



TANNI GREY-THOMPSON

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

WHO IS TANNI?

- Tanni Grey-Thompson is a famous 'Paralympian'. She was born with a medical condition that stopped her from walking and running. Being in a wheelchair did not stop Tanni becoming Tanni Grey-Thompson took part in four Paralympic Games. She won 11 gold medals. She won the London Marathon six times. After she retired from racing, she went on helping disabled sportspeople. Her story inspires many people to take part in sport. She was a champion in athletics.



HER CHILDHOOD

- Tanni was born on 26 July 1969 in Cardiff, Wales. Her full name was Carys Davina Grey. Her sister Sian was 2 when she first saw baby Carys. Sian called the baby 'Tanni', meaning 'tiny'. And Tanni she stayed Sian gave her the name Tanni. Tanni was born with spina bifida. It affects babies before they are born. Because of that she couldn't walk properly then started to use a wheelchair at the age of seven. Her parents soon saw that Tanni wanted to do things on her own. So did her teachers at school.



FUN FACTS

- Wheelchair racers wear gloves. Why? Because their hands hit the chair's wheels very hard! Tanni was 35 when she won her last Olympic gold medals.

- 
- Tanni attended Birchgrove Primary School in Cardiff and was determined to find out for herself what she could and could not do. Tanni's parents were always supportive and encouraged her independent streak. After a long battle with the local authority they were able to secure a place at mainstream school. Tanni attended St Cyres Comprehensive in Penarth and it was here Tanni found out for herself what she could do.
 - She enjoyed sports. She liked archery, basketball, swimming and horse riding.



BECOMING AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE

- When she was 13, Tanni tried wheelchair racing. When she was 15, she raced for Wales in the Junior National Wheelchair Games. She won the 100-metre race. At 18, Tanni joined the Bridgend athletics club. It had a grass running track, not so easy for a wheelchair. But there were lots of paths to train on. In winter, she and her friends used a multi-storey car park, racing up and down the car ramps. This was rather dangerous! In 1988, Tanni was chosen to race for Great Britain at the Paralympic Games. The Games were held in South Korea. It was a long way from Wales!
- It was Tanni's first Paralympics. She came home with a bronze medal. Being a disabled athlete brought many challenges. She felt 'you were on your own for most of it'.

A GOLD MEDAL

- After a year off for an operation, Tanni won 4 gold medals at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Barcelona is in Spain. She won the 100 metres, 200m, 400m and 800m races. Tanni was now Britain's most famous disabled athlete.

RUDE. JUST TOO RUDE

- Not everyone in sport welcomed disabled athletes. In 1994, at the Commonwealth Games in Canada, one official said athletes with a disability were an embarrassment. Today, disabled athletes from many countries take part in the Paralympic Games. They do sports such as archery, athletics, basketball, cycling and tennis.

UNBELIEVABLE

- Tanni set 30 world records! One of her records was being the first woman wheelchair athlete to race 400 metres in under 1 minute.
- In 1996, she took part in the Olympic Games at Atlanta (USA). She won 1 gold medal and 3 silver medals.
- In 2000, in Sydney (Australia), Tanni won 4 gold medals. In Athens (Greece) in 2004, she won 2 more gold medals.
- In 2002, Tanni carried the flag for Wales in the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games.

A FAMILY

- In 1999, Tanni married Dr Ian Thompson. They had a daughter, Carys, in 2002.
- Tanni said this about her sports career and being a mum: 'My gold medals in Sydney meant I was the best person in the world at the time in those events, whereas Carys is 24 hours a day for the next 60 years and being the best mother I can be.'

RETIRING

- Tanni retired from racing in 2007. She spends a lot of time helping others to enjoy sport. She works with the Sports Council for Wales, and other groups.
- Tanni was voted BBC Wales Sports Personality of the Year three times. In 2000, she came third in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year.



WINNING ISN'T THE TROPHY. TAKING PART
IS