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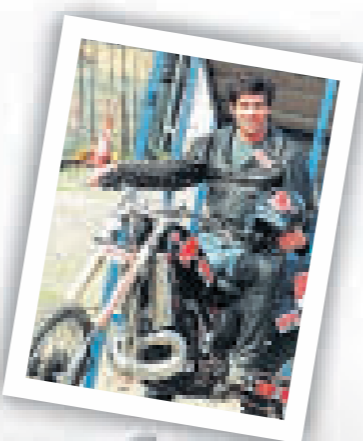
health

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BRAIN-DAMAGED STUNT RIDER EDDIE KIDD ON HIS GREATEST CHALLENGE

I used to jump buses on a motorbike but walking the London Marathon will be my biggest feat EVER



HUGE EFFORT
... Eddie trains with his wife Samantha

SWEAT breaking on his brow, his face a mask of concentration, brain-damaged Eddie Kidd slowly inches forwards.

Using a walking frame, the one-time stunt biker known to millions for leaping the Great Wall of China prepares for his biggest test yet.

In nine days' time he will take part in the London Marathon, a seemingly impossible feat for

BY DAVID LOWE

someone who was told he would never walk again.

If all goes to plan he will do a mile a day and cross the finish line almost four weeks later.

It's a snail's pace for someone who once lived a glamorous life in the fast lane, but he is determined to push his broken body like never before - to raise money for charity.

After shuffling a few feet along Brighton's crowded seafront using his wheeled frame, his latest "bike", the 51-year-old returns exhausted to his wheelchair.

Eddie, who in 1984 soared over 19 buses in Sweden, says: "This will be my greatest stunt yet. Even bigger than jumping the Wall of China in 1993."

"But don't underestimate the power of my ELLMA machine. That stands for Eddie's Lovely London Marathon Aid. I remember being told I'd never walk."

"Well, f*** that. I'll complete the London Marathon, even if it kills me."

It's nearly 15 years since his devastating smash at the Bulldog Bash motorcycle rally in Warwickshire, where he was booked to jump 50ft over a speeding car.

As Eddie landed the suspension on his Honda CR500 failed and he cracked his chin

on the tank. Hurting 30ft down a steep bank he suffered brain damage, a broken collar bone and pelvis and six damaged vertebrae.

He woke from a 40-day coma with partial paralysis and speech problems - and his slurred words are now barely intelligible.

Eddie, above right in his heyday, spent three years in a rehabilitation centre learning how to live a vastly altered life.

Little wonder the man who once doubled for Bond stars Timothy Dalton and Pierce Brosnan and starred in a Levi's TV ad felt suicidal.

He admits: "Nothing mattered any more. I planned how to end my life. Lying in the bath and going under the water, knowing I wouldn't be able to get myself out. I have moved on since then."

Eddie credits his marriage last year to the former model and actress Samantha Kiril, 42, for giving him a new lease of life.

They had a brief relationship 25 years ago, which was rekindled after they met again in 2007. Summing up his relationship, twice-married Eddie slowly forms two words: "Lovely. Superb."

Positive

Looking on, Samantha beams and insists her hubby's marathon attempt and fundraising have also had a positive impact.

She says: "I have never heard Eddie grumble about the accident. A few months back he did say, 'I must have been a right b****d in my last life to deserve this.'"

"That really affected me. You hate to see the one you love feeling down. Now Eddie has something to focus on."

"And the change is remarkable. Not only is he training for a marathon, but he is raising cash for a cause very close to his heart."

The Eddie Kidd Foundation, still in its infancy, was started by the man himself two years ago and aims to support the rehabilitation of stunt performers who have been injured at work.

One of those who was injured plying their trade was Harry Potter stunt double David Holmes, left paralysed and wheelchair-bound after an accident on set in 2009 aged just 25.

Samantha says: "These guys do the stunts that make big names look good. The danger is immense."

