

Casllwchwr 2012

PARKS 737

Richard Parks is an inspiration to us all at Casllwchwr Primary. This magazine tells the story of his visit to us.

Cost £4.00



Richard is the only man in history to climb the highest peak of each continent and reach the world's poles in less than a year

INSIDE: RICHARD'S STORY TOLD TO CASLLWCHWR

Richard was interviewed by the children of years 5 & 6. They questioned him on his great adventure, why he did it and what the whole adventure meant to him. They also found out about his life before climbing.



"I felt totally inspired when I heard Richard's story"
Mollie Quick



Richard on top of the world! Here's Richard at the summit of the world's highest and most dangerous mountain. See inside for the questions that the children asked him about climbing it. Find out if it was the hardest to climb, learn how Richard felt at the top and understand how it almost wrecked his challenge.

737 Challenge

SEVEN SUMMITS



"I've done it!"
Richard atop Mt
Elbrus, the final peak
of his astonishing
journey

SEVEN SUMMITS

Mount Vinson
Aconcagua
Kilimanjaro
Carstensz Pyramid
Mount Everest
Denali
Elbrus

THREE POLES

The South Pole

The Geographic
North Pole

Mount Everest
(The Third Pole)

SEVEN MONTHS

Due to weather conditions and the sheer toughness of the task, nobody had ever achieved this feat in less than a year. Until Richard tried it.

Richard Parks is a truly extraordinary human being. He is one of those extremely rare people who have reached the very top of the tree in not one, but two sporting disciplines.

Born in Pontypridd in 1977, his was the childhood of a normal boy in South Wales, consumed by a love of sport, he tried everything from rugby to motorcycling. In fact, so good was he at motorcross, that by the age of just 11 he was a sponsored rider and one of the best in Britain, but it was in rugby that he was really to make his name.

First at Newport, then Pontypridd, briefly at the ill fated Celtic Warriors, then back to Newport Gwent Dragons via successful stints at Leeds and in France with Perpignan. He even managed to reach the highest pinnacle for all rugby players born in this part of the world, by donning the red shirt of his country, and playing for Wales.

For most people, these achievements are remarkable enough. All sportspeople yearn to play for their country but, in reality, very few actually manage to. But to leave one high achieving career behind and walk - quite literally - into another, is the stuff that legend is made of.

Once you have read Richard's remarkable story that follows in this magazine, told so eloquently by, not just himself in response to the many excellent questions composed and created by the talented children of Years 5 and 6, but also through the eyes of the children themselves who have learned so much about this remarkable and inspirational man, then I have no doubt whatsoever that you will understand that the word legend is one that is truly appropriate and fitting to describe Richard and his unique achievements.

On a personal note, I would like to publicly take this opportunity to thank Richard for becoming involved in this project - and also hail the power of twitter!

I didn't know Richard prior to this project, but having watched a documentary of his 737 Challenge in 2011, I tweeted my congratulations to him. I didn't really expect a reply, but got one. That reply led to a twitter conversation including the simple question of whether he would be able to find time to come to Casllwchwr and tell the children his story.

He agreed instantly and the result is this magazine.

Thank you Richard for becoming our inspiration, and proving once again, that good guys can come first in life.

David Brayley, Editor.

"When I saw Richard coming down the corridor into our classroom, it was like a dream"

Rhys Davies



RICHARD IN PICS



A brief history of Richard

Richard's first love was rugby and first played for Newport in 1996.

He was quickly spotted as a player with potential, and in 2002 made his debut for Wales against South Africa

Little did Richard think when he was playing rugby for Wales, that one day, he'd be setting world records in the world of mountaineering.



Richard brought in the Welsh Flag that he took to the top of Mount Everest!

When Richard came in to meet the children, he brought with him much of the equipment that he took on his epic challenge with him, which the children were able to hold and inspect. There were the boots that he wore, (held by Taylor Hart above) the gloves that kept the frostbite at bay, (held by Caitlin Grigg-Williams) the ice axe that helped him climb, (held by Jamie Lloyd), the snow shoes that he wore on his feet (held by Sam Cousins) and the crampons that helped him climb and get a grip of the granite like ice on the slopes of the coldest mountains (Held by Jodie Adams). Richard even challenged some of the children to put on a pair of his massive snow boots, and then tie the laces whilst wearing his equally massive snow gloves. Needless to say, despite an excellent effort, and much laughter, the children failed, it appeared an impossible task. But in an instant, Richard put on the gloves and tied the laces with little trouble. When asked by one of the children how he managed to do it, Richard replied “Lots and lots of practice!”

“The flag is special”

He explained that without learning how to do it, in the time it would take to whip the gloves off to do it, there was a chance that frostbite would already be getting into his fingers! There were two other items that Richard brought in that also drew attention. There was the length of rope that saved his life when he fell into a crevasse whilst approaching Mount Denali. As Richard said himself, “Without that rope, I wouldn’t be here now.” A sobering thought. But one item more than most has a special place in Richard’s heart - his Welsh flag. (held by Callum Everest - the perfect surname!) The flag went with Richard on every part of his journey, and became the focus for his thoughts. “As important as all the equipment was, it was just that, equipment. Much of it I have auctioned off to raise money for the charity, and the rest, in time, I will probably lose or give away. But the flag is special. I will never, ever give that away. It is one of my most important and proudest possessions”.

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT	CRAMPONS	ICE PICK	SNOW SHOES	ROPE
	<p>What are they? Traction devices used to improve mobility when climbing through snow and ice.</p>	<p>What is it? A multi-purpose ice and snow tool used both in the ascent and descent of routes which involve frozen conditions.</p>	<p>How do they work? by spreading the weight of a person over a larger area so that the person's foot does not sink completely into the snow.</p>	<p>Kernmantle rope is rope constructed with its interior core protected with a woven exterior that's designed to optimize strength.</p>

INSIDE: RICHARD'S VISIT



A day we'll never forget!

Alex Pennock of Year 6 described his day meeting Richard Parks as one of his best ever in school. "I'll never forget meeting and listening to Richard when he came into school. He inspired me so much and made me realise that with hard work, anything can be achieved. It was one of my best school days ever."

A wonderful day where Year's 5 & 6 became journalists for the day.

Prior to Richard visiting us at Casllwchwr, the children carried out in depth research on not just Richard and his 737 Challenge, but also about the terrains and environment that Richard experienced during his wonderful journey.

One of our Governor's, David Brayley, who himself in recent years has become a sports writer, thought that there would be no better person for the children to practice their interviewing skills on that someone with such an inspirational tale to tell like Richard, so was delighted that Richard accepted his invitation to attend.

Once Richard had agreed, David went in to the Yr 5 and 6 classes and worked with the children on their research to ensure that they made the very most out of the opportunity to interview someone as unique as Richard.

David split the research into two areas, Yr 5 would focus on Richard's actual 737 Challenge, whilst Yr 6 would concentrate on Richard's life and career before and during the challenge. Yr 5 didn't just focus on the physical element of the challenge, but they also learned about the actual mountains that Richard had climbed, the environment of them and also the difficulties Richard would have faced in climbing them.

Yr 6 also carried out detailed research on Richard, and not just on the successes of his rugby career, but the bad times too like the injuries he endured and they learned how important it is to respond to adversity, never give up and actually come back stronger.

After the research, David then worked with both classes for them to come up with an array of interesting and thought provoking questions that they would put to Richard during his visit.

On the day itself, the hall was converted into a press conference room, with tables arranged for Richard to sit behind, with chairs for the children to come up in groups of five, and put their excellent questions to Richard, whilst all the time making notes of Richard's answers in order that they would be able to write about their experiences after Richard had gone.

Prior to the interviews, Richard showed the children a ten minute video of his journey which gave everyone an understanding of just how tough the challenge had been, and how it almost even cost Richard his life.

Once our journalists were done, there was just enough time for the Yr 6 children to present Richard with £100 toward his charity, Marie Curie Cancer Care, from a sponsored run they had arranged. The perfect end to the perfect day!



Dylan MacGregor is the journalist quizzing Richard

RICHARD WITH THE YEAR 5 CLASS



AND WITH THE YEAR 6 CLASS



RICHARD'S LIFE IN HIS WORDS - YR6

Richard gets a grilling from the trainee journalists of Yr 6 - read what happened in a superb Q&A session.

