

THE red-hot charity single produced and performed by over 1,000 residents of Royal Wootton Bassett is making itself heard amongst the big guns for this year's Christmas Number One.

Since its release last month, Wootton Bassett Rocks' moving cover of Green Day's '*Wake Me Up When September Ends*' has become a global internet sensation, touching millions of followers and attracting celebrity support.

The video, filmed against the familiar and iconic High Street backdrop of the Wiltshire town, went viral on YouTube across 74 countries becoming the top five most watched video in the UK, USA, Canada, Germany and Australia. It has this week (December 19th) become available to download through iTunes for £1.29.

The single, recorded at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in Box, Wiltshire, has performed well in all the key charts, including the Official Charts Company, which decides the UK Christmas Number One. However, it faces fierce competition for that chart-topping festive accolade from X Factor winners, Little Mix, with their release of Damien Rice's '*Cannonball*', and the Military Wives Choir with '*Wherever You Are*'.

This totally independent community project was the brainchild of Wiltshire mum-of-two, Tracey Rogers, whose brother was killed by an IED while evacuating an injured soldier in Afghanistan in 2009.

Royal Wootton Bassett has become synonymous as the town which held the heartbeat of the nation. It won the prestigious Millie Award presented by Prince William in 2009 and became a focal point for the repatriation of 345 fallen heroes over 167 separate occasions. Although repatriations no longer pass through the town, the community of Royal Wootton Bassett remains in close association with and continues to support military families and soldiers by raising funds through sales of the single and video, and related merchandise.

The Wootton Bassett Rocks team chose four charities which deliver support for bereavement and the welfare of serving military families. **Combat Stress** provides support for ex-servicemen and women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, the **Royal British Legion and Sailors, Airmen & Families Association (SSAFA)** both offer long-term care for current and ex-service personnel and their families impacted by the consequences of conflict and the **Undentable Trust** is supporting Family Activity Breaks for bereaved military families, who provide adventure-based holidays.

Kevin Hale, trustee of the Undentable Trust, which will be distributing funds to the other three charities, said: "You have, as a community, not only shown tremendous respect for this country's fallen heroes, but also provided support for the bereaved relatives in their darkest times, especially those who could not, for whatever reason, be present at the return of their loved ones.

"To know that an entire town was there in their place was of great comfort for them. For this, we will always hold close the people of Wootton Bassett, and wish them well as they continue to promote the welfare of our servicemen and women."

The single, recorded using local musicians and singers, together with two choirs, also attracted support from well-known artists such as Rick Buckler, drummer from The Jam. "I really enjoyed the day," he said. "Playing drums in the street was a rare treat and the atmosphere was very

friendly. It was great to see so many people turning up to support the cause and sticking with it despite the rain.”

Production was completed at the world famous Abbey Road Studios and mastered by Christian Wright who said: “The mastering process is the final stage in the sound chain, where the mix is tweaked for correct playback. It is a small, but important part of the audio post production process.

It was a real pleasure being part of such a huge community project that’s raising money for military charities.”

Celebrity endorsement for Wootton Bassett Rocks has been received from the likes of sports stars Dame Kelly Holmes and Sharron Davies, Christine Hamilton, actress Lynda Bellingham, and former EastEnders’ star Michelle Collins, who re-tweeted her support for the single to nearly 22,000 Twitter followers. Loose Women star, Lisa Maxwell, who made her name in ‘*The Bill*’, followed suit by re-tweeting the YouTube link to her 38,000 followers and the enigmatic Jools Holland offered his support to Wootton Bassett Rocks saying: "Wishing you the best of luck".

American rock band Green Day released ‘*Wake Me Up When September Ends*’ back in 2005, peaking at number six in the American charts and number eight in the UK. Green Day Authority is co-sponsoring a 20th anniversary for Green Day’s breakthrough album, ‘*Kerplunk*’ on Friday, January 20th. The sold-out event will provide a variety of entertainment, including live performances and a large video screening of the Wootton Bassett Rocks video. There are also plans to stream the event live through the internet to a much bigger audience.

Co-owner and site manager of the band’s fans’ website www.greendayauthority.com Tony Anastasi said: “When I first saw the video to Wootton Bassett Rocks’ cover of ‘*Wake Me Up When September Ends*’, it blew me away. It was inspiring to see a community come together like that for such a cause as this. It’s the kind of spirit and involvement that we try to encourage with the Green Day Community. The video itself really reminded me of the ‘*American Idiot, The Musical*’ version of the song. It’s extremely uplifting for a song with such a sad meaning behind it.

"Green Day Authority is delighted to be working alongside Wootton Bassett Rocks to help them achieve their goal of raising £1 million to go towards military charities for returning soldiers. Green Day fans all around the world can relate to the feelings of loss and despair that result from wars, and we want to help wherever we can to show our support for the people that make it home after putting their lives on the line fighting for their country's freedom."

The video Wootton Bassett Rocks can be found on YouTube. The charity can be followed on Twitter at: [@wbcharitysingle](https://twitter.com/wbcharitysingle) or like them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WoottonBassettRocks

Donations can be made to the charity at www.justgiving.com/woottonbassettrocks or by sending a text message to RWBR11£5 (or an amount of your choice) to 70070. The official website is: www.woottonbassettrocks.co.uk/

Editor’s notes:

The charity single ‘*Wake Me Up When September Ends*’ was released on November 27th, 2011, timed to follow the official granting of Royal charter status. The goal is to raise £1 million for

four military charities – the Royal British Legion, Combat Stress, The Undentable Trust and the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association.

The project was the brainchild of Tracey Rogers, whose brother Captain Mark Hale was killed in Afghanistan in 2009. She said: “I first had the idea for a charity single in June this year. I wanted to do something meaningful that involved as many people as possible from this wonderful community to remember my brother and other fallen heroes. I also wanted to mark the end of an era of repatriations through Royal Wootton Bassett, and also to raise much-needed funds for military charities that focus on supporting bereaved families, and also help support wounded servicemen and women.”

Music producer and sound engineer Richard Sutcliffe recorded the single, which was mixed at Peter Gabriel’s Real World Studios in nearby Box, Wiltshire, with additional recording at St Bartholomew’s Church in Royal Wootton Bassett and mastered at Abbey Road Studios.

The video was directed and produced by Mark Kenna, co-owner of Dreambase Studios in Royal Wootton Bassett, and Ross MacKenzie, owner of Firebird Films in Swindon, was director of photography. The video featured more than 1,000 local residents including singers and musicians, skateboarders, the junior town crier, sports and youth group, British Legion standard bearers, and bikers who became closely involved with repatriation ceremonies. It was filmed using a Red One camera to give it cinematic quality and mastered to cinema standard by Dolby.

Since the single and video’s release, a concerted campaign has been launched using social media. Paul Driscoll, Operations Director of SCFM, Experiential and Field Marketing, has been running a Facebook campaign, sparking an initial 40,000 views for the original video.

Facts and figures:

- 65,852 channel views (at December 13).
- 40,000 views in first five days of original video.
- Top 5 countries: UK, US, Canada, Germany, Australia.
- 74 countries reached
- 42% mobile views / 9% embedded

Reached:

No 3 Amazon Rock Chart (64 hours)

No 11 iTunes Rock Chart (64 hours)

No 183 in OCC (64 hours)

671 singles sold in week one

Website: www.woottonbassettrocks.co.uk

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/WoottonBassettRocks>

Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/wbcharitysingle>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/#!/wbcharitysingle>