



## Dear friends of 500 miles

I hope you are thriving as we come towards the end of 2021. Our main news since our last newsletter is that, on the 1st of July this year, 500 miles successfully handed over full administrative and fiscal control of our prosthetics and orthotics centre in Mzuzu in the northern region of Malawi to Mzuzu Central Hospital. You can read more about that below, as well as about our ongoing work in Lilongwe, Malawi and Katete, Zambia. I'm sure you will enjoy Timothy Miti's account of his first two years of studying in Bangalore for his 3-year diploma as part of our continuing training programme.

I've also selected some patient stories to illustrate the sheer transformative impact on people's lives of a few pieces of plastic in the hands of trained professionals.

The next major task on our horizon is the handover of our busy clinic in Lilongwe to KCH/LION in around three years from now. In the words of the director of KCH, Dr Jonathan Ngoma, "we want to do this in a gradual, orderly and sustainable way". It will take serious investment to make this handover possible – hence our last ever appeal to you, our supporters.

Our bold target is £262,500 towards which we have raised £66,000. Perhaps for somebody's Christmas – or maybe your own! – you could you make a final, one-off donation 500 miles through the BIG dinner 2 to help get us over the line – and somebody in Malawi up off the ground. There is no need to have a dinner – just a donation would be gratefully accepted! But whether you do or not, please **enjoy the wealth of video recipes and tips** provided by many well-known friends of 500 miles. £262,500 is 1,500 x £175 – which is the all-in total cost of production of an average device – but you can see the costs of all of our most commonly prescribed devices **on our website**.

As we struggle to make a fist of things post Covid 19, you can be sure that Malawi and Zambia will feel the economic effects more severely and for longer than we will in the UK – and we still enjoy a national health service, free at the point of delivery. In Malawi and Zambia, the majority still depend on charity for basics that we can take for granted, like a prosthesis or orthosis if we or our children need one to be able to get up and walk.

*Olivia Giles*

### Abbreviations

The terms we use to keep things simple!

**CSPO:** Cambodia School of Prosthetics and Orthotics

**KCH:** Kamuzu Central Hospital, Malawi

**MCH:** Mzuzu Central Hospital, Malawi

**MoH Malawi:** Ministry of Health of Malawi

**P&O:** Prosthetic(s) and Orthotic(s)

**SFH:** St Francis Hospital, Zambia

## Welcoming a new trustee to 500 miles

The trustees of 500 miles (Susan Dalgety, Sue Davie, Robin Garrett, Olivia Giles and Jane Salmonson) are delighted to welcome Shruti Turner to the board. Shruti secured her PhD in Biomedical Engineering, Prosthetic Rehabilitation from the Centre for Blast Injury Studies at Imperial College London this summer. She has a keen interest in what makes a comfortable prosthetic socket, which is music to our ears! Please enjoy her excellent TEDxYouth Talk, **Prosthetics under Pressure**, about the importance of this.

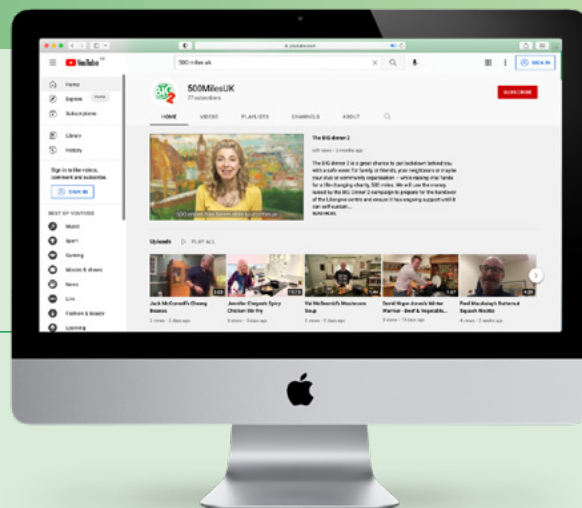


# Project updates

## Malawi

Visit our YouTube channel (search for "500 miles UK") to watch a nine-minute film all about our work to date and future plans in Malawi.

Malawi has suffered the same three waves of Covid-19 as the UK, a few months behind us and undoubtedly less devastating. At the moment, life is pretty much back to normal and even at KCH where our centre is, there seem to be few cases. Vaccinations have been available for all of our staff and now, only a few have not taken up this protection due to fear caused by unhelpful social media.



