



A vital service for all of us in the Thames Valley

This month we report on one amazing service that we have here in the Thames Valley. One that we possibly either take for granted or that we do not normally think about, unless it affects us or our nearest and dearest. Yet, every day, many volunteers work their hardest to make a difference. A difference that, more often than not, is really one between life and death. Here's is Jack's story.

Jack's wife, Holly, tells us her side of the event:

"I was unlucky enough to find out about Jack's accident when I had a call from the police, the officer explained that Jack had been in a car accident and was on his way by Air Ambulance to the John Radcliffe hospital, Oxford. When I heard he had been air lifted and taken to a specialist hospital, I was sure it was serious - I



Jack's car after the crash

was right. I asked the police officer if Jack was ok, not knowing the extent of his injuries

he could only respond with 'He's not well'.

"When I arrived to A&E Jack was still in resuscitation and they were trying to stabilise him, it was then that I learnt about the severity of his injuries. The doctor explained that Jack had a severe brain injury and multiple fractures to his face, neck and back along with a collapsed lung. The original outlook wasn't good - **they gave him a 2% chance of survival** - but I kept being told 'he is in the best place possible' but he will probably never be the same again.

"I couldn't imagine how devastating the consequences would have been had the Air Ambulance not been able to pick Jack up and get him to the JR, the location of Jack's accident wasn't particularly close to any hospitals especially hospitals with the facilities and capabilities of the JR, along with the

expert care Jack received at the scene of the accident from the crew on the Air Ambulance. This meant he was stable enough to fly and was in the scanning equipment within 20 minutes of arriving. I have no doubt that this gave Jack the best possible chance at survival and recovery.

"Life after Jack's accident was a crazy few months, he was in an induced coma for 12 days to allow his brain to heal, he had a neck and back brace for 2 months to allow his bones to align properly. We had many more weeks of heartache and worry as his condition worsened. When he did start to slowly improve he was taken off his respirator and could breathe on his own and started walking around - the greatest day was when he had his tracheostomy removed and I could hear his voice after what felt like months! Things continued to improve, physically and mentally until he was well enough to come home. After the prognosis we were given, Jack, myself



and our family feel truly blessed to have Jack here and this is definitely thanks to the Air Ambulance and crew!"

The Thames Valley Air Ambulance would not exist without the help of their volunteers, the heartbeat of the charity. TVAA are looking for people who would like to volunteer for them to spread the word about what they do. Here at The Didcot Directory we are very pleased to do just that. If you would like more information on volunteering, please contact their Volunteer Fundraising Manager,

Katie Whelpdale, on

katie.whelpdale@tvairambulance.org.uk