"Often insurance is severely lacking. Most are insured for immediate care only, nothing long-term. Eddie

didn't have any insurance so he knows what it's like to find yourself injured, alone and left with nothing."

"He has had to fight for everything and is determined to help others in a similar situation."

Charity Children With Leukaemia will receive a proportion of the cash Eddie raises and with a huge £100,000 target, getting in shape clearly isn't Eddie's only challenge.

But for now he is concentrating on training to ensure that he doesn't disappoint sponsors.

Samantha says: "Eddie must be crazy but he's very determined. He's pushing himself to extremes."

"The guys at Riptide gym in Brighton have been amazing and Eddie goes four days a week to work out for four hours a day."

"Things get complicated because of the brain injury, which means Eddie needs to rest every hour."

"It will be a slow process as he inches along the marathon route doing about a mile a day."

"I'll be there the whole way and in the evening we'll be sleeping in a Winnebago on a friend's drive."

"Each morning we'll return to the spot where Eddie left off the night before."

I'm so inspired by his commitment. He has taken on a challenge most of us wouldn't dream of doing.

Eddie's attempt will feature a special celebrity event, when he will be joined en route by old friends from the world of showbiz.

Actor Ray Winstone, who played football with Eddie in the charity team Showbiz 11, is patron of the Eddie Kidd Foundation and will accompany the likes of EastEnders actor John Altman, Madness singer Suggs and comedian Bobby Davro for a half-mile stretch.

Ray, 54, told The Sun: "Eddie Kidd is an inspiration - a proper man made from the stuff this country prides itself on, guts, honour, humanity and a will of steel."

Back in Brighton, after rest Eddie slowly begins walking again with his frame as a group of biker fans cheer him on and record his efforts on their mobile phones.

Samantha says: "If I see him cross the finishing line I will be crying my eyes out. It will be overwhelming for both of us."

"On my part there will be a huge sense of relief to see him complete something that means so much."

Meanwhile the sweat is pouring down Eddie's face again, and clearly he means business.

● To sponsor Eddie's marathon attempt visit virginmoneygiving.com/EddieKidd.

your letters

I HAVE constant migraine. I've tried various pills but it's always there. I also have Meniere's disease, which makes me dizzy every day. I take Stemetil for this. And I'm stone deaf in one ear. Help!

YVONNE, Alloa

I doubt your problem's either migraine or Meniere's. A key feature of migraine is that you get a bad attack for hours or a couple of days, then it clears completely until the next episode.

It's the same with Meniere's disease. It causes severe attacks of vertigo but these are short-lived - you should be back to normal between attacks.

So if you have constant headache and constant dizziness, there may be other reasons. It might even be side-effects from the treatments you're taking.

Painkillers themselves can cause headaches if taken regularly. And Stemetil - a common treatment for vertigo - is only supposed to be taken for a few days at a time.

Regular use lowers your blood pressure, causing dizziness.

Which means it is probably worth trying to go without your pills for a while. Give it a few weeks, then you might notice a dramatic improvement. If not, you should see your GP. There are many other possible causes for your symptoms and, with deafness too, a growth on the nerve from your ear is one possibility that needs checking.

SOME weeks ago I had a head cold that left me deaf in both ears. I've tried inhaling steam and menthol but it hasn't helped. Any ideas?

SUE, Mansfield

You've got Eustachian tube trouble. The tubes connect the back of your throat to your inner ear. When blocked - say, through a cold - they don't equalise the pressures as they should.

The result is deafness, an echoey feeling and a sensation of pressure in your ears, with crackling and popping.

Sooner or later they'll clear on their own. And those inhalations may help, so persevere.

I HAVE an embarrassing problem. My penis is like an inverted lid. It seems to go inside my body and only the head shows when not aroused. What's wrong?

ANON, Newcastle

Don't panic. We all have a pad of fat in the pubic hair area. In some men this is so pronounced it "swamps" the penis, causing the problem you describe. If you're a bit lardy, losing weight may help. But it's absolutely nothing to worry about.

