

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



the brain injury association

The perseverance of the long-distance runner - brain injury survivor takes on mammoth 186 mile run

A rock climber, who suffered severe head injuries whilst ice climbing, is to run the entire 186 mile length of the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path in six days, 27th May – 1st June, to raise money for the UK's leading brain injury charity.

Colin Watts, of Melksham near Bath, is hoping to raise the vital funds for Headway, the charity dedicated to promoting understanding of all aspects of brain injury, and providing support and information to brain injury survivors, their families and carers.



Colin competing in the Cardiff Half Marathon 2005

Colin, fell 200 ft whilst ice climbing in North Wales in 2003 suffering severe head injuries and multiple fractures. But since his gradual return to health, the 41 year old, who works for Swindon-based company, Intergraph, has taken part in a gruelling number of long-distance runs for Headway, already raising £5,000 in support of those with a brain injury.

“I view these runs as steps in my ‘journey of recovery’ and an opportunity to help others who have suffered a brain injury and who are having to work harder than I have to get back to their normal lives,” says Colin who is preparing for the interesting Pembrokeshire run at the end of May which will take him, escorted, past the army tank firing range.

“Ideally I would like to follow the coast but the official coast path detours inland to skirt around the tank firing range. However, the army has offered to escort me through the range so I can follow the coast!”

When Colin started running in the summer of 2003 he was doing shorter 3-4 mile routes at lunchtime because running would invigorate him so he was more alert in the afternoons to combat the severe fatigue he felt from the head injury. "I also had a tendency to veer off while running so I thought off-road would be safer."

Now, through perseverance, he has run several taxing marathons but this event is his most arduous to date.

Peter McCabe, chief executive of Headway UK said: "Brain injury can often have a totally devastating effect on the lives of brain injury survivors and their families. We know this because we hear about the problems people have to wrestle with daily.

"Colin is undertaking a truly mammoth run and our admiration is with him all the way!"

Visit www.colinwatts.co.uk for more details on this and other aspects of his accident. Visit www.justgiving.co.uk/colinwatts to donate online,

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Headway - the UK's leading brain injury charity - provides support, services and information to brain injury survivors, their families and carers as well as professionals (health, legal etc).

Every year around two-hundred thousand people sustain a brain injury of some sort. The effects of the injuries are usually for life, therefore the number of people living with brain injury will rise year on year.

Men are three times more likely to have a brain injury than women and men aged between 15-29 are FIVE times more likely to suffer brain injury.

The effects of brain injury are often devastating and can include physical disability, memory loss, speech problems and rapid mood changes but has no impact on life expectancy. For many, it is parents and relatives who will become the main carers

For more information please call Maria Dryden, communications officer, Headway UK on 0115 947 1911 or email media@headway.org.uk