## Malawi: Lilongwe

The volume of work at our centre in Lilongwe has steadily picked up since July when the 3rd wave of the pandemic was at its peak. The number of patients visiting our centre had dropped by about a third but the patients who stayed away are returning, our partners are making referrals again and we have resumed all of our regular outreach work in central region. We really don't have enough space in our building at KCH but that is only one of many reasons that we are delighted to be looking at moving to the Lilongwe Institute of Orthopaedics and Neurosurgery (LION) at KCH.

The LION Trust is an initiative involving Haukeland University Hospital of Norway, AO Alliance Foundation and Christian Blind Mission which has the objective of creating a centre of excellence for musculoskeletal and neurosurgical care, research and training of health care workers to serve the whole of KCH's catchment population in the areas of orthopaedic surgery, neurosurgery and musculoskeletal rehabilitation.



Progress under way on phase 2 – with the rehabilitation building at LION

Phase 1, which comprises the surgical theatres and wards, is expected to be complete early in 2022 with phase 2, which is the rehabilitation building where we hope to have our new home, following later in the year. Not least because we will be located in the same building as physiotherapy and occupational therapy, this is a very exciting prospect. We really hope that everything will fall into place, in particular the employment of all of our staff by MoH Malawi/the LION Trust. This would give us about two years in these new premises before we hand over responsibility for running our service to KCH/the LION Trust and MoH Malawi, although we intend to continue post-handover to provide on-going, stabilising, run-off support.

Until the move to the new building in 2022 and then hand over in 2024, we have a lot of work to do. First, we need to reboot and embed the bespoke quality management system which we have had designed to sustain the quality of the service and product being provided by the prosthetic and orthotic centre at KCH. Secondly, we want to fully train all of our staff. And, finally, we're aiming to consolidate and expand our outreach activities so that by the time we hand over, everyone in central region who could benefit from our service or who could refer someone to us, knows where we are and how to access our service.

Our busy staff have also found time to have a workshop on quality improvement and to contribute two video recipes to our collection for the BIG dinner 2: **Futali** and **Mpunga Wa Nkhuku Yalokolo**, both traditional Malawian dishes.





### Malawi: Mzuzu

On the 1st of July 2021, Samantha Burgio and Charlie Freeman handed the keys to our centre at MCH in Mzuzu to **Benadeta Singini**, its new Malawian manager, and returned to Australia. Our sincere thanks to Sam and Charlie for over four years of outstanding work for us, running the centre and getting it into shape for handover as well as developing our outreach programme to make as many people in northern region as possible aware of the prosthetic and orthotic service in Mzuzu.

500 miles left behind a fully equipped, purpose built, 250 square metre prosthetic and orthotic centre and an adjacent accommodation block. They were built by a Malawian construction team, led by architect, the late Michael Lwanda, to match exactly the design of MCH.



Benadeta, the new manager, with Sam and Charlie



The centre at Mzuzu prior to handover

This handover of full fiscal and administrative responsibility, with the potential to be sustainable, was possible for four specific reasons:

1. We had designed and installed a bespoke quality management system to secure and sustain the quality of the product and the service by systematizing it.
2. Since we opened our doors in November 2012, we had been gradually integrating our centre with MCH, encouraging it to take on increasing responsibility for costs.
3. All of the staff had been trained, half with professional qualifications, and absorbed on to the MoH Malawi payroll.
4. Most importantly, we had trained Benadeta to degree level and given her on the job management training since she qualified in June 2019 so that she was able and ready to take over as manager.

In the lead up to the handover to MCH, we offered to continue to provide run off support, including a supply of materials, but MCH declined our offer and insisted that it wanted to fly solo from the start. We wish them well!

### Zambia

We had hoped to escalate our activity in Zambia in a sustainable way through working with the prosthetic and orthotic department at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka but unfortunately, despite our best efforts over more than five years, we were unable to secure sufficient cooperation from either the staff (in spite of having sponsored the international training of the majority of them) or the management of the hospital to continue this work, and so in January this year we took the difficult decision to end that relationship and focus our resources on projects where our partners will engage with us.

We are continuing with our small project at SFH in Katete in eastern province. We do not currently have the machinery and equipment required to manufacture prostheses and complex orthoses, just basic tools – but our current representative at SFH, Agness Manda, is able to carry out repairs to most prostheses and orthoses and to make and fit small and simple orthoses.

