A DEVOTED dad is marking his 50th birthday by doing a “daunting but exciting” 1,100-mile charity cycle to raise thousands to celebrate his son surviving meningitis.

Duncan Tuffrey, of Bournemouth, felt powerless when his six-year-old son Adam contracted the dreaded disease.

Adam felt fine one day, but just 24 hours later he had painful joints and a temperature.

Doctors initially diagnosed a virus and prescribed painkillers, but within hours he had a raging headache and rash.
An ambulance rushed Adam to Southampton General Hospital before he collapsed.

Lying in bed, the youngster felt excruciating bright lights beaming down, which was photophobia (sensitivity to light), a key meningitis symptom.

Adam pushed doctors away, tried to remove his oxygen mask, struggled for breath, had many injections and endured severe pain.

He also hallucinated and suffered severe head pain.

Adam fondly remembers inter-locking his hand with his dad and mum’s hands as they anxiously sat bedside.

The now 19-year-old said: “I’ll never forget when my mum leaned over and kissed me, then my dad did and they pulled away – why were they leaving when I wanted them the most?

“The nurse ushered them out – they were gone – I cried and was scared that I wouldn’t see my parents again.

“It wasn’t until a few years later that I was told how pivotal that night was.”

Musical maestro Adam rallied and returned home two weeks later to start on the road to recovery.

Adam always feels fortunate to be one of the lucky ones so has supported Meningitis Now ever since, recruiting his family and friends.

To do something special to mark his half-century on Earth and his son’s recovery, Duncan has chosen to cycle from Land’s End to John o’Groats in 14 days for the UK’s largest meningitis charity.

He has rallied friends Dave Smith, Pete Brown and John Preston, who have known Adam since he was born, and they set off on Tuesday, May 13.

The foursome, of Bournemouth-based cycling group Lansdowne Peloton, hope to raise £4,000, which would fund a year’s specialist therapy for a child suffering hearing impairment from meningitis.

Duncan’s brother Neil will drive the support car.

The cyclists started preparing in January and juggle their jobs with hopping on their bikes to increase mileage, and visit the gym each week.

Duncan, a long-standing Meningitis Now supporter, said: “We felt so helpless – we seriously believed we might lose Adam – it was heartbreaking.

“Adam was fortunate, he’s now a talented musician, but he could’ve lost his hearing.

“I dread to think what could’ve happened, so we also want to help people with hearing impairment.

“We are determined to fundraise with Adam, we’ve always wanted to do the ride, so decided now was the time, tying it in with my 50th.

“It’s a daunting but exciting challenge that will raise vital money and awareness of the terrible disease.

“When I said I wanted to do it in Adam’s name, they jumped at the chance.”
Adam, a Meningitis Now young ambassador, gets a buzz arranging fundraisers for the charity including organising and performing in four musical and variety concerts, raising £30,000.

Following a sell-out 2012 show, Adam is organising his biggest ever Music 4 Meningitis (M4M) at Bournemouth Pavilion on Friday, July 4.

The Dual headline and support acts include Stage Door Dance School, Big Little Theatre School and other local performers, from 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £15 (concessions available), from 0844 576 3000, www.bhlivetickets.co.uk and www.bic.co.uk.

Meningitis Now founder Steve Dayman MBE, who launched the UK’s meningitis movement after losing his baby Spencer to the disease in 1982, added: “What happened to Adam illustrates how swiftly meningitis can strike, often without much warning.

“It reiterates that meningitis is often confused for viruses or the flu and prompt medical help can be the difference between life, death or lifelong disability.

“We wish Duncan and his friends the best with their epic cycling challenge, and to Adam with his latest M4M.”

Meningitis Now formed after Meningitis UK and Meningitis Trust, founders of the meningitis movement, merged in 2013.

To donate to the foursome’s foray or for more information, visit http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/lpontour.

For more information on the disease, visit www.MeningitisNow.org.

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Photo Captions:

Duncan And Group a ï BIKING BUDDIES: Duncan Tuffrey, far right, whose son Adam survived meningitis, and, from left, Pete Brown, John Preston and Dave Smith

Adam Tuffrey a ï MENINGITIS SURVIVOR: Adam Tuffrey, who survived meningitis aged six, performing

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Meningitis and Septicaemia Facts
Meningitis is usually caused by bacteria or viruses
Meningitis is inflammation of the membranes that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord
Septicaemia is blood poisoning
Some bacteria that cause meningitis also cause septicaemia
Meningitis and septicaemia often happen together it is vital to know all the signs and symptoms
The early signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia can be similar to flu and include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and muscle pain.
The more specific signs and symptoms include fever with cold hands and feet, drowsiness, confusion, pale blotchy skin, stiff neck, dislike of bright lights and a rash which doesn’t fade under pressure.
In babies, symptoms can also include being floppy and unresponsive, dislike of being handled, rapid breathing, an unusual, moaning cry and a bulging fontanelle (soft spot on the top of the head).
There are an estimated 3,400 cases of bacterial meningitis and septicaemia each year in the UK.
Following bacterial meningitis or septicaemia, one in ten people will die and at least a third of survivors will be left with lifelong after-effects such as hearing loss, epilepsy, limb loss or learning difficulties
Meningitis and septicaemia can affect anyone, of any age, at any time. However, babies and young children are most at risk, and young people between 15 – 24 years are also a higher risk group.
In the past 20 years, effective vaccines have been developed to give protection against SOME types of meningitis. These are offered to all babies and young children as part of the UK childhood immunisation programme. BUT there are not vaccines to protect against ALL types.
In January 2013, a vaccine to protect against Meningitis B, the most common cause of bacterial meningitis and septicaemia, was licensed for use in Europe. In March 2014, this vaccine was recommended for routine use in the UK childhood immunisation programme, provided a cost-effective vaccine price can be agreed.
If you suspect someone may be ill with meningitis or septicaemia, trust your instincts and get immediate medical help.

For more information visit www.MeningitisNow.org or call the meningitis helpline 0808 80 10 388

About Meningitis Now

Meningitis Now, the UK’s largest charity fighting the disease, formed after Meningitis UK and Meningitis Trust merged in April 2013.

The newly united charity, with around 30 years’ experience exists to save lives and rebuild futures through research, awareness and support.

Meningitis Now fights the disease on all fronts by providing a powerful, united voice for people fighting meningitis.

- Saving lives by funding vaccine and preventative research.
- Reducing the diseases’ impact through awareness.
- Rebuilding futures with dedicated support.
- Fundraising to deliver our plans.