



RAISING FUNDS IN AID OF:

Marie Curie
Cancer Care



THE STORY OF THE CHALLENGE

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RICHARD PARKS'
737
CHALLENGE
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27 DECEMBER 2010 / LEG 1 THE SOUTH POLE.

90°S

Richard battled white outs in -35c pulling his sled weighing around 50kg fighting wind blown ridges called sastrugi to reach the South Pole.

He spent Christmas day 14 miles from the Pole opening the few presents and cards he took as luxury items.

2 days later Richard reached the South Pole having skied the last degree, around 100km. He had to camp out at the pole until 1st January 2011 seeing the New Year in on the South Pole to ensure his world first record to stand on the 7 summits & 3 poles would be in the same calendar year. The 737 Challenge had lift off!





08 JANUARY 2011 / **LEG 2**

MOUNT VINSON.

ANTARCTICA 4,897M / 16,067FT

Richard reached the summit 8 days ahead of schedule but then got stuck in Antarctica for 2 weeks due to fuel strikes in Chile and a broken plane. The long delay nearly put the whole challenge in jeopardy and put the pressure on Rich to make every day count.

Richard also had the pleasure of carrying 4.5 days worth of his own excrement on the mountain in his very own backpack!





05 FEBRUARY 2011 / **LEG 3** ACONCAGUA.

SOUTH AMERICA: 6,959M / 22,830FT

Richard summited the highest mountain outside of the Himalayas in a very small weather window, taking the decision to attempt the summit from camp 2 not the usual camp 3 due to weather conditions.

This presented him with a brutal summit day but the best shot at success. He had one chance to attempt the summit and made it, that same week a climber died on the mountain just below the summit.



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27 FEBRUARY 2011 / LEG 4 KILIMANJARO.

AFRICA: 5,895M / 19,340FT

Richard summited the highest freestanding mountain in the world and Africa's tallest peak alongside Marie Curie Cancer Care nurse Janet Suart, friends and family. It was a special leg for Richard with every member of the team raising considerable funds for Marie Curie Cancer Care and making the summit successfully alongside him.





15TH MARCH 2011 / **LEG 5** CARSTENSZ PYRAMID.

AUSTRALASIA: 4,884M / 16,023FT

West Papua and Indonesia was next... an unpredictable rollercoaster. Richard summited after a savage, technical rock climb, and after spending days wading through the jungle through waist high rivers, leaches, and endless rain, rain and more rain, trekking in wet clothes every day. He had to abandon the summit attempt due to bad weather and then go up again the next day. A nerve-racking Tyrolean traverse across the summit ridge was not for the faint hearted.

After summiting it was time to trek all the way back through jungle, swamps and rising rivers... exhausting work.

Richard also had his clothes stolen and porter strikes to deal with on this leg making it one of the most unpredictable and adventurous of the 7 summits! The infamous Carstensz casualty list included 1 pair of boots, 1 pair of gloves, 2 pairs of socks, 3 cameras including video camera, a jacket, a pair of trousers, Scarpa trainers, a trekking pole, oh and part of his sanity!





11 APRIL 2011 / **LEG 6** THE NORTH POLE.

90° N

Richard skied the last degree to the geographical North Pole. He was joined on this leg by double Olympic rowing champion Steve Williams OBE. Richard travelled across the dangerous moving ice cap to reach the North Pole battling temperatures down to -40c.

On route he fell down a pressure ridge and a pulke (sled) landed on his head. A further close shave saw him almost get caught in between two ice flows moving together. His kit casualty list grew, setting fire again to further items in a bid to stay dry and warm.





25 MAY 2011 / LEG 7 MT. EVEREST.

ASIA: 8,850M / 29,036FT

Rich went straight from the North Pole on to Everest. Steve also joined him again on his leg. He summited the world's highest mountain almost 2 years to the day since retiring from professional rugby. Richard summited in the last available weather window of the season, his team were one of the final teams to summit.

After abandoning the first summit attempt due to high winds, Everest was all about holding his nerve. Along the route he passed a dead body in a body bag on the Lhotse Face.

He stood on top of the world just 45 days after he was stood on the geographic North Pole and was overcome by emotion calling home in floods of tears. After descending to base camp he was air lifted to Kathmandu and flown home after the shocking discovery that he had grade 1-2 frostbite in his big right toe.

From elation to despair, he feared his world first 737 Challenge might be over.





30 JUNE 2011 / LEG 8 DENALI.

NORTH AMERICA: 6,194M / 20,320FT

After spending 16 days locked in a race against time for the frostbite in his big right toe to recover, getting treatment and advice from surgeons and consultants and spending twice a day in a hyperbaric chamber, Richard made the decision to carry on with the challenge, despite his toe still recovering from frostbite... North America's highest mountain awaited.

Rich arrived on Denali (also known as Mount McKinley) knowing 5 climbers had already died on the mountain this year.

Denali was as brutal as expected, what wasn't expected was falling down a crevasse on day 1. Richard's fall led to some critical hours for him and his toe. Soaking wet and almost hypothermic, a dramatic rescue from a 7 metre cavern followed before a gruelling 6 hour climb to reach the first camp at 7,500ft. Carrying heavy loads onwards, Richard and his painful frostbitten toe, shedding flesh, conquered Denali 10 days later.





12 JULY 2011 / LEG 9 MT. ELBRUS.

EUROPE: 5,642M / 18,510FT

Richard Parks summited Mount Elbrus on Tuesday 12 July 2011 making history and completing his world first 737 Challenge in 6 months, 11 days, 7 hours and 53 minutes.

He reached the summit of Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe 213 days after leaving Cardiff to set off for his gruelling 7 month expedition.

It was the last of the famous 7 summits conquered, he reached the peak at 11.53am local time, 08.53 UK time.



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