Nicholas Howells

Did you enjoy reading in school, and if so what was your favourite book?

I can't remember my favourite book, I did enjoy reading. English wasn't my best subject, I was more into Maths than English, Maths, CDT and sport, but I did enjoy reading.

Jake Thomas

What was your most memorable childhood experience?

I started racing motorbikes when I was 6, when I was really young, and when I think back to that period of my life I just think of sleeping in the car or sleeping in a tent on the side of a mountain somewhere.

Every Friday night after school we'd load the car up, me, mum and dad and we'd drive somewhere in the night and I'd race every Saturday and Sunday and then drive back Sunday night, and every Sunday night, the treat if I'd raced well, was we'd stop, in a restaurant called The Little Chef and I'd have pancakes and ice-cream, that was my treat, and my fondest memory probably.

Evie-May Gibbins

Did you have any hobbies in school, and if so what was your favourite one?

Racing bikes. I started racing motorbikes when I was really young, and then I lost my sponsorship when I was 11, and my folks couldn't afford to keep paying for the bike parts and repairing them, that's when I started playing rugby properly, so my two favourite hobbies were bikes and rugby. I really enjoyed doing both.

Molly Thomas

Who was your best friend in school and are you still in touch?

My best friend from when I was that young was a friend called Richard, his nickname was Bloggs, and we still keep in touch, we don't speak regularly. When you get older you get different jobs in different parts of the country, which sometimes makes it harder to keep in

touch, but Christmas time and birthdays we always catch up with a text or something.

Mollie Quick

If you could go back in time to your school, in primary, would you change anything?

No, I don't think I would, no. I really enjoyed it, so there's nothing I can really think of that was bad, which is pretty good. So that's why I can't think of any reason why I'd want to change it.

What was your favourite subject in school and why?

I liked Science and Geography, they were my favourite subjects. As I got a little older I really liked Design Technology. For A levels I did Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Geography, so they're mostly science based really as that was the type of subject I really enjoyed.

Rhys Davies

Did you have a favourite teacher in school that inspired you?

Yes I did, I had two teachers that really spring to mind. My rugby teacher, he jumps out at me, and my Biology teacher as well, and the crazy thing is that it's not the teachers that were the friendliest were my favourites, it was the teachers that pushed me the hardest, and as a result I achieved the most with them.

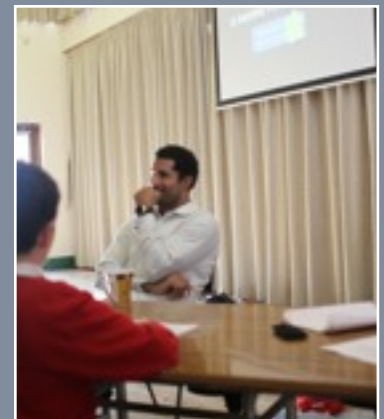
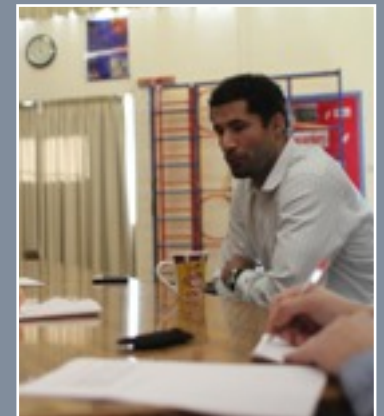
I had a nickname for my Biology teacher, his name was Mr. Rawton and we nicknamed him Gegg, or Goggle Eyed Gegg because of his glasses, he had big fat glasses on. They were both really friendly, but pushed me the hardest.

Holly Edwards

Who inspired you to play rugby?

I don't know. Like I said when I stopped racing bikes, I started taking rugby more seriously in school and really enjoyed it, it was just fun, I just loved playing it and played it more and more. I was lucky enough making a career out of it, but I can't think of anybody specifically that inspired me to start playing rugby.

ON THE SPOT



Richard being interviewed

On the day that Richard came into the school, the hall was set up as a professional interview room for him. He showed us a video of his challenge before we began, and then the children came up in groups of five, sat opposite Richard, and then asked him his questions. Just like real journalists.

ON THE PITCH!



Richard's Rugby Career

Richard reached the very pinnacle of his sport as a rugby player in Wales, representing his country (**top picture**). He enjoyed a long and varied career that took in many clubs. He won the Powergen Cup with Leeds in 2005, (**above middle**) & until his retirement in 2009, due to a shoulder injury, he played for Newport Gwent Dragons. (**Above & left**)

Alexa Howard

How did it feel when you were awarded your first rugby contract?

I felt very lucky and grateful. The first time that I got given something because of rugby was after school, I actually went to school in South Africa for a year and I won that scholarship because I played for Welsh U18s the year before, and although that wasn't a professional contract that was a pretty amazing experience, I felt really lucky for that.

Megan John

Who has been your favourite team mate and why?

I've had a lot of good friends from playing rugby. My favourite team mate is hard to pick out, but my best friends from rugby are Kevin Morgan who played full back for Wales, Tom Palmer who plays second row for England and Peter Sidoli who is Robert Sidoli's brother, who played for the Dragons with me. I've got a lot of friends from rugby, but those are my three best team mates I guess.

Andrew Griffiths

Can you remember the first professional try you scored and can you describe it?

I can't, I can remember a lot of firsts in my career. You know I mentioned that I went to

school in South Africa, I went in 1995 which was after they had just finished something called an apartheid, which is something I'll let your teachers explain to you, but I was the first black child to play for the first 15, I was also the first black student to get awarded colours for the school, but I was also the first student to get sent off as well!! I can't remember tries. I can remember my favourite try, it was for Pontypridd against Llanelli, I can't remember the year but just remember the try, I've got a photo of it in my house.

Aaron Price

What was your feeling when you got picked for Wales?

I didn't actually believe the phone call was real! I had a phone call from a former Wales rugby player called Alan Phillips who then, and still now, has a job as the team manager for Wales. Anyway, he rang my house and said 'this is Alan Phillips from Wales and you've been selected to go on tour to South Africa with Wales'. I was so shocked that I couldn't believe it, and even though I can't repeat it, but I said a rude word because I didn't believe him. I honestly thought it was one of my friends on the phone and was winding me up, and then, when I realised that it actually was Alan Phillips, I had to apologise. I was just really surprised at first and then I felt very excited.



Richard was an outstanding rugby player

Christian Wade

Was it difficult playing rugby against France compared to Wales, and can you speak French?

I can speak French. I've made some good friends in France from my time over there. I don't think it was more difficult or less difficult, but it was different. As you know from watching rugby, each team, each country plays a little bit differently, and that's what it was like in France - different! The most difficult thing about going to France was going over there on my own and not speaking French when I went out there so I had to make friends in a different language and learn all the rugby moves in a different language, that was the toughest thing, but playing rugby, it was just fun.

How did you feel when you were given the Arthur Boucher award for most promising player at Newport?

Well I didn't remember it until 15 minutes ago, when one of you mentioned it in my introduction. I remember feeling really proud because a lot of good players had won it before me, in fact a good friend of mine who plays at the Ospreys Ian Gough, the second row for Wales, had won it the year before, so I felt really proud and I felt quite excited because I was getting to the point where I was being picked to play regularly, instead of just being a substitute, so it was quite an exciting year for me. That year I was asked to train with the Welsh team and I got picked for the Welsh 7s to play in Japan, so it was quite an exciting year, but I forgot it until 15 minutes ago!

Georgia Rees

When you won the Powergen Cup for Leeds, how did it compare to winning the cup for Pontypridd?

It was different. I can't say it was better or worse, both were amazing. The thing I loved about winning the Principality Cup with Pontypridd is that we were a very young side and after winning the Principality Cup, six of us were picked for Wales that year to go to South Africa, so it was a key time in all our lives. But what I loved about winning the Powergen Cup with Leeds was that half way through the season we were bottom of the league and everybody had written us off, we were going to be relegated. The same group of players just started working harder and we believed in ourselves and we ended up winning the last 8 games, and we were beating the top sides in

the league, and it wasn't necessarily winning the cup but the whole 8 weeks before it that was really special, some really fond memories.

