

# The BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY

## Rowing pair set out on perilous Atlantic crossing

Fundraisers aim for the record books in unsupported boat



Two rowers have set out from New York in a bid to conquer one of the world's most treacherous ocean routes.

Tom Rainey and Lawrence Walters, both 23, left Lower Manhattan today (3 May) in their ocean rowing boat Yves.

They hope to become the youngest pair to make the Atlantic crossing from the US to the UK, as well as completing part of the route in record-breaking time.

The duo will spend at least eight weeks in Yves, which is just 23 feet long and six feet wide. They have no support yacht and are carrying all of the freeze-dried food and supplies they need for the journey.

They expect to cover around 3,800 miles before they next touch dry land in Salcombe, Devon. On route they will face waves seven storeys high, icebergs and gale-force winds.

The pair, known as Team Ocean Valour, will rest for alternate two-hour periods in a tiny cabin at one end of the boat. One will row while the other sleeps.

They are aiming to raise £250,000 for The Brain Tumour Charity, inspired by the loss of Tom's father Luke in 2012.

His death from a brain tumour "rocked the family to the core", Tom said.

*"The Brain Tumour Charity gave us so much help and advice. It was a port in what would otherwise have been an unweatherable storm."*

Of the 60 crews to have attempted the journey from the US to the UK mainland by rowing boat, just 23 have completed it. Five people have been lost at sea.

Tom, from Salcombe, was originally due to row with 25-year-old Sam Coombs, from Clevedon.

But when Sam injured his back less than a month before their departure date, Lawrence – who is from Lymington and now lives in Bristol –

stepped in at the last minute to take his place.

Family and friends were on hand to witness Tom and Lawrence begin their row from New York's famous Battery Park district, in the shadow of One World Trade Center (Freedom Tower), at 10.30am EST (3.30pm BST).

The pair will be able to communicate via satellite phone during their journey, and a tracking device will allow followers to keep tabs on their progress.

They are hoping to break a 119-year-old record for the fastest row between New York and the Scilly Isles, which stands at 55 days.

Sarah Lindsell, chief executive of The Brain Tumour Charity, said: *"We are immensely grateful to Tom and Lawrence for taking on this extraordinary challenge and we wish them the very best of luck."*

*"Everyone at the charity will be following their progress closely over the coming weeks and willing them on across the Atlantic."*



For more information about Tom and Lawrence's departure and the Ocean Valour expedition, or to speak to the rowers' family members, contact Chris Martin, Ocean Valour media manager

+1 707 799 8356 or 07967 826833 | [media@oceanvalour.co.uk](mailto:media@oceanvalour.co.uk)

**Polly Newton, PR and Media Manager, The Brain Tumour Charity.**

**DD: 01252 418191 | M: 07990 828385 | [polly.newton@thebraintumourcharity.org](mailto:polly.newton@thebraintumourcharity.org)**

#### **About The Brain Tumour Charity**

**Registered Charity No. 1150054 (England and Wales) SC045081 (Scotland)**

The Brain Tumour Charity is at the forefront of the fight to defeat brain tumours and is making a difference every day to the lives of people with a brain tumour and their families.

They fund pioneering research to increase survival and improve treatment options and raise awareness of the symptoms and effects of brain tumours to get earlier diagnosis and to help families cope with everything that the diagnosis of a brain tumour brings. They provide support for everyone affected so that they can live as full a life as possible, with the best quality of life.

They fund and promote the UK-wide HeadSmart campaign, raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of brain tumours in children and young people to make earlier diagnosis a reality. Earlier diagnosis will reduce long term disabilities and save lives. In just three years, HeadSmart has reduced average diagnosis time from 9.1 weeks to 6.7 weeks.

Find out more at: [www.thebraintumourcharity.org](http://www.thebraintumourcharity.org)

Members of the Association of Medical Research Charities, The Information Standard, The Helplines Partnership and the Fundraising Standards Board.

#### **Brain tumours – the facts**

Brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under 40.

Over 9,300 people are diagnosed each year with a primary brain tumour, including 500 children and young people – that's 25 people every

day.

Almost 5,000 people lose their lives to a brain tumour each year.

Thousands more are diagnosed with secondary brain tumours, which are not recorded.

Brain tumours reduce life expectancy by on average 20 years – the highest of any cancer.

Just 14% of adults survive for five years after diagnosis.

Brain tumours are the largest cause of preventable or treatable blindness in children.

Childhood brain tumour survivors are 10 times more likely to suffer long term disability than well children.

This accounts for 20,000 additional disabled life years for all the children who are diagnosed each year.

Research offers the only real hope of dramatic improvements in the management and treatment of brain tumours.

Over £500m is spent on cancer research in the UK every year, yet less than 2% is spent on brain tumours.