

A NATURAL SOLUTION

Jeff Hordely, *Emmerdale's* Cain Dingle, talks about his struggle with Chron's disease *By Arlene Harris*

"That was where it all began – I suddenly I knew what I wanted to do with my life."

The 40-year-old indulged his burgeoning passion for acting by taking part in productions during the Edinburgh Festival and eventually went to drama school in Manchester where in 1994 he met and fell in love with wife, Zoe who was in the year below.

"I knew straight away that she was the only girl I wanted to be with."

Then in 2000, he appeared on our TV screens as the rough and ready, but strangely likeable Cain Dingle.

"When I first joined the cast of *Emmerdale*, it was such a shock to the system," he says. "I had been watching the show for years and suddenly I was part of the famous Dingle family – it was quite nerve-wracking."

Being nervous isn't something normally associated with Cain but Jeff has enjoyed developing his on-screen personality over the years.

"When I started playing the character, the storylines always brought out his worst side, but as time has gone on, he seems to have become a much more grounded person," he says.

"There are flashes of vulnerability where you can see that he cares about people – this is good, because if he is too nasty, it will become unbelievable."

Without giving too much away, fans can expect to see a lot of Cain in action over the coming months.

"Things are definitely hotting up in the Dales and viewers can expect to see a culmination of the Wylde story very shortly," he reveals. "Cain will be very instrumental there – and people will be saying 'go on Cain, do something'."

"The writers have created a gem of a character for me to play and I'm really enjoying the storyline at the moment – it's also good to be able to unleash his witty side."

SYMPTOMS OF CROHN'S DISEASE

- persistent diarrhoea
- abdominal pain
- cramping
- rectal bleeding
- fever
- weightloss
- skin or eye irritations
- delayed growth in children.

But things haven't always been so happy for Jeff. Just weeks before his 26th birthday, he was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease – a potentially fatal intestinal condition which claimed the life of his mother when she was just 29 years old.

"Crohn's is a horrible disease and not at all glamorous, so most people don't talk about it," he says. "It is an inflammatory bowel disorder which causes problems for the intestine and can affect people anywhere from the throat down to the rectum."

"I had problems with both the large and small intestine and had been told it might be Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) so it wasn't until I collapsed and haemorrhaged that we knew something was wrong."

"When they diagnosed my condition, I underwent surgery which was pretty harrowing to say the least."

After his operation, Jeff was put on medication to minimise future symptoms, but was reluctant to surrender to a lifetime of drugs, so began searching for an alternative route.

"I don't like taking strong drugs, especially long-term, so I decided to see if I could find something natural which would do the same job," he says.

After taking advice from a fellow colleague, he approached a company called Little Herbal who makes a product called Simba which naturally supports the immune system. Derived from an African potato tuber, the product is

entirely natural and seems to be helping Jeff keep his condition under control.

"One of the problems with Crohn's Disease is that it tackles the immune system and I have found that by amending my diet and taking this herbal treatment, I can keep things at bay," he says.

"Although I'm not 100 per cent better, by having a strong immune system, I have a stronger chance of fighting anything else that might go wrong in the future."

Cain Dingle might not approve, but his real life alter-ego says that opening up about health issues is the only way to stay on top form.

"There is a danger that people with illnesses like mine, will be too embarrassed to talk about it," he says. "But take it from me; I was lucky to have caught my disease early, so if you there is anything worrying you about your health just go to the doctor and get it sorted." **WWW**

"There is a danger that people will be too embarrassed to speak about their condition"



*Jeff with his *Emmerdale* co-star Tom Lister*

His on-screen character is mad, bad and dangerous to know, but Jeff Hordely, the actor who plays the infamous Cain Dingle in the long running soap, *Emmerdale*, shares nothing but his dark brooding looks with the rowdy character.