Nia Thomas

Is there one rugby player in history who you would love to have played against?

Richie McCaw, he's the captain of New Zealand. I would love to have played against him.

Sian Waters

When I'm older I would like to be a dentist, was there ever been a time when you would have preferred to be a dentist rather than become a rugby player?

No. It was sort of different though, when I was around that age 16/17, rugby wasn't professional then, rugby wasn't a job like it is now so I never thought I was going to play rugby professionally. My best friend in school had applied to be a dentist in Cardiff and I didn't really know what I wanted to do so I just applied to do dentistry so that we could hang out together, that's the honest truth. As soon as I had the opportunity to play rugby professionally I grasped it with both hands, so I don't regret it. I have a lot of friends that are dentists though and they really enjoy it.

Can you remember the best game of rugby you played and who was it against?

Yes I can actually. It was for Leeds and it was my second year at Leeds, and we had got Cardiff in the European Cup. We lost to Cardiff in Cardiff by 40 points so we got heavily beaten but I still got man of the match, and a couple of weeks after Cardiff came up to Leeds to play in the return fixture and we beat them by 50 points and I got man of the match in both those games. Those are my favourite games. I'm very good friends with Martin Williams but we've always had a healthy rivalry throughout our careers, so I always like playing well against him.

Zachary Spackman

When you played rugby did you ever worry about getting injuries?

No. You can't. If you think about getting injured you are more likely to get injured. If you train properly and you've got the right technique there's less chance of getting injured.

CUP WINNER



Rugby is about winning!

Richard's happiest memory was winning the Principality Cup with Pontypridd, and (**top**) is next to skipper Dale McIntosh. Next, it was the Powergen Cup with Leeds (**middle**) sharing the success with Alix Popham, and (**bottom**) a man of the match performance for Leeds against Cardiff.

HARD KNOCKS



Richard's Rugby Career

Richard would have regained his place in the Welsh squad in 2007, had it not been for a run of bad luck with injuries which cut short such an excellent career. **Top;** Richard bursts through the London Irish defence, **middle;** Richard playing for Wales against Fiji, awaits a line out. **Bottom;** Richard in the thick of it for the Dragons.

Richard became Wales' 1001st rugby player in his debut here v South Africa



Isobel Bass

How did you manage to get a stress fracture on your spine, and how much did it hurt?

I'm not really sure how I got my stress fracture on my spine. That was my second year in professional rugby and I started to lift a lot of weights and I put a lot of weight on and I was still pretty young, so maybe that might have contributed towards it. But there's no real reason for a stress fracture, it's just sort of over use of the body. It wasn't painful, it was uncomfortable, it's like having an achy back so I couldn't sleep, after every training session I had to put ice on it. I lost a whole year of rugby because of it.

Ella Scoberg

In 2007 you tore your knee ligaments against Cardiff Blues, can you remember how it happened and did it hurt?

I can. That's one of, emotionally and physically, the most painful experiences of my rugby career. I had moved to France to play for one of the best teams in Europe the year before, and it hadn't gone as well as I had hoped it to have gone, I got injured out there so I came back to play for the Newport Gwent Dragons in order to play for Wales. That's ultimately what I wanted to do. The first half of that season, I was playing really well and I just

got back into the national squad, the training squad, and I got injured on Boxing Day against Cardiff when I was playing really well and it was incredibly painful. It was the second time I'd torn my knee ligaments in about 7 / 8 months, I knew then that my chances of playing for Wales again had gone. So it was a very sad time as well for me.

Abigail Powell

When you injured your shoulder in 2008 did you know straight away that it might end your career?

No I didn't. Like the other question that I answered, you can't allow yourself to think negatively or worry about getting injured so every time I got injured I just assumed that I was going to get better and be able to play again. So, no I didn't realise at the time. In fact, when I injured my shoulder it was the second game of the season against Llanelli, the Scarlets, and I knew it was painful but I continued to play throughout the season with it and that's probably what made it worse and ultimately stopped me from playing. Had I maybe have rested straight away I might still be playing. But even just talking about it I've got mixed feelings because I half wish I still was playing, not as bad as I used to, but also if I hadn't have had that injury, I wouldn't be here with you now and I've never been happier in my life, so it's sort of mixed feelings now.

Alexander Pennock

As flanker, were there any unusual injuries that you had?

Yes, two injuries. I used to get a lot of concussions, that's why, for a period of my career, I used to wear a scrum cap. I used to get a lot of injury on my neck and shoulder with trapped nerves. Those two I used to get very often and just had to live with.

Olivia Benjafield-Cook

What were your emotions when the doctors said your career was over?

I was really upset. I was angry, sad, frustrated, scared. I didn't want to finish, I wasn't ready to finish. I was really sad, really depressed.

Kaylee White

Who or what inspired you to do the 737 Challenge?

It was a mixture of two things. After an operation to repair my shoulder I was lying in bed feeling sad, all the things we just spoke about, sad, frustrated and down. I was reading a book at the time by a very famous British explorer called Sir Ranulph Fiennes, that combined with a sentence from my grandmother's funeral which has become a bit of a strap line for the challenge which is 'The horizon is only the limit of our sight', well those two things gave me the courage to pick myself up and to channel all my energies into climbing. For me, the real challenge was learning a new skill. I didn't know of a record that hadn't been achieved, I didn't know that at the time, I just wanted to learn a new skill to take my mind off rugby.

Did you come up with the idea for the 737 Challenge and was it anything like rugby training?

No I didn't actually. Like I was just saying, the challenge for me was to learn a new and very different skill to test myself in the toughest environment. I'm very fortunate, it was through the involvement of individuals and companies that have formed the team and my sponsors that the 737 Challenge evolved into what it's become.

Even now I feel very lucky, very grateful to have had the opportunity and it was nothing like rugby training at all. In some ways it was much tougher than rugby training.

Aimee Gronow

What was your longest and hardest training session and why?

Well in order to prepare for the challenge I split my training into three parts. There was fitness training, physiological training, and that was to become as efficient as possible at metabolising oxygen so that when you're at a very high altitude on top of the mountains, when there's less oxygen than there is here at sea level, I was as fit as possible.

The second thing was technical climbing, because the environments that I climbed in were very dangerous and you had to be very skilful and know exactly what you're doing, when to not only complete it but to stay safe. And the third thing was called deprivation training, and I did that in order to prepare myself psychologically and mentally for what I was going to encounter and those were probably the toughest sessions I did.

For example, I did a 24 hour climb on Pen-y-fan without food or sleep to prepare myself for the long days. I did a cold water immersion test in the University of Portsmouth which actually was to prepare myself for the North Pole in case I fell through the ice, but actually it became vital on Denali when I fell into the crevasse, that was every day over three days.

I was immersed into cold water for an hour, they dropped my body temperature down to clinical hypothermia where we'd normally go to hospital but they'd take me out of the tank and we'd test different survival blankets to warm myself back up, that was probably the most uncomfortable training that I did. As uncomfortable as that was, the worst thing about those three days was one particular thermometer that I had to wear, I'll let you think about that one yourselves.

Sophie Donne

We climbed Pen-y-fan, why did you choose it?

I knew you guys climbed Pen-y-fan, I think that's awesome! I used it because it's the biggest mountain in South Wales around here and I love it, I really like the mountain. I normally take my dog Ben up there to walk. I love it, its close and it's the biggest around here, and actually it's not just me that uses that particular mountain for training, the army use it as well to train a lot.

TRAINING!



Fail to prepare, prepare to fail

Richard underwent training far more grueling than anything he'd done in his rugby career. His body was pushed to it's limits to ensure it could cope with the extreme conditions he would experience on the challenge. This training helped save his life as he sat in a freezing cold crevasse on Denali awaiting rescue.

Cerys Thomas

Did you know about the Marie Curie charity before the challenge, and why did you pick it?

That's a very good question. I did know of the charity before the challenge. I'm very passionate about this particular charity. Very sad, but a lot of us will know somebody that's been ill with cancer, my father had cancer, he's fit and well now, but very sadly I lost my Uncle Terry and Auntie Joy to cancer. The motivation for the challenge was very personal, for me it was a way to overcome my injury from rugby but I think it's very important to help people less fortunate than us, I feel very proud and privileged to be able to help Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Rhys Salter

Before the 737 Challenge, what was your favourite mountain to climb out of the seven?