Right: Agness Manda.  
Below: The new physio building at SFH.



With funding from Medical Support Group and Wild Geese of The Netherlands, SFH has recently completed a new building which will house the physiotherapy department and as soon as it is ready to open, Agness will move there to work alongside the hospital's physiotherapy service. When Timothy Miti, who set up our P&O service at SFH in January 2017, returns to Zambia in July 2022 with his diploma qualification we will consider how we can develop this service. (Read more about Timothy below.)

# Our patients

**£175 is the all-in full cost of production of a transtibial (through-knee) prosthesis. Here are stories of six of our patients who came to 500 miles at KCH in need of one of these devices this year.**

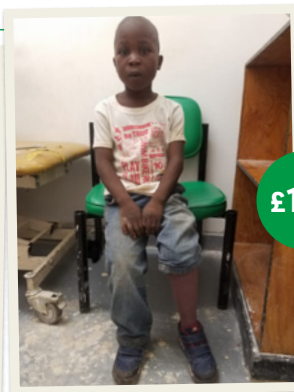
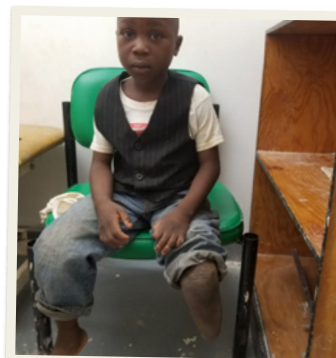
## Talandira

Talandira Ezara will be 8 this January. He is the middle child of three and he is in Primary 1. Like many children in Malawi, he wants to be a doctor when he grows up.

Talandira was born with congenital malformation of his left leg. He didn't have a foot but instead something which looked like a ball. In 2015, when Talandira was a year old, his parents took him to Bwaila Hospital, close to our centre at KCH. There the doctors prescribed and performed a transtibial amputation to remove the deformed part of the leg and a Malawian NGO called MAP referred Talandira to 500 miles for a prosthetic device.

In May 2015, Talandira received his first prosthesis from 500 miles and since then, he has used 3 devices, all of which have been repaired from time to time as required. He is a regular visitor!

Talandira's most recent visit was in October because his prosthesis was worn out. Talandira's prosthetist, Peter, took a cast for new



£175

transtibial prosthesis which was fitted a few days later and, after some gait training, Talandira was discharged walking well. You can see the improvement in his gait in the [video on our YouTube channel](#).

Talandira and his mother were very happy with the new device. Talandira said that he is going to enjoy playing with his friends and that going to school will be easier.

## Tamara

Tamara Dickson was born in 2005, a normal healthy girl. When she was 7, she had a wound on her left leg which wouldn't heal despite local medical assistance at Tamara's home in Chimwala in Mangochi. Her parents became worried so they took her to Ntcheu District Hospital where her doctors found that she had developed gangrene which meant the only option was to perform a transtibial amputation. The operation was carried out at KCH which then referred her to 500 miles.

Tamara received her first prosthesis in February 2014 and her second in May 2016. She came back for a repair and a new foot in July 2018. When Tamara returned in February this year, aged 15, she was using crutches because her prosthesis was completely worn out. So, her prosthetist, Peter, took a cast of her stump to make a new prosthesis and a couple of days later, it was fitted.

Tamara was very happy with the fit of the new device. You can see her walking in our centre in the [video on YouTube](#). She said that she would now be able to walk to school again, no problem. Tamara likes writing stories and wants to become a teacher when she finishes school.



£175

## Zikomo

Zikomo M'bwana turned 4 in September. She is at nursery school and likes playing with her friends there.

Zikomo, which means "thank you" in Chichewa, was born with lower limb deficiency on the left side. This condition occurs when a portion of a foetus's leg fails to form normally in the uterus. In Zikomo's case, her tibia was short and she had a small foot. However, the rest of her leg was fine so the surgeons at Beit CURE, an American Hospital in Blantyre in the south of Malawi, carried out a transtibial amputation and in April 2020 when Zikomo was 2, they referred her to 500 miles at KCH for her first prosthesis.

