

# HOW YOU CAN HELP THE MAD MOWER MEN



Hopefully you've spotted adverts in the last two magazines advertising an amazing charity challenge – a team of BIGGA members pushing mowers from Ransomes Jacobsen's Ipswich HQ to BTME in January – a total of 177 gruelling miles.

It's all in aid of Scotty's Little Soldiers – a charity which supports the families of men and women killed in action while serving with the British Armed Forces.

Tim Johnson, greenkeeper at Wilmslow Golf Club, joined several other greenkeepers to push the mowers from Liverpool to Hull last year, so why are they doing it again, this time in the depths of winter?



How did it all start, and how can you help?

GI spoke to Tim, who is currently in training for this latest gruelling challenge.

## **Pushing mowers hundreds of miles?! How did this all start?**

Lots of people these days do marathons, cycles and other endurance challenges. I wanted to do something very unusual that really stands out from the crowd, that people remember and that's also tied in with the sports turf industry.

One morning last year I was cutting all 21 greens at Wilmslow and I thought I could somehow incorporate a mower in a charity challenge, so I looked at places in the country that could be used as start and finishing points. I spotted that Liverpool and Hull both have an Albert Dock and that created the Port To Port Challenge, it was really that simple. A few friends and family agreed to support us and it was on!

## **Do you think this will be tougher than last year's challenge which you completed in August?**

Yes very much so, this challenge is 80 miles longer with less hours of daylight to

play with, along the east coast of England in January.

We are expecting snow, sleet, gales and a lot of sideways rain. Ransomes Jacobsen are supporting us which we're extremely grateful for, and we're also hoping to secure other support too. Something like this is so tough physically and emotionally but the camaraderie of the team gets you through, and the feeling of achievement at the end is incredible.

## **Why have you chosen to support Scotty's Little Soldiers?**

A lot of emphasis is put on the soldiers on the front line, and injured soldiers going through rehabilitation, and some amazing work is done in that area. But not enough attention is given to the families that are left behind if the worst happens.

Scotty's Little Soldiers was set up by Nikki Scott after her husband Corporal Lee Scott was tragically killed in an explosion in Afghanistan in

July 2009, leaving behind her and their two young children, so it's a hugely worthwhile cause.

## **How are you preparing for it?**

At Wilmslow we do a lot of hand mowing so that helps massively for training. Plus I've joined a triathlon club which is going a long way towards helping me getting prepared for this challenge.

Last year we raised well over £2,000 for Help for Heroes and we're hoping to beat that this time round.

## **How can people donate?**

Visit [www.bmycharity.com/HardRoadToHarrogate](http://www.bmycharity.com/HardRoadToHarrogate) - that's our dedicated website. We leave Ipswich on Thursday 16 January and hope to arrive in Harrogate on Tuesday 21 January for the opening of BTME.

After that we will be on the Ransomes Jacobsen stand to chat to people (if we make it!) and you will also be able to donate then. See you in January!