Until I began the training for the Challenge, I hadn't climbed a mountain before it.

Did you look forward to one of them?

I know that doesn't seem like a difficult question but... I always knew that Denali would be the toughest mountain and that's why I climbed it in training before the challenge. I was looking forward to going back to Denali, but also a little nervous too because I knew how difficult it was. That's probably my favourite mountain out of the seven. My favourite place though was Antarctica, I loved Antarctica, it is a very special place. If you can imagine being in the middle of absolute nowhere with not a living person, animal for as

far as the eye can see and everything is just white, it's an incredible place. I still struggle to get it into my mind that there are parts of Antarctica that no human has ever been to or touched or walked on, and that still blows my mind that there are still parts of the world that have not been explored.

Shannon Carter

What was your favourite clothing when you climbed up Penylan?

Probably my rain jacket that kept me dry, because like most days on Penylan it was raining when I was there. The most important item of clothing was my head torch because as you can imagine climbing through the night was pretty tough. I've got a cool story to tell you about that. It was about 3 o'clock in the morning and I was on my own climbing back down and all the sheep's eyes were reflecting from my head torch, so all you could see was these little fluorescent eyes bouncing around all over the place. As I was walking down, I wasn't far from the car park before I turned and went back up, when I saw what I thought was a sheep walking towards me, and next thing the eyes started moving around. I was rubbing my eyes thinking I'm tired I'm seeing things, they got closer and kept moving and I'm thinking what is it? It turned out it was two friends of mine that had their own head torches on and walking side by side, they came to keep me company in the middle of the night. They came up with a load of golf clubs and golf balls and we went back up to the summit and were hitting golf balls off the summit as the sun came up. Obviously we collected all the golf balls on the way down!



Richard at the North Pole - a very dangerous place!

THE PEAKS



Richard's Three Peaks

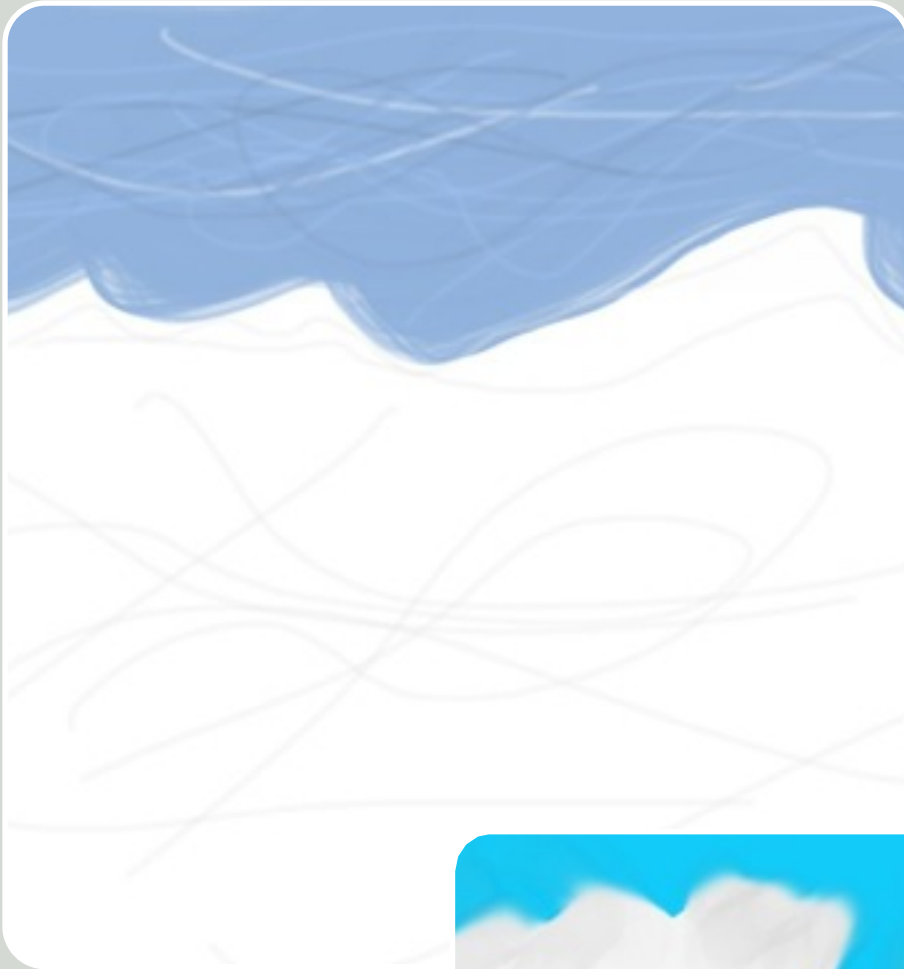
Richard summited 7 peaks on his challenge, and here are three of them.

Top; Kilimanjaro, a mountain that Richard climbed with some friends and family

Middle; Denali, the mountain that nearly took his life

Bottom; Everest. The most iconic of all, and one he climbed with just days to spare.

RICHARD PARKS' 737 CHALLENGE - A GALLERY

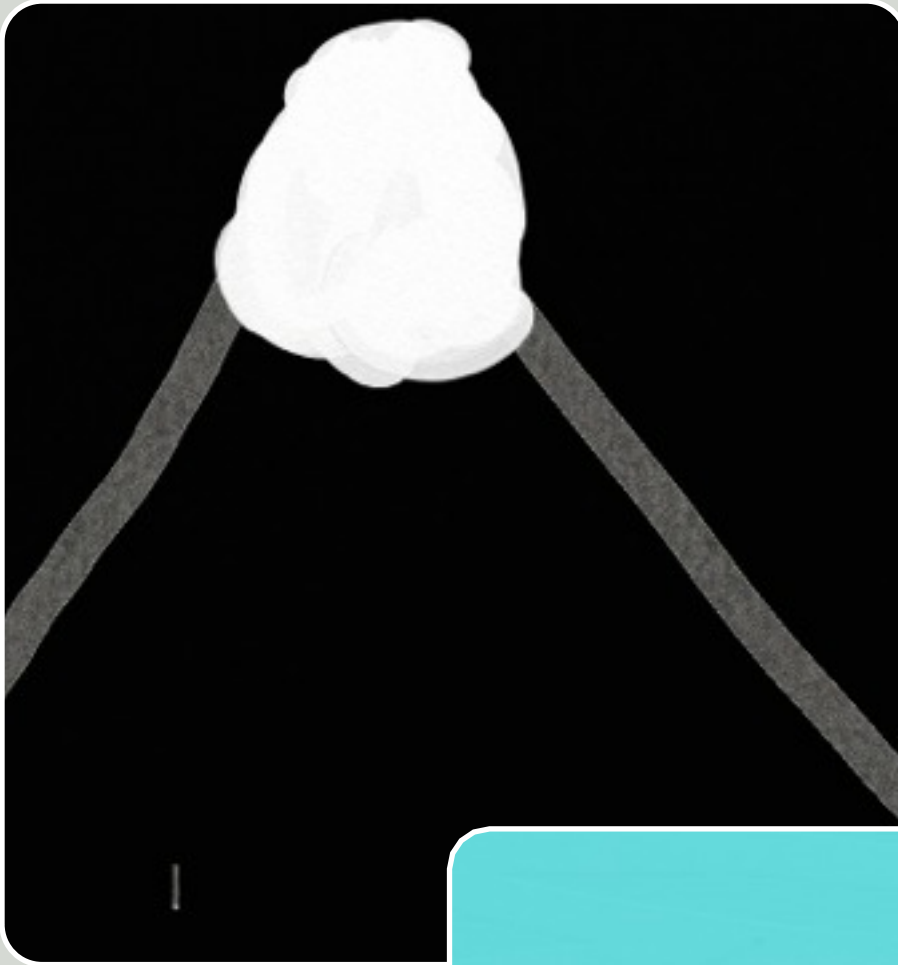


1st Leg of the Challenge
The South Pole
by Molly (left)