In April this year Zikomo was referred to us again by Beit CURE because not only was her prosthesis too short, it was completely worn out. A fresh cast was taken by her prosthetist, Peter, and two days later Zikomo was walking on her new leg. There's a [short video on YouTube](#) where you



£175

can see her walking well with the new device. Her father was delighted to see his daughter walking in comfort. Zikomo will go to school with her friends from nursery school because she has this leg.

**See more of our patients at: [500miles.co.uk/patient-stories](https://500miles.co.uk/patient-stories)**





## Lucia

Lucia Bikison is 72 years old and has 5 children and 8 grandchildren. She lives with one of her granddaughters who is 16 and in Secondary 2 at school – just the two of them together. Lucia said her granddaughter takes good care of her.

Early in 2020, Lucia fell as she was climbing onto the veranda of her home and broke her tibia on the left side. Unfortunately, the bone started to rot so, in September 2020, Lucia's doctor at Ntcheu District Hospital decided to perform a transtibial amputation. In March this year, Lucia was referred by her clinician to 500 miles and she came with her granddaughter.

When Lucia came to 500 miles she was crawling on the ground and we really doubted for a while that she would have enough strength to walk with a prosthesis. When Maliwase, her prosthetist, spoke to her about using a prosthesis, Lucia insisted that she would walk with it because her granddaughter is not always at home to take care of her so she needed it to move around the house and to check her garden. Because she is an otherwise healthy woman, we decided to let her try.

To our surprise, when Maliwase finished fitting the device, Lucia stood up straight away and walked in the walking bars. She even danced! As you can see in her [YouTube video](#), she was very excited and so was everyone at 500 miles!



£175

## Taulo

Taulo Kamudya is a 47-year-old subsistence farmer who lives with his family in Ntcheu. In February 2014 he was involved in a domestic accident in which a wall collapsed on his left leg. This led to a transtibial amputation at Ntcheu District Hospital. 500 miles has a regular outreach practice with a NGO called MACOHA and so three months later Taulo was referred to 500 miles by MACOHA's personnel in Ntcheu for his first device.



£175



In June this year, MACOHA referred Taulo back to us because of the condition of his device. Mwayi, his prosthetist, saw that because both the socket and foot of his device had broken down, Taulo had developed a poor walking pattern in which his knee was malaligned. It was an easy decision to make him a brand new leg.

Taulo's gait was immediately corrected by the new leg and he left with a good walking pattern and his knee in perfect alignment. You can see the contrast in the video [on our](#)

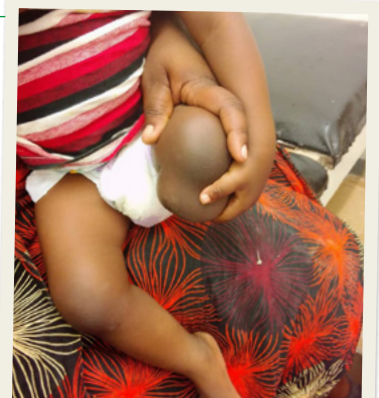
[YouTube channel](#), of Taulo walking with the old and new legs. Taulo said he felt stable and therefore hopeful about getting back to farming and to church.

## Rashid

Rashid Jack is his parents' first born and only child. They live in Dedza and farm for a living. Rashid developed gangrene in his left foot as an infant and by the time he was 18 months old, the local surgeons had decided to amputate his leg through the tibia.

Naturally Rashid's parents were very worried about their child's health and quality of life but the clinician in Dedza explained to them about what 500 miles could do and booked an appointment for them five months after the amputation.

In February this year, when Rashid was 2, Maliwase, Rashid's prosthetist, took a cast and made and fitted a transtibial prosthesis. She tried to get Rashid walk in the gait training bars but he was scared and just wanted to hold his mum's hand. You can see him trying to "find his feet" in [our video on YouTube](#) – but remember this was only day one! We know that Rashid is now able to walk on his leg and wears it every day.



£175

## Training updates

### Timothy

**Timothy from Zambia is now four months into the third year of his 3-year diploma course with Mobility India and is enjoying his clinical placement. Despite Covid restrictions, we did manage to get him home to Zambia for an extended break over Christmas 2020 but he will not be home again until he qualifies in July 2022. This is Timothy's own account of his first two years.**

Going to college is a dream for every youth in Africa who believes in education and expect to enjoy college life to the fullest, but studying abroad as an African it's a different case.

