

ON THE HUSKY TRAIL WITH TRACY

Tracy Clephan, Head of Dietetics, successfully completed the 250k Arctic Husky Challenge this Easter, taking a sled and a team of 5 huskies from Tromso in Norway to the Swedish Ice Hotel at Jukkasjarvi.

She joined 13 other fundraisers for the challenge. All provisions; tents, survival equipment and food, had to be transported in the sled panniers. People power (pushing or scooting) was also needed in order to help move the sledges up mountains!

Tracy takes up the story of her adventure, "I was struck by the remoteness we experienced on the trip. For 3 of the 5 days, my fellow fundraisers were the only people I met. We saw lots of tracks and heard animals including arctic wolves and reindeer, especially at night. We took our water for cooking and drinking from holes we hand-drilled into frozen lakes, directly from rivers or from boiling snow. Meals consisted of Drytech food used by Norwegian Special Forces which we reconstituted with boiled water. Between meals, snacks were high in energy and we found that some normal foods like chocolate do not fare well in extreme cold! Night temperatures dropped to -16°C and we were advised to sleep in our merino layers, gilets and hats so I can honestly say that we did not feel the cold in our tents!

"I shall always remember the noise 91 barking dogs made when anticipating the first off, and the silence that followed once we had started – the only noise being the swish of the sled runners on the snow! For miles we would be the only animals in the mountain or crossing the huge frozen lakes. We had mixed weather; from really sunny to complete white out, when we were glad of our protective clothing!"

Celebrations included vodka and loganberry cocktails (Polar Eclipse) in the Ice Bar and a meal at the Ice Hotel Restaurant including Arctic fish and moose.

Tracy is particularly grateful to William Thompson from Rawdon who in 1808 was the first wool merchant to import merino wool. She can testify to the warming and antibacterial properties of her merino base layers!

After working for the NHS for 30 years, in 2011 Tracy was diagnosed as suffering from thyroid cancer and was successfully treated at Leeds Teaching Hospitals. Her challenge has raised £2,000 so far. You can support her at justgiving.com/Tracy-Clephan.



Tracy (front) pictured with her sledding partners



If you would like to follow in Tracy's footsteps (sleigh-tracks!) and relish the challenge of a trek or a bike ride at home or abroad to support the cancer centre, please contact the Fundraising Team to take part in one of our Open Challenges for 2016. Tel: 0113 206 8620 / 0113 206 8444