2nd Leg of the Challenge
Mt Vinson
by Eleri



RICHARD PARKS' 737 CHALLENGE - A GALLERY



3rd Leg of the
Challenge
Aconcagua
by Darcie

4th Leg of the
Challenge
Mt Kilimanjaro
by Lucy



RICHARD PARKS' 737 CHALLENGE - A GALLERY

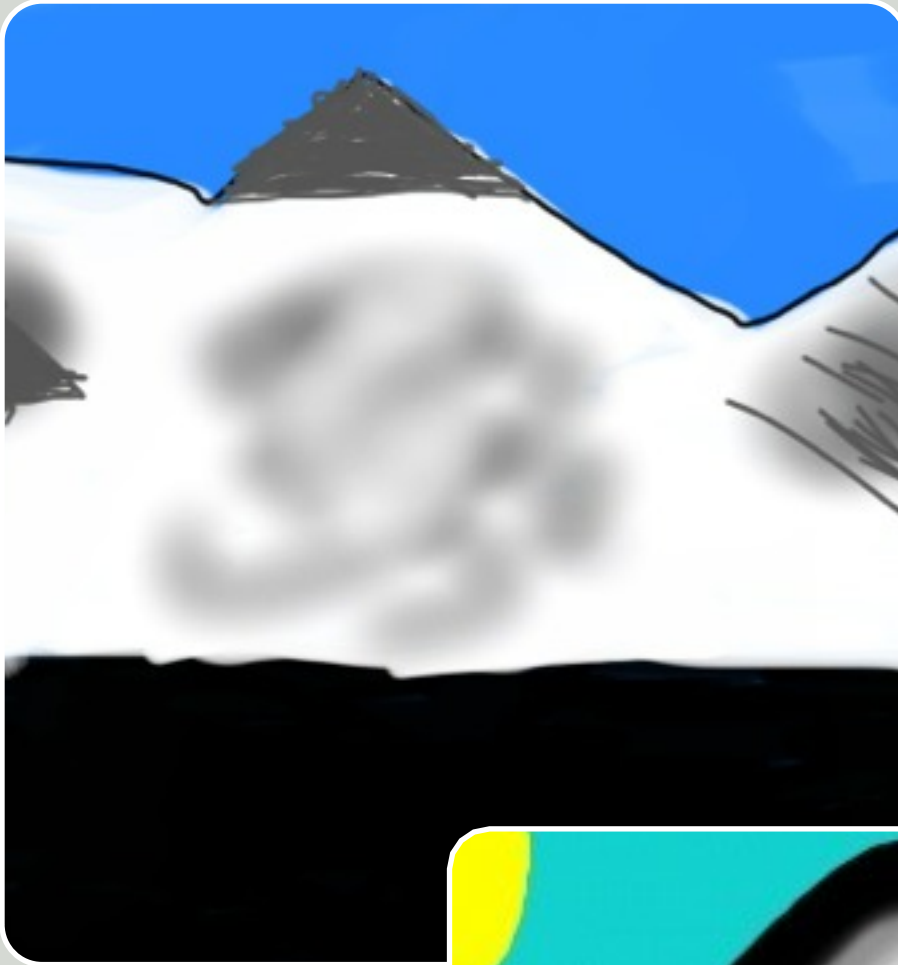


5th Leg of the
Challenge
Carstensch Pyramid
by Chloe (left)

6th Leg of the
Challenge
The North Pole
by Joshua



RICHARD PARKS' 737 CHALLENGE - A GALLERY

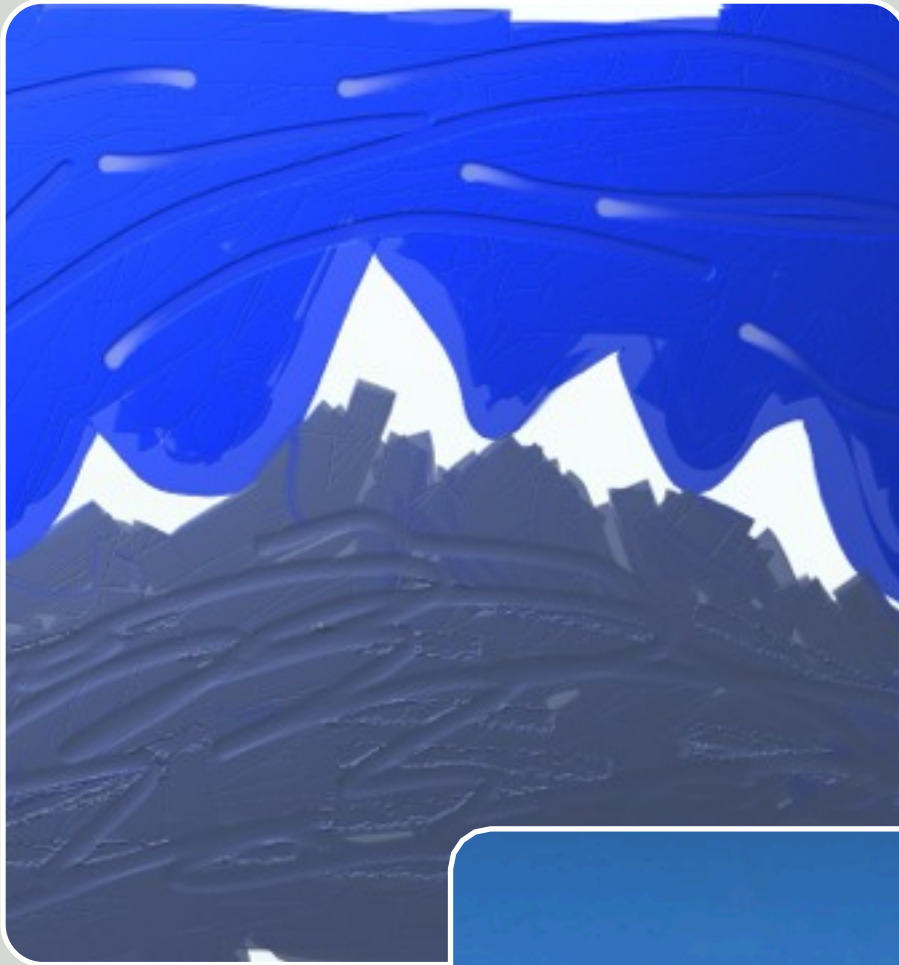


7th Leg of the
Challenge
Mount Everest
by Ella (left)



8th Leg of the
Challenge
Mount Denali
by Harriet

RICHARD PARKS' 737 CHALLENGE - A GALLERY



9th
and final Leg
of the Challenge
Mount Elbrus
by Edan (left)

9th and
final Leg of the
Challenge
Mount Elbrus
by Richard



THE BIG INTERVIEW 1 - YR5

The following pages detail the questions that the YR 5 children asked Richard.

Niall Jargisa - What equipment did you use on the way to the poles and did you use the same for each?

I used very similar equipment for each. We used skis for both of them and we pulled all our gear in a sled behind. Our sleds weighed about 60kg which I guess you could imagine is like putting your mum in the bath tub and dragging her along in it. We planned for similar temperatures so I used similar equipment. The main difference in equipment was, for the North Pole we used buoyant sleds that floated to cross the open leads of water and also I wore a rucksack on the North Pole. The reason why I wore a rucksack is, I kept essential equipment inside it for example my phone, my satellite phone, a very warm jacket and a survival bag in my rucksack so that should my sled slip through the ice or fall into the sea I would still be able to survive with just the gear I had in my rucksack.

Luke Davies - How did you feel when you achieved the first pole?

Amazing. It was a very special moment for me. It was the first leg of the nine leg challenge so I was very excited. I was obviously very nervous starting the challenge so to get the first one out of the way, under my belt, was a really big step for me. Like I said before, I love Antarctica. It just so happened

that I left Cardiff 100 years after a very famous British explorer, called Robert Falcon Scott, left Cardiff as well on his Terra Nova expedition, and I'd read a lot of books about Scott. When I arrived at the South Pole I was thinking back to these incredible people that had done it 100 years before me.

Nia Gemine - Did you meet any people in any of the poles, and if so who were they?

