



The Background

Internal
newsletter

October 2009

Celebrities line up for BackCare Awareness Week



A trio of top sports stars have agreed to help BackCare as part of Back Care Awareness Week this month.

They are Olympic Gold Medal rower Tim Foster, England and Leicester Tigers rugby player Lewis Moody, and former Irish international rugby player Rob Henderson. Their recruitment is a major coup for Martin Jarman, who along with Janet Mee, has been deeply involved in organising BackCare Awareness Week.

Martin used his contacts combined with a chance meeting at a local pub to sign up the celebrities.

"I approached Tim Foster when he was at a 20 year rowing re-union at the Bloated Mallard in Victoria Street, Teddington," he explained. "He was very friendly and readily agreed to help us because he has suffered occasional back problems like most professional sportsmen."

Tim, who is now coaching the Swiss international rowing team, will visit BackCare's Teddington offices on 30 October for an interview and photo session.

There is a chance he may even persuade fellow Olympic champions Sir Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent to come with him. Martin has also worked his magic to get rugby stars Lewis Moody and Rob Henderson to lend their support to the charity's work. They will also be visiting Backcare's office at a later date.

The staff's massive efforts to promote BackCare Awareness Week this year have really paid off.

BackCare have sold in excess of 600 of the special information packs so far – three times as many as last year.

One of the biggest orders came from Parcelforce whose thousands of staff need all the help they can get to cope with their heavy lifting workloads. The company has bought 173 packs which will be distributed among its 54 depots across Britain along with the range of six skeleton posters.

Equally impressed with BackCare's material to promote healthier backs is Aegon UK, one of the world's largest insurance and pensions companies, based in Edinburgh. It has done a deal worth £15,000 to BackCare to reproduce its information sheets and images in a booklet for each of its 5,000 employees. The company has also raised the possibility of a partnership with the charity and sponsorship in the future.

Finally, among the many places where there will be a special event to mark BackCare Awareness Week will be Great Ormond Street Hospital. Management at the world famous medical establishment have agreed to host one of BackCare information stands.

Helen, Mandy, Carolyn and Gordon have done a fantastic job in stuffing and dispatching the packs. There will be an update on all the BackCare Awareness Week activity in November's internal newsletter.

Sash Makes A Move



After sitting in my garden a couple of weeks ago listening to my neighbours I decided it was time to move. The couple two doors up were having a cracker of a row, next door is deaf and he was shouting to his wife that the sweet peas were flowering, on the other side, M & P were wandering around the garden in the nude as they tend to do (they also kick box in the nude!) and the man at the bottom of the garden was telling his eight-year-old daughter off for using language that a docker would have been proud of.

Time to go. It was all putting me off my book and glass of wine.

I put the house on the market and 10 days later it was under offer at over the asking price. I barely had time to draw breathe before I was given the exchange date of 9 Oct - who said there was a recession ?

Undaunted off I trot, fondly imagining that house-hunting shouldn't be too difficult.

I am moving down to Hampshire away from it all, hopefully to the middle of nowhere with a large garden for the cats, dogs, chickens and goat.

I have now offered on four houses and lost each one. They all went for well over the asking price. One went for £70,000 over the asking price! Estate agents are now asking me to express an interest in a house so they can sell it quickly and get more commission. I have now decided to take the grown-up approach - spend the equity on shoes and live in a cardboard box.

Sash Newman
Chief Executive



Sunday Telegraph Success

BackCare produced a 16 page colour supplement printed in the Sunday Telegraph on 27 September, which featured top tips for maintaining a good back, a questions and answers section, and advice on some of the many complementary therapies currently available.

Sash Newman said:" We are very pleased to have worked with Media Planet to produce what is the first of its kind for BackCare. We hope that the information included will help more people manage their back pain and help thousands of others avoid this condition."

Talk by Louise Levy

Helpline volunteer Louise Levy is giving a seminar talk in her professional capacity as a cognitive behavioural hypno-psychotherapist at the Back Show, Earls Court, on Sunday 4 October 1230 -1pm. Her talk is entitled "You already have the power within you to reduce your pain." She would welcome seeing anyone come along who may be interested to support her.



Helpline News

The Helpline has been very busy after four new volunteers joined us in April, completed the training course, and are now important members of the team. As a result we have been able to operate three new shifts and are now open 12 shifts a week.

The new volunteers are already also acting as expert patients for callers who want to talk to someone who has the same condition or same procedure as them and are all contemplating joining the email service.

We have had two refresher days, one in May and the other in September, with interesting speakers on pain management, the new NICE guidelines, the anatomy of the spine, and products and aids. We have also looked at how the Helpline could develop and grow. We have found that we have a wealth of expertise within BackCare and have been roping in volunteers and trustees as well as outside speakers to conduct the training.

Wendy Allsop, our mentor, has retired and we are very pleased to now be using Fiona Greenhalf in that role and she met the volunteers for the first time in September at the second training day. Fiona has a lot of experience of mentoring helplines but this will be the first time she has done it on the phone.

Chris Hughes Helpline Manager



Phil Collins Quits Drumming

The news that drummer Phil Collins may be forced to quit drumming after a back injury led to Sash Newman being called in as a guest on talkSPORT, the UK's leading commercial radio station, to discuss back pain.

She discussed with presenters Mike Parry and Andy Townsend how common the ailment is and was able to promote the charity whose Helpline number and website details were given out on air.

Mike Parry was particularly interested in the subject as he has back pain problems of his own.

Collins revealed that he suffered back injury during the last Genesis tour, in 2007, because of his drumming posture. He went on to say that surgery to repair dislocated vertebrae in his neck had left him incapable of holding drumsticks properly or playing the piano.

He was quoted as saying: "There isn't any drama regarding my 'disability' and playing drums.

"But after a successful operation on my neck, my hands still can't function normally. Maybe in a year or so it will change, but for now it is impossible for me to play drums or piano.

"I am not in any 'distressed' state - stuff happens in life," he philosophised.

