



The Hereditary Multiple Exostoses Support Group (HME SG)

OUR NEW PATRON CRAIG HEAP



Age: 40
DOB: 10/07/73
Born: Burnley
Hometown: Newcastle



Commentating- 2012 Olympic Games for BBC Radio 5Live



Winning Gold at the Commonwealth Games 2002



Good friends Craig and our Youth Chair, Ryan Spencer

The HME Support Group is delighted to announce that we have a new Patron for 2014 and an Olympic Gymnast at that!

Hereditary Multiple Exostoses is a rare bone condition that affects 1:50,000 adults and children. The Support Group was set up back in 1997 to help families who have recently been diagnosed or as a constant source of comfort to those who live with this condition day to day often enduring many surgeries to remove bony tumours. The effect on the family can be stressful at times and the Support Group is there to help alleviate some of their feelings whilst adopting a positive approach. We endeavour both to educate and learn more about the genes that cause HME and our overall aim is to make a difference to people affected by this condition.

Christine Spencer, Chair of the HME Support Group said:-

"We are delighted that Craig has agreed to become our Patron and we are looking forward to working alongside him over the next twelve months. His help will be very valuable in helping us raise awareness of this painful condition"

In 1998, at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, Craig became the first person to captain England to team Gold. Four years later in the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, he did it again. At the age of 21, Craig had left his family and friends to take up centralised training at Lilleshall National Sports Centre, in Shropshire, to fulfil his childhood dream of competing at the Olympic Games, where he achieved his Personal Best performance in the All Around final.

In 2002, Craig retired from Gymnastics and set up his own company, which aims to inspire young people to lead more active and healthier lives. He is also a High Performance men's coach at the City of Newcastle Gymnastics Academy. He has appeared as television many times during his career and as a "Mystery Guest" on BBC's "They Think Its All Over", done back flips for Kylie Minogue and has been a guest presenter on gymnastics for the BBC since 2002, working on the 2009 World Championships with Gabby Logan, and the European Championships in 2010. Also for SkySports as a Commentator at 2010 Glasgow Grand Prix. From 2007, Craig has worked as an Athlete Mentor for the Youth Sport Trust at the UK School Games, the SkySports-Living for Sport project, Young Ambassador Conferences and the Sky-Living for Sport Volunteering project. Craig is also a Sporting Champion, Sport Makers Ambassador and works with the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust. He has recently worked for Radio 5Live covering gymnastics in the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Craig and our Youth Chair have been friends for a while now having met each other at the Gateshead SSP Awards where Craig presented Ryan with the Best International Award because of his successes in the field of Shotokan Karate. Their friendship has grown and we were able to approach him to ask if he would like to become our Patron! Craig is a great motivational speaker and he and Ryan will be working hard to help raise awareness of HME and the work of the Support Group.

"I am very honoured to be Patron of the HME Support Group and I am looking forward to helping the group raise awareness and to meeting some of the children that have this condition. If anyone out there feels they can help us in our quest then please get in touch with the Group as soon as possible – this Group needs your help....." – Craig Heap