I joined Mobility India (MI) in 2019 to pursue a 3-year diploma in prosthetics and orthotics, I was so excited in knowing that my dream has come true and I wanted new experience in broadening my knowledge in this particular field of study.

So far, I have spent 2 years in India and my experience is one of maturity and learning to handle problems as they come along. The beginning of my course was amazing, meeting new people from different countries with different languages and culture – it was pleasant experience.

In addition to prosthetics and orthotics sciences at MI we also take some basic chapters in related subjects such as anatomy and physiology, pathology, applied mechanics etc. to help students have an overall understanding of the services.

After a few days I started socialising with friends in campus and we started going out visiting historical places and playing games, it was a great chance of learning and understanding their culture and behaviour.

Food was the major challenge that I faced in early days of my stay in India, it was difficult to adapt to Indian dishes.

The communication barrier is one of the challenges that I face as not all friends are able to speak and understand English well. Especially when I go off campus communication is difficult and it's for that reason that I had to learn some common words in their language, but I found it interesting and it gives greater sense that I am in a different part of the world.



Towards the end of my first year covid-19 started spreading in India and the government ordered first nationwide lockdown. This was new and the biggest unexpected challenge that changed everything academic programmes inclusive.

Mobility India introduced online learning and advised us to stay in campus except local students who could travel to their homes. At first, it was very scary but nothing I could change about the situation – the only possible solution is to accept it and follow preventive measures and move on.

However, the learning system switched to online classes and it was quite difficult to adapt to this new system of leaning, at times as I experience I was losing concentration and facing technical issues with a lot of distractions.

At the start of my second year everything seemed okay, we resumed physical classes and we gained confidence that things are getting back to normal. It was until mid of the second year when the second wave of covid-19 hit India again and we had to get back to online classes, we managed to carry on till end of second year when the situation got stable.

Currently am in my final year, in clinical practice. It's time to identify my weakness and work out on it along with preparation for the final clinical ISPO (International society for prosthetics and orthotics) exam.

### Alwin and Mike

Due to the threat of Coronavirus, the Cambodian government is still not issuing visas for students on courses in Cambodia so Alwin Kawonga and Mike White, both from Malawi, have started their courses with CSPO online. We hope that they will both be able to fly to Phnom Penh to get on with the practical aspects of their courses in early January.

Alwin's course is a 3-year diploma in orthopaedic technology. It started online in January this year. St Columba's Church of Scotland in London is funding the first year of his studies and, so far, Alwin is doing well.

In early 2021 we were given the opportunity by CSPO to select a candidate for one year's prosthetic and orthotic technician training, sponsored by the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation. We chose Mike White who is one of our assistant orthopaedic technicians at KCH and he began to study online in May. This is a very practical course so it has been extended by two months to allow enough time for training on the ground in Cambodia. We really hope that training can begin soon!



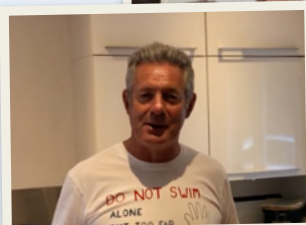
Left: Alwin with his new laptop.  
Above: Mike in the workshop.

**Read more about our students at [500miles.co.uk/projects/training](https://500miles.co.uk/projects/training)**





# Sit down to eat in your country – and in Africa, someone will stand up and walk



We've asked a few well-known friends for recipes to help inspire (or just entertain) you: cocktails from a Paralympian, breakfast from a newsreader and fancy beans on toast from a former First Minister – among many others. There's more to come too, as we'll be adding more until the end of the year – visit: [500miles.co.uk/BIGdinner2](http://500miles.co.uk/BIGdinner2)

Please support our last ever large fundraiser for 500 miles by making **a one-off donation on the website** or raising money for us any way that suits you to help us reach our £262,500 target for achieving the handover of our busy Lilongwe clinic in 2024.

Our final appeal is called the BIG dinner 2 because we thought that, as we emerge from Coronavirus restrictions, people would be glad to sit down to eat together – but you don't have to host an event to support us; if you're enjoying our recipe videos (see side bar), you could just make a gift – and we will not ask you again! It costs £175 to make and fit an average prosthesis which will get a child into school, an adult into work or an older person participating in community life – and **many of our devices** are cheaper.

To show that you don't need to cook or host any kind of meal, here are some stories of other wonderful ways in which people are supporting our final appeal...

