

## **Cycling event to raise funds in memory of Hugo Yaxley and Helen McCrory OBE**

Following the tragic passing of his much-loved brother and aunt, Thomas Yaxley, 32, has organised a charity cycling event **on Sunday 5th June 2022**, to raise funds in their memory.

In November 2020, Thomas's brother, Hugo Yaxley, was involved in a serious road traffic accident in which he tragically lost his life. Just five months after, his aunt, Helen McCrory OBE, also tragically passed away after losing her battle with breast cancer.

In a bid to honour their memory and fantastic charity work, Thomas hopes that his event, 'The Ride4Hugo Sportive', will raise a total of £24,000 for four charities close to Hugo and Helen's hearts, including Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, children's mental health charity Place2Be and HVH Arts.

Ride4Hugo is not designed to be a race and involves cycling through the beautiful Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire countryside. The event has three distances to choose from, including 'The Baby Fondo' (30km), 'Fondo' (60km) and 'Gran Fondo' (100km). All three routes will start and finish at Henstridge Airfield, on the Dorset/Somerset border.

Those participating in the Gran Fondo will set off at 8.30am, followed by a staggered start for the Fondo and Baby Fondo distances. Several pit-stops will be available along the route, to provide a well-earned rest and refreshments for those that want it.

The event will be a celebratory occasion for all involved, especially as this is taking place during the Queen's Jubilee weekend.

### **Speaking about the cycling event, Thomas Yaxley said:**

"All these charities hold an incredibly special place in our family's heart for their links with Hugo and Helen. The work they do makes lives better every single day, but this is only possible due to the generosity of the public. We have already raised over £97,000 in their memory, hopefully this event will add to that total and mean these amazing charities can bring their life changing work to even more people.

"As the patron of HVH Arts, Helen poured her heart and soul into the work they did, her energy and enthusiasm has made a difference in countless lives of kids in North London. Helen was always the first to support her family, so it is incredibly special to be able to give back to something that was special to her.

"This could not be a more fitting event to honour Hugo's memory; it is doing a sport he loved in a part of the world that was very special to him. With the 60km and 100km feed station at his old prep school, this really is personal. Although Aunty Helen was not known for her cycling, she would have been on the side-line cheering everyone on and certainly been at the finish line to celebrate everyone's amazing achievements. We hope the day will

be one of celebration, with a chance for people to come together, challenge themselves and raise money for a great cause.”

**Debbi Clark, CEO of HVH Arts said:**

“We are absolutely thrilled that HVH Arts are being supported by Tom and the Ride4Hugo team, to raise funds to continue our work providing free art courses for children and young people in Queens Crescent, Camden.

We'd love you and your families to sign up and join us for what will be an amazing ride through beautiful Somerset and Dorset countryside!”

For more information and to register, visit the Ride4Hugo website: [www.ride4hugo.com](http://www.ride4hugo.com)

Entrance fees: Baby Fondo: £26, Fondo: £36 Gran Fondo: £41.

**-ENDS-** 591 words

**Notes for Editors**

- Queries on this media release and requests for interviews should be directed to Debbi Clark, CEO of HVH Arts by calling: 07792951104 or emailing: [debbi@hvharts.org](mailto:debbi@hvharts.org)
- Jpegs are attached to this press release showing:
  - Charity logo
  - Picture of Hugo Yaxley
  - Picture of Helen McCrory OBE
- HVH Arts JustGiving donation/sponsorship page for the Ride4Hugo event: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/HvHRide4Hugo>
- HVH Arts blog post about the event: <https://hvharts.org/funding-appeals/ride4hugo-cycle-ride-fundraiser-register-now/>

**About Ride4Hugo**

Ride4Hugo is a cycling event in memory of Hugo Yaxley and his aunt, Helen McCrory OBE. The aim is to raise money and awareness for four charities that were close to their hearts, including Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, Place2Be and HVH Arts.

**Hugo Yaxley**

Hugo was one of life's positive people. In his short 20 years he touched so many people's lives. Hugo was a big advocate of facing up to mental health issues and changing the stigma attached to it. He had been through his own turmoil battling depression and learning to not let the disease rule his life. He spoke out to his peer group at school and raised money for Place2Be; a children's mental health charity that provides mental health support and training in UK schools.

In November 2020, Hugo and his girlfriend, Minna, were involved in a serious road traffic incident. Due to the severity of the incident, multiple emergency services were deployed to the scene, including the Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, Coastguard, Wiltshire Air Ambulance, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance and Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Hugo was cared for by Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance at the scene of the incident, before airlifting him to University Hospital Southampton to receive further treatment, while Minna was cared for by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, who also airlifted her to University Hospital Southampton. Tragically, Hugo died in hospital later that night as a result of his injuries, which were catastrophic.

### **Helen McCrory OBE**

Helen, or Aunty Helen as she was to Hugo, was one his greatest supporters. She had the most amazing way of lighting up any room she was in and making everyone around her smile.

Helen dedicated so much of her time off screen to charitable causes and one that was very close to her heart was HVH Arts. The charity provides a gateway to the arts supporting disadvantaged children and young people by providing them with the inspiration and tools to develop life-long artistic passions, giving them access to free workshops in a wide range of arts in order to develop and grow. Helen had been their Patron since the charity's inception in 2013.

Helen's passing five months after Hugo's accident was another huge blow to the incredibly close-knit family.

For more information about Ride4Hugo, visit: [www.ride4hugo.com](http://www.ride4hugo.com)

### **About HVH Arts**

HVH Arts provides a gateway to the arts supporting disadvantaged children and young people by providing them with the inspiration and tools to develop life-long artistic passions, giving them access to free workshops in a wide range of arts in order to develop and grow.

A close friend of CEO Debbi Clark, actress Helen McCrory OBE supported HVH Arts as Patron from the charity's inception in 2013. To continue Helen's work, her husband, the actor Damian Lewis OBE, became a Patron in 2021.

For more information about HVH Arts, visit: [hvhart.org](http://hvhart.org)





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