WRITE TO: Dear Doc, The Sun, 3 Thomas More Square, London E9 8 1SN, or drkeith@the-sun.co.uk. PLEASE NOTE: The contents of this column are for information purposes only and are not a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek your GP's advice. The Sun accepts no responsibility for medical decisions readers may take.



... ask Dr Keith

Don't turn a deaf ear to poor hearing and other ailments

OK, I'll confess. Whenever someone with a weight problem complains it's all down to their glands, big bones or whatever, I turn a deaf ear.

So I felt very guilty when I read about poor Sophie Harris, the 28st 16-year-old. She's three times the weight of her twin brother Shane because of a rare genetic condition that makes her supersized. And there's nothing she can do about it.

It's a reminder to us all that we should think about the possible medical implications before we judge. Lots of symptoms tend to be blamed on lifestyle, habits or hygiene. But it may be that occasionally they are caused by a medical problem.

For example, SLEEPINESS. Yes, he may be a lazy so-and-so. Or he

might be suffering from sleep apnoea. Clues are that he'll be lardy, with a collar size over 17in and will snore for England, plus his breathing may sometimes pack up at night.

Treatment involves reducing weight and booze intake and seeing the doc if it gets no better.

BAD BREATH: We all know that smoking plus curries plus toothbrush phobia equals dog breath.

Rarely, though, there's another explanation - like bunged-up sinuses, lung disease or the side-effects of pills. In which case, it's time to breathe all over your GP.

DANDRUFF: Surely this just needs some shampoo and grooming? Maybe. But dandruff can be caused by scalp disorders including seborrheic dermatitis or psoriasis.

Clues are severe itching or very thick dandruff lumps - plus a snowstorm when you shake your head. Medicated shampoos containing coal tar or anti-fungals may help.

WIND: Belching, or worse, is usually just an unpleasant habit. But sometimes it results from medication or bowel trouble such as excess acid or food intolerance. If you think there's a medical explanation, have a word with your doc.

POOR CONCENTRATION AT SCHOOL: Maybe he is daydream-

ing about scoring the winner at Wembley or that girl in 11C when he should be focusing on algebra. But there could be another explanation. Deafness, for example. Or a fit called petit mal, which might make him drift off for a few seconds. Or ADHD. If in doubt, get your GP to check.

FISHY SMELL: One for the ladies. That Billingsgate whiff may not be the result of a soap shortage. It might simply be caused by a germ in the front passage - especially if it smells worse after sex. It's easily cured by a course of antibiotics.

SNIFFING: Probably just another bad habit. Although if he's sneezing, blowing and running, too, he may have a nasal allergy. Antihistamines or steroid nose sprays should help - they're available over the counter.

GROUCHINESS: Yes, maybe he's just a grumpy old git. Or he could be depressed. Clues include tearfulness, poor sleep and loss of interest in the important things - like sex and football.

Try self-help first: a lifestyle makeover, adequate sleep and plenty of exercise. Failing that, he should book an appointment.

Of course, if he's got all the above, either he's really unlucky with his health or it really is time to trade him in for a new model.

Every little helps

on telephones.

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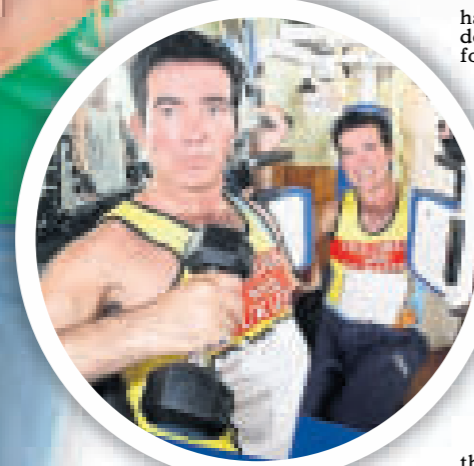
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