mrs Fussey said: "We are just bowled over by the fact that she has decided to face such an incredible challenge while suffering with a brain tumour and that she has raised such a fantastic sum."

She added: "She has also really done a marvellous job of raising awareness of this terrible disease."

She added that survival rates for brain tumours stood at just 14pc, compared to those of most cancers that are at about 50pc.

Mrs Phillips started having headaches and "vagueness" at 16, which doctors said was migraine or stress, until finally it was diagnosed as a brain tumour at age 21.

Despite operations to remove the tumour, she graduated from Cardiff University with a degree in medicine before starting work as a junior doctor in Norwich. In 2008 she discovered the tumour had grown back and had progressed, which meant she had to undergo chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment.

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