## Reading Maiden Erlegh Inner Wheel

**Sue Edwards** is the International Officer for Reading Maiden Erlegh Inner Wheel Club this year and she has chosen 500 miles as the club's international charity, so we were the lucky beneficiaries when the club's Vice President, **Louise Shapland** (right), asked club members to sponsor her walk of Hadrian's Wall in August, raising a very welcome total of **£550**.



## Marvellous MUM Linda

**Linda McDonald** raised an amazing **£3,266.52** by walking 16 miles to South Queensferry and asking her large network of friends to sponsor her – and many of them also joined her along the way. Linda is the founder of MUMs (Malawi Underprivileged Mums) – a Scottish charity set up in 2005 to support mothers forced to use Bottom Hospital, a very deprived hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi. Linda has raised thousands of pounds, making a huge difference for mothers and babies in Lilongwe – saving many lives.

MUMs has raised funds over the years by selling collections of recipes – called MUMs Recipes – so Linda was among the first we asked to contribute to our BIG dinner 2 recipes, with her excellent **Auntie Sheila's Soup**.



## Bonkers Bikers

In early September, **Janette Harkess**, her husband Jim, plus Lorna, Pete, Kirsty, Liz, Gary and Jill – aka the Bonkers Bikers – cycled the NC500 in one week, raising a phenomenal **£5,862.19**.



## Peace in the valley

Chairpersons **Catriona Simpson** and **Sheila Kerr** of Forth Valley East Trefoil Guild held a silent auction for 500 miles and raised **£700**.

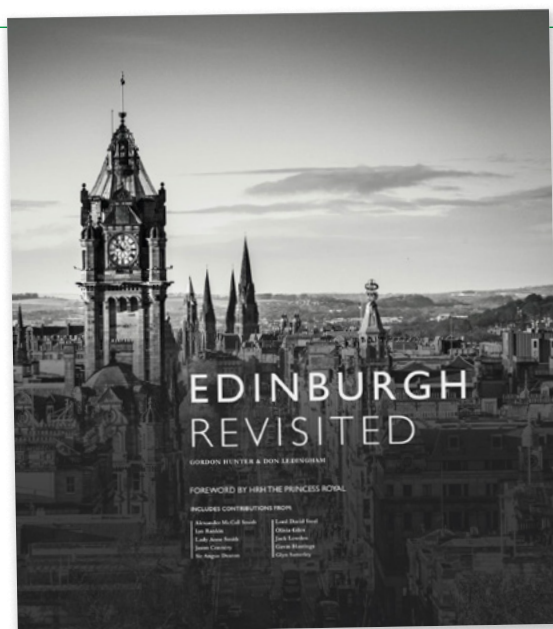


## Wonder Wayne's going the distance for 500 miles

Wayne Davidson has been in the Army since he was 19, giving him personal experience of the physical and mental devastation explosive devices can cause. He also lived and grew up in Malawi, so he has also seen the challenges many poor Malawians with disabilities face every day. And so he has decided to raise money for both 500 miles and the **Felix Fund**. From 11 November until 23 December, he will be walking 500 miles for 500 miles, with a series of other walking challenges to come next year – all culminating with a 30-day, 500-mile walk in Malawi. Find his [page on justgiving](#)

## Edinburgh Revisited

You may remember that in October 2019, photographer, Gordon Hunter, and poet, Don Ledingham, raised substantial funds for us by exhibiting their series of evocative poems about classic landmarks and places in Edinburgh illustrated by stunning black and white photographs, all of which were compiled into a beautiful coffee table book. These two talented men from the Scottish Borders are very kindly re-launching their inspired and inspiring exhibition, "Edinburgh Revisited" this time at the **Open Eye Gallery in Edinburgh** from 15th January to 5th February 2022. Again, all proceeds from the sale of prints of the photograph/poem combinations and of the book will be shared between 500 miles and **Leuchie House in North Berwick**. 500 miles will be hosting an event, about which we'll let you know in due course.



## Nic's on track for the NC500

**Nichola MacLean** is still on track for walking the NC500 in May 2022, in aid of four charities including 500 miles. With 6 months to go, her training programme has her walking 25,000-30,000 steps (about 12.5-15 miles) a day on her treadmill. And look who are supporting her! To find out more, or make a contribution, visit her [justgiving page](#).