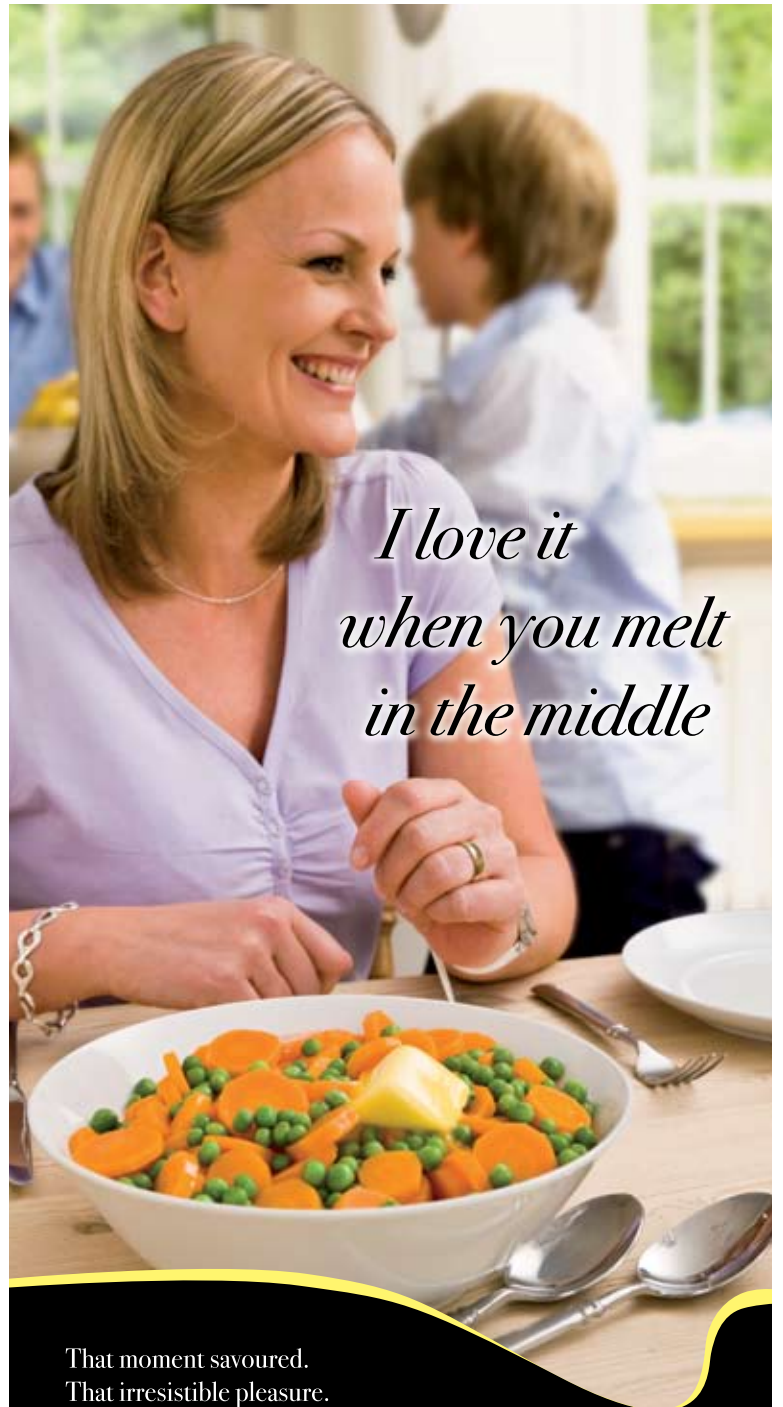
In reality, Jeff, who hails from Lancashire, is a doting dad to Violet and Stan and husband to fellow thespian, Zoe Henry who also features in the show as local vet Rhona Goskirk.

In contrast to his famous character, the actor is gently spoken as he describes how he discovered drama and at the same time, his future wife.

"When I was growing up, I had never really thought much about acting but fell into it by chance at school, when an inspirational English teacher encouraged me to take on a starring role in a school play," he reveals.



For more information about Crohn's Disease visit the Irish Society for Colitis and Crohn's Disease on www.iscc.ie
For more information about Simba visit www.littleherbal-international.com or call Health Matters in Dublin on 01 671 0166



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