

Story of a tragedy 24 years old



LAST PHOTO: Above, Sam Lyon pictured with her brother Anthony, who died shortly after this photo was taken.



Left, the first school photo of Sam after the crash.



RAISING AWARENESS: Sam Lyon, centre, was left with severe burns following a car crash that claimed the life of her younger brother. With her are former Magpas medic Dr John Hedges and her boyfriend, Dr Chris Targett.

Sam Lyon speaks of the accident that killed her younger brother and left her with burns needing 15 years of surgery

By **GAIL ANDERSON**
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A WOMAN who suffered horrifying burns to her face and hands in a road collision that also claimed the life of her younger brother has spoken publicly of her ordeal for the first time in 24 years.

Sam Lyon, of The Granary, Sawtry, was just seven years old in 1987 when the car she and her brother Anthony were travelling in was hit by a lorry at a junction near Bassingbourn.

The car was catapulted into the air and burst into flames. Anthony, who was five, died immediately. Sam's mother, Cynthia Spillman, who was driving, and Sam were rescued from the burning vehicle by a passing stranger.

Cynthia, 52, suffered superficial burns and a fracture, but her daughter was severely burned and had a broken leg.

Sam, now 31 and a physiotherapist at Papworth Hospital, remembers very little about the incident, which left her needing extensive plastic surgery.

It was only when discussing her partner Dr Chris Targett's plan for a solo trip around the world for medical emergency charity Magpas with her mother, that she learned that one of her rescuers had been a Magpas doctor.

Sam said: "I remember lying by the side of the road that day, but nothing else. I never knew Magpas came out that day. I mentioned to mum that Chris was doing this big trip and she said 'That must be because of Sam'. I had no idea Magpas had been there.

"This just seems the perfect chance to say thank you to them and to raise awareness of what Chris is doing and the work they do."

The family had stopped at the junction of

the A1198 and A603 when a lorry, which had been overtaking a tractor, went straight into the back of their car.

The passer-by who rescued Sam and her mother remains to this day unidentified. A couple who lived near the accident also rushed to help as did a group of soldiers on their way from Bassingbourn Barracks.

Dr John Hedges, a GP at Royston for 32 years and volunteer Magpas doctor for nearly 20 years, was the first medic on the scene, and remembers giving Sam pain relief.

He said: "When I arrived, being based where we were, I was first on the scene. I was faced with a seven year old girl in tremendous pain from the burns.

"I knew she needed pain relief, but one of the problems was that because of the burns, the normal sites for an intravenous injection were not possible.

"In that second, you have to make a quick decision. Afterwards watching the ambulance drive off, you are thinking 'Did I do the right thing?' I have a whole host of memories from that day. You always hope that you have done your best."

The pair were rushed to Addenbrooke's Hospital. Over the course of nine years, Sam endured 15 operations including skin grafts from her legs and arms to her face and hands, and operations to reconstruct her eyelids and encourage hair regrowth.

Chris, 34, will be setting off on a 21,000 mile journey through Europe, Africa and Asia in February. He hopes to raise £100,000 for Magpas and African medical charity Riders for Health. **See below**

DOCTOR Chris Targett, known to family and friends as Tigger, needs £10,000 to cover petrol costs on his six-month solo trek across Europe, Africa and Asia totalling 21,000 miles.

The 34-year-old will be following the Nile in Africa passing through Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique, before flying his bright orange KTM 990 Adventure motorbike to Nepal. From there he will travel through India, Pakistan and Iran.

Chris hopes to raise £100,000 for Cambridgeshire charity Magpas and African medical charity Riders for Health.

Despite a crippling spine problem that forced him to drop out of his

medical studies for five years, Chris says he can make the distance.

He has so far received £750 worth of sponsorship from Midas Engineering of Peterborough, the A&E Agency and social event website Dinner Dates, but he desperately needs more to get on the road. As well as gearing up for the journey, Chris is in the midst of organising a black-tie charity ball at Chilford Hall that will include a three-course meal and celebrity speakers. It is set for October 19, 2012 – which means that, whatever happens on the road, Chris must be home in time for the event.

INFORMATION: To sponsor Chris, to buy tickets for the ball or find out more go to www.tiggerstravels.org



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