At the South Pole is a very big scientific station called the Amundsen Scott Station, it's owned and run by the Americans. Inside the station they're doing these NASA experiments, these space-like experiments. In order for it to be a world first I had to be stood on the South Pole on the 1st of January but I arrived a little early, I arrived on the 27th of December, so I had to wait on the South Pole for 4 or 5 days in my tent until the 1st of January. I was very lucky, very privileged, to be invited into that science station. I met some of the scientists there and saw some of their experiments which was incredible, very cool. So I met more people on the South Pole. On the North Pole the only guy that I met was the Russian pilot that flew the helicopter in to pick us up, and he was crazy.



"I left Cardiff 100 years after Captain Scott"

Michael Jones
Which pole was scariest to reach and why?

The Geographical North Pole. It's not land, it's actually frozen ice, it's like a fluid jigsaw of ice over the sea. This jigsaw of ice can be anything from 5 to 6 meters high, pressure ridges, which is where two icebergs collide and push the ice up. So the opposite is open areas of water which we had to cross and we used our sleds that we had all our gear in pulling behind us, they were buoyant so when we had to cross these open leads of water we had strapped them together to use as rafts. The North Pole was tougher because every single foot step you have to be aware or manage the thickness of ice, you have to constantly check the ice, we checked that by the different colour of the ice.

It was also the coldest leg of the challenge. We had temperatures on the challenge, on the North Pole leg, down to minus 40/41 which was really cold.

"It's like a fluid jigsaw of ice over the sea"



THE BIG INTERVIEW 2 - YR5

The YR 5 children continue to grill Richard.... with very interesting results!

Morgan Jones - If you could go back to one of the poles, which one would it be, and why?

It would be the South Pole because Antarctica has really stuck with me, it really captured my imagination. I've only seen a very small part of Antarctica, maybe if I went back I'd like to go to the South Pole again but maybe via a different route, or from a different side.

Shaun Cunningham - Why did you climb Mount Vinson first and what were you doing there?

The order that I climbed the mountains was decided by weather. Each of the mountains all have different seasons and weather systems, so I spent 18 months planning this with a company called Jagged Globe who are very experienced in this, and we decided that we'd start in Antarctica as it's their summer in January and the weather would be the best there at that time.

The locations that were set in stone, that we couldn't change, were Everest and the North Pole as they have very small weather windows and if you miss that weather window it's impossible to reach them.

We worked from the North Pole, Everest and Denali and then we worked everything in around those, as they were so important. For the journey, I flew from London to Mendoza in Argentina, after that I then got a bus to Santiago in Chile, and after landing there, it was another plane from Santiago down to Punta Arenas, which is in Chile, it's the most

southerly airport in the world I think.

Once we were safe in Chile, I had one more airplane to catch, which was this big Russian plane which flew us from Chile onto the continent Antarctica. That was the start of the journey, and also the start of all my flights. It's amazing when I look back at it now, but all, I took 44 flights in six months.

Thomas Davies - As Mount Vinson was your first mountain, how were you feeling when you started?

Nervous. I was excited and nervous. Vinson was actually one of the easiest mountains on the challenge for me, but we didn't prepare for that. Because Vinson is in Antarctica it's got potential to be the coldest of all the mountains. I've heard stories of people being stuck in storms. We had taken enough food for two weeks on the mountain, actually we had great weather and summited it in three days, but I was very nervous.

Zak Harrison - What was the experience of climbing Mount Aconcagua like?

Funny. I had a different climbing partner for each of the nine legs of the challenge. My climbing partner on Aconcagua was an Argentinian guy called Diego, and I had not



"In the whole journey, I took 44 flights!"

met Diego before I arrived in Argentina. Diego couldn't speak any English and I can't speak any Spanish, but I was led to believe that he had climbed it three times and actually he had been on the mountain three times but he'd never summited, he'd failed each of the three times, so it was sort of a bit scary and a bit funny, but we got on really well and we became really good friends. We had these crazy conversations in the tent, where we'd laugh for hours in the evening, and I still don't know what we were talking about because I can't speak Spanish and he can't speak English so it was a funny experience.



Above; Richard standing atop Mt Vinson in perfect weather. "We had taken enough food for two weeks on the mountain!"



Left; Richard on the march to Mt Vinson.

Right; Richard at the Geographical South Pole. "The South Pole has really stuck with me, it captured my imagination."



THE BIG INTERVIEW 3 - YR5

Richard continues with his story with tales of the loo and eating guinea pigs!



“The monkeys were annoying as they kept us awake!”

Jade Roberts - What food and drink did you take to Mount Aconcagua and how did you manage to go to the toilet?

I took local food. I couldn't carry food from here in Wales to all the different mountains, so I'd buy my food from around each of the mountains, that was to save money and also it was easier than carrying it. Aconcagua was probably the craziest place for food, I actually ate a guinea pig in Aconcagua, which is pretty wild. In Ecuador it's one of their national dishes, it was a dare for me to eat it in Aconcagua, and it tasted like chicken before you ask!

It was a little easier to go to the toilet in Aconcagua as there are areas that are specifically designed to go to the toilet. It was a lot more challenging to go to the toilet in Antarctica because as it's a really special place, when you go there you have to agree to be part of the Antarctic Treaty, and basically what you promise is that you won't leave any evidence of your visit, so you won't leave anything behind at all. And what that means is

Right;
Richard explains the delights of toilet issues at the pole!

Some of the children may now think twice of following his footsteps when they realised what they'll have to do!

“Guinea Pig is a delicacy...I was dared to eat it...it tasted like chicken!”

that you actually have to carry all your own toilet with you, so every time you go for a poo you have to put it in a bag and take it with you. Actually, I've brought one with me, it is clean, don't worry, I've brought a new one. In the bottom it's got this sand that absorbs the smell and then you tie it up. You'd use the same bag three times.

Caitlin Grigg-Williams - What was your most amazing moment when climbing Kilimanjaro, and what types of animals did you see?

Kilimanjaro was actually very special to me. On that particular leg I was joined by a Marie Curie nurse, called Jan Stuart, in order to help me raise money for Marie Curie. I was also joined by quite a few friends and family, which was the first time I had friends around, and the last time actually on the challenge, so it was a very special climb for me. Also, the first three legs, the South Pole, Aconcagua and Vinson all had potential to go wrong. I'd spent a lot of time preparing for Everest, Denali and the North Pole, but the South Pole can be the coldest place on the planet, Aconcagua is the highest mountain outside of the Himalayas, and Mt Vinson could've potentially been the coldest mountain on the challenge, so to get those first three legs under my belt, I was growing in confidence then. So when I came to

Kilimanjaro I was a lot more relaxed than I had been, and like I said to be joined by friends was really special. Especially my cousin David, it was David's dad that sadly died from cancer so it was great to be with him and stand on the top. We saw monkeys, and they were really annoying because they would fight in the night and keep us awake so you couldn't sleep.

Jamie Lloyd - Was there much snow on Kilimanjaro, and what were your emotions when you got to the top of it?

Surprisingly there was snow on the summit on Kilimanjaro which is the highest mountain in Africa and it the highest free standing mountain in the world. It's actually a volcano, so you imagine it to be very hot, which it is at the bottom of the mountain, but at the summit there's actually a big glacier and surprisingly there's a lot of ice and snow around.

My emotions standing at the top were... well, I'd had negative opinions of Kilimanjaro, a lot of celebrities had climbed it and I didn't think it would be that interesting, but actually it was amazing. I had all my friends around me, it was a really beautiful mountain, and the sunrise we had on summit day was spectacular. So it was an amazing and enjoyable experience, which was a surprise for me as I didn't think I'd enjoy as much as I did.



THE BIG INTERVIEW 4 - YR5

Here the YR 5 children find out about the hardest mountain of the challenge!

Kimberly Randlesome - Did you get scared when climbing Carstensz Pyramid's ropes, and how old did the ropes look?

