

The North East Scot

Friday, July 8, 2016

2014 Scottish Provincial Press Editorial Campaign of the Year

£1.05 SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: 75p



YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD

Len becomes published author, aged 91 Page 9

Robbie pops the question from the top

By ALISTAIR WHITFIELD
a.whitfield@northern-scot.co.uk

A MORAY cyclist has proposed to his girlfriend in a uniquely romantic way after conquering one of France's toughest mountains.

Robbie Sheils put to use all of his family's heartbreak over recent years to reach the top of Alpe D'Huez.

The 52-year-old Lossie loon had originally planned to cycle up the mountain in June 2014 alongside his brother Paul and niece Emma.

Robbie planned the holiday as a fund raiser for MacMillan Cancer Relief. Tragically, however, with just weeks to go to the challenge, Emma was diagnosed with a brain tumour which required immediate surgery.

The brothers wanted to call off the trip, but Emma insisted they went ahead. Robbie said: "With Emma's

McKay since the pair first met in a nightclub in the town 14 years ago.

His original attempt to conquer the mountain was inspired by the death of her mum, Linda, from cancer at the age of 57.

Now, to fully focus on achieving his personal goal, he joined Elgin Cycle Club and began training harder than ever before.

By this point, John, who was Robbie and Paul's dad, had been diagnosed with lung cancer and passed away in January 2015, aged 74.

Sadly, Emma's condition had also deteriorated and, after going into an Edinburgh hospice, she died in January this year at the age of 31.

Robbie said: "Their untimely deaths were the catalyst for this picture onto the Facebook

for me going back to the Alps - I would do it in their memory.

"I felt that every painful pedal stroke would be nothing compared to the pain these people close to me had endured.

"I also took some of my dad's ashes with me as he had been with me all throughout my life and, in this small way, I felt he was still there supporting me."

After one hour and 44 minutes of constant and agonising climbing, Robbie finally reached the summit.

Once there, he put on something else he had carried with him up the mountain. It was a T-shirt with a message for Jackie which read: 'Jacqueline Anne McKay will you marry me?'

Robbie then posted the picture onto the Facebook



Robbie Sheils proposed to his girlfriend Jackie from the top of a mountain in France.

Knowing Jackie was just about to get out of work at Gordon & MacPhail, he also wrote telling her to take a look in the bedside table at home.

Inside was another T-shirt printed on it - 'Yes' - Jackie posted a return picture onto Facebook of herself wearing it.

Robbie joked: "I only put the one T-shirt in the drawer the perfect way to non the

option of turning me down. "It was an emotional moment seeing Jackie wearing the T-shirt."

"I was in France with a party of cyclists and we all went for a meal that evening which turned into a bit of a celebration.

"Jackie and me have been together for a long time and I always wanted to do something unique. This seemed like

"I only put the one T-shirt in the drawer. I didn't want to give her the option of turning me down."