I was very concerned with Carstensz. Carstensz Pyramid is the least climbed of the summits, and the reason why is because it's the most remote and so difficult to get to. It's probably the furthest removed from life as we know it here in Wales. Believe it or not the local Papuans still shoot and kill their animals with bows and arrows, and that's how they hunt for food. There's a lot of fighting between the different tribes over there, and I guess a lot of things could've gone wrong in that particular leg. I've heard stories of people being kidnapped, stories of people getting their bags stolen in the middle of the jungle, so I was very nervous about Carstensz for a lot of reasons. The rope that you're talking about is called The Tyrolean Traverse, and it's very rare, there are not many mountains where that's left, anywhere in the world, and it was pretty scary because you don't know how long the ropes have been there. There were four ropes going across The Tyrolean Traverse and I clipped into all four of them because I thought it's likely that one might break, but you'd be very unlucky if all four of them broke.

Liam Rees - What part of Carstensz Pyramid did you struggle with the most, and what was the view like at the top?

It was the heat in the jungle. Carstensz is the most technical climb of the seven summits, but what makes it so difficult is that it's so remote. Like I was saying, we had to trek through the jungle for a week just to get to the bottom of the mountain and that was probably the toughest part of that particular leg. The temperature was incredibly hot there, it was plus 40 degrees and almost 100% humidity. There were leeches, bugs, mosquitoes, we had to cross rivers and go through knee high mud, it was really horrible. I was wet for two weeks, that was the most uncomfortable of the nine legs and probably the mountain I'd least like to go back to.

Lauren Nurse - What kit did you take to Mount Everest, and did you need anything special because it was Everest?

I did. The thing that was very specific to Everest was oxygen. Everest is the highest mountain in the world, but it's almost impossible to climb it without using supplementary oxygen. I was driving down here in the car and I saw a plane flying over us very high in the sky, like a tiny plane, and it blew my mind that that was probably the same height as the summit of Everest, it's incredibly high, just under 30000 feet, so you need supplementary oxygen. A very, very small percentage of people have the genetics to



"I thought one of the ropes might break, but unlikely for all four to"

climb it without oxygen, so oxygen was the biggest change of any kit that I used.

Below; Richard setting out for Everest.



Left; Richard on the incredibly dangerous ropes of Carstensz Pyramid



Right; Richard relaxing in one of the village huts on Papua New Guinea.

THE BIG INTERVIEW 5 - YR5

Richard reveals exclusively to the children how dangerous it is to climb Mt Everest.

more emotionally scary. That was worse, the thought that I may not finish the challenge through injury, well that thought was more painful to me than the actual physical pain of the frost bite.

Taylor Hart - Can you describe climbing Everest, what was it like, was there a point that you wanted to stop?

I never wanted to stop and I never contemplated giving up. I did think however, that there were going to be times when I wasn't going to be able to continue, due to really bad weather, and the frost bite coming down, so there were times when I was nervous about not being able to continue, but I never thought about giving up, no. The climb on Everest, people normally take 7 to 11 weeks to complete it, but because Steve and I arrived there very late, we didn't have the time to be able to acclimatise, so I decided on a very different and aggressive strategy to climb it. Instead of climbing up and down it to get used to the altitude, I just climbed once to Camp 2 to at 6,500 meters, stayed there for 6 days to acclimatise, came back down and waited for the weather window. That added to my nerves because I was doing something I had not practised, I was doing something that not everybody agreed with, but when we did get the weather window to go, we climbed from Base Camp to Camp 2, where we stayed for

two days. Then, from Camp 2 up the Lhotse Face, which is quite a famous part of Everest and a very steep icy section that we were climbing for about 8 hours. Then we got to Camp 4, which is just under 8,000 meters. Camp 4 is called The Death Zone because there's not enough oxygen in the air for us to live, to sustain human life. We got there expecting to climb the next day, we only took one day of food up with us. We got stuck there because of the weather, which was pretty rubbish. It was scarily windy, the tent was completely shaking, we had to screw the tent into the ice, bury all the sides of the tent to stop the wind picking the tent up. I had to sit there for three days and wait for the weather to get better. We had only taken enough oxygen up for two days so we had to use it sparingly, for an hour on, an hour off, two hours on, two hours off, so we could ration the oxygen. If we ran out of oxygen, that would have been it - all over.

Also, as I've mentioned, we didn't have enough food, so we would go around all the other camps to try and borrow food off people that were going back down the mountain. I was really nervous because, if you remember the video I showed you earlier when I was talking and I said 'We've just got to stay calm, I think she'll give us our chance.' What I meant by that was, I just had to have faith, I just had to believe that the weather would change, and when it did I had to be ready for it, and I was very lucky that the weather did change and I was fortunate enough to climb to the summit in the third day.



"Camp four is called The Death Zone - there's not enough air to live"

Thomas Weeks - What was it like to get a frost bitten toe, and did anything else go wrong on Everest?

We arrived on Everest very late because we had to go to the North Pole at a very specific time, so by the time my climbing partner Steve and I got to Everest base camp we were already five weeks behind every other team on the mountain. Normally you'd spend almost two months acclimatising, climbing up the mountain gradually and coming back down.

We didn't have the time to do that because of the weather, so nothing went wrong but I was very worried and very nervous about it, scared. Getting the frost bite was painful and in a different way, scary as well. If you could imagine, I was very sad when my rugby career finished because of an injury, meaning, because of the injury, I could never play again.

The idea that the challenge would end in the same way, that I wouldn't be able to finish it because of a different injury, that was really scary to me. Not scary in the normal sense, but



Left; Richard on the dangerous ascent to the top of the world's highest mountain, Everest.

Right; He made it! Richard, clutching the same Welsh flag he brought to Casllwchr, sitting on the top of the world!



THE BIG INTERVIEW 6 - YR5

Richard reveals how a frostbitten toe and a fall in a crevasse nearly ended the challenge!

Callum Everest - What was it like in the death zone and what were your emotions when you got to the top?

Camp Four and Everest is I guess the closest thing I'll ever get to another planet, or maybe like the moon.

If you can imagine, Camp Four is set on part of the glacier that is quite flat, so it's quite a big area of flat ice, but the reason why it's flat is because it's been scoured by the wind, so it's incredibly windy, I mean crazy windy!

Sometimes you struggle to even walk out of your tent because it's so windy, you can't stand upright. All the other tents in and around Camp Four were ripped and broken, there were bits of tent everywhere, bits of food everywhere. We were at the very end of the climbing season, so most people had either summited or attempted and failed, so we were pretty much there on our own with all this destruction and chaos around us.

When you're sat there and it's very cold in the tent, every hour you'd put the oxygen mask on and use oxygen, then you'd take it off to try save it, so it was a very different environment and pretty scary actually. The thing I was most scared about was not having the opportunity to even attempt the final climb. It would've been a very difficult scenario if I'd climbed all the way up to Camp Four, all the way up to 8,000 meters and not be able to climb the remaining 900 meters. Just staying calm and waiting was really tough. Imagine, the tent is no bigger than the same length as this table

and maybe twice as wide, and you can't go outside, well you can but you don't want to because it's so cold and so windy, and you've just got to sit there for three days. Imagine, it would be like sitting in the downstairs toilet for three days, not being able to go anywhere, you can't stand up, and you're really cold as well so it was really tough.

After Everest, what was your experience like going to Denali?

I keep using the word scary. Denali was really difficult, it was the most difficult leg of the challenge for me. I was really excited about going back there, because I'd climbed it in training the year before and I really loved it, but it was pretty difficult for me because I had frost bite in my toe at that point that was incredibly painful. With frostbite, as it gets better it gets worse, so by the time I began climbing Denali there were bits of dead flesh on my toe that was dropping off and it was really painful.

We were very late on in the season because of all the delays, so the mountain was really warm and you might think that's a good thing but actually you want the mountain to be cold because the lower glacier, when it's cold it's frozen, and all the snow bridges that cover all the crevasses are frozen so you can walk over them.

Because Matt and I were so late and it was warm, that's why I fell into the crevasse,

"There were bits of dead flesh hanging off my toe...frostbite"

which was probably the worst start to any expedition you could imagine, which very nearly meant the end of the challenge.

I was also saying earlier that it's 24 hour sunlight on Denali, and after the crevasse fall, after I was rescued, I realised that I wanted to get on and off the mountain, as quickly as possible. Matt and I weren't working to a 24 hour day that we'd have here, we would just climb to a camp, or to where we wanted to set camp, we'd get there and melt snow to drink and eat, then we'd sleep, when we'd wake up we'd just climb again, so we were just climbing really hard.

The year before, I summited in 22 days, this year in the challenge, Matt and I summited in 9 days. We worked really hard but had we not worked as hard as we did we wouldn't have summited because we were the very last people to summit this season which is pretty cool!

Another thing as well about Denali is, this year has been one of the worst years on the mountain for deaths, 7 people died on the mountain, which is pretty scary as well.



Left; The toe! Taken after Denali, this is the frostbite that nearly ended Richard's dream. It was so serious, there were suggestions that it may have been amputated.



Left; The trek to Everest. Battling the potential of altitude sickness due to arriving late on the mountain, Richard and team make their way toward the summit - The Death Zone.



“At the checkpoints were Russian soldiers with machine guns”

Isabelle Allen - Did you have any funny, or even dangerous, experiences on Denali?

The crevasse fall was the most dangerous experience I've ever had, I think. I fell 6 or 7 meters into the crevasse and my fall was only broken by landing on a ledge half way down the crevasse.

I wasn't able to climb out of the crevasse because the rope had cut into the snow bridge, my sled was pulling me back down further into the crevasse and as the sun got warmer in the day, the crevasse started to melt and drip onto me, so I was soaking wet and very cold after about 10/15 minutes.

I was actually stuck down there for an hour and a half while Matt, my climbing partner, and another team of American climbers helped me out, that was probably the scariest and most dangerous bit of that particular climb.

The funny bits were, every day I had to change the bandage on my toe and Matt, my climbing partner, was pretty grossed out by

THE BIG INTERVIEW 7 - YRS

Cooking breakfasts on Denali and dodging terrorists in Russia - amazing tales!

that every night, I had to do it after dinner, so we'd eat first and then I had to change it. We had a cook off as well, we took it in turns to cook in the tent and every night we'd argue whose cooking was the best and which food was the best.

Matt still thinks his chilli con carne and fajitas were the best, I think my full English breakfast was the best, I had bacon and sausage out there. Each mountain we took one

luxury, weight was very important so everything had to be very light, and on Denali, because I was pretty tired and I'd lost a lot of weight by then, the luxury that I took was better food.

Mary Buckland - What was it like climbing Mount Elbrus compared to the other mountains that you had climbed?

Every mountain was different, but Elbrus was slightly bizarre because getting to Elbrus was very difficult. Mount Elbrus is on the border of Russia with North Ossetia, it's an area that's very hostile. Just before we'd arrived there, terrorists had shot three tourists so we had to change where we were going to climb from.

We were originally going to climb from the South side, we had to change our plans very last minute to climb from the North side. It was pretty scary, we had to go through check points, and when we were waiting at these

check points there were Russian soldiers with machine guns, while they checked our passports, so it was a pretty scary place.

In some ways it helped me, because normally people climb it in 9 to 15 days, but by this point I was really homesick, I was really tired, my toe was really painful and I didn't want to get shot so Matt and I climbed it in two days, we were up and off it as quickly as possible. The actual mountain was pretty boring actually, but it was probably the most amazing sunrise I'd ever seen in my life and still a memory that's very special to me.

Michael Walters - What state was your body in on Elbrus, did you ever think you would have to give up?

By the time I got to Elbrus by body was pretty beaten up.

My toe was incredibly painful, the most painful thing I've ever had to go through. My knees were pretty painful, obviously my shoulder was sore, I was tired, absolutely shattered.

I'd lost just under 20kg throughout the whole challenge so I was very light, I was around 78/79kg by that point and I just desperately wanted to finish, I desperately wanted to go home as well, I was really homesick.

I never thought of giving up, no. Especially not that late on, it was very close to the end at that point.



Left; Richard on top of Mt Elbrus, a genuine World Record Breaker.

Right; GAME OVER! On top of the highest point in Europe, Richard knows that it's all over. But now the hard bit begins - raising the money!



THE BIG INTERVIEW 8 - YRS

Richard explains how a quote from his Grandmother's funeral gave him inspiration.

Dylan MacGregor - What was the hardest summit you did and why?

Denali. I was in a lot of pain with my frost bitten toe. On the first day of the expedition I had a really bad fall into the crevasse, and because we were so late in the season we had to climb it very quickly.

Denali is very different to Everest but it's equally tough as well, obviously I was really tired by this point having just come off Everest, so it made it tougher.

In fact Denali has a bigger altitude gain from base camp to summit than Everest.

Matthew Richards - Is there anything you would've changed or done differently about the whole challenge?

Well, this might sound complicated so forgive me. There are a few things that I would do differently, however I did it the only way I could've done it. What I mean by that is not the climbing but, as you can imagine, a lot of work went into the planning and preparation and getting sponsorship and fundraising.

I've learnt a lot with this project and I would do things differently the next time round, but I wasn't able to do it differently now because I didn't have a pedigree, if you understand what I mean, because I'd never done it before. When I was going around companies asking them to sponsor me, it was very difficult because not many people believed I could do it.

Whereas now, I've done it, if I went to companies saying I want to do something

similar, they would believe me, they'd think I'd have a better chance of doing it. So I couldn't have done anything differently, but I would do things differently next time. That's the thing though I think, the most important person is yourself, if you believe you can do something, it doesn't matter what other people say or think, the most important thing is whether you believe it.

Zackery Whitehouse - What were your emotions when you reached Mount Elbrus and the ends of the challenge?

You know what it was really strange. People think I would've been really excited, or happy, but I wasn't. I was happy, I was relieved, grateful, but it didn't feel any different to any of the other mountains, actually standing on the summit.

In fact, I'm still thinking, remembering and processing everything now, I haven't really had the opportunity to think a lot about it, I'm sure one day soon I will. I don't see the challenge as finished yet, although the physical climbing is finished, I'm very passionate about raising money for Marie Curie, the cancer charity, and I don't see



"The horizon is only the limit of our sight"

the challenge as finished yet until July next year, until I've finished working for Marie Curie, so I've not allowed myself that luxury to relax and think.

Sam Cousins - What inspired you to do the actual Seven Three Seven Challenge, and would you ever do anything like it ever again?

Yes I would. I have ideas to do similar projects in the future. I'm very grateful that as a result of the 737 Challenge I've found a sport and a lifestyle that I love doing and I can earn a living like rugby, so I'm very grateful for that.

My inspiration came from a sentence from my Grandmother's funeral, 'The horizon is only the limit of our site,' that combined with a book I was reading at the time by Sir Ranulph Feinnes, gave me the idea and the courage to channel my energies and all my emotion around being really upset about having to retire from rugby, into something positive.

"Denali has a bigger altitude gain from base to summit than Everest"



Above; Richard with Welsh Flag, stands proudly above Elbrus



WHAT THE CHILDREN THOUGHT - YR6

They were all asked the question “What were your feelings when you met Richard Parks?” Here Goes!



Isobel Bass

On the day that he came in, I felt really excited because I had never really met a famous person before. When I saw him I could hardly speak because knowing that the person that was right in front of me had done something that amazing as he had done, the only word in my head and that I could think of was WOW because I just couldn't get my head round who was in front of me! How would you feel if someone who had done something as amazing as this? how would you react?

Sophie Donne

I felt scared because all i knew about Richard Parks was what Mr Brayley told us about him. Richard Parks brought in some stuff he used in the 737 challenge it was really good. It was a really good day.

Zac Spackman

Most of our class were excited, but on the day I felt nervous. But when i met him I found him really normal and friendly. The impression that is have on Richard Parks is that he's a inspiration to young children and adults, how on earth he did the 737 challenge? I like the way he is a type of person that you can walk up to in the street and just say hello. Richard Parks has inspired me to never give up even if you have a a frost bitten toe! If i could ask him one more question it would be “if you could do the 737 Challenge again, what would you change?” That day was a great opportunity to meet Richard Parks!

Nicky Howells

My feelings when he came in to our school and spoke to us about the 737 Challenge were that I felt amazed to see him at our school and to sit by Richard and to speak to him. The day before Richard came into our school we did a charity run to help him raise money for Marie Curie. I thought that Richard did really well at our school and I hope he comes again to our school, because I have got another question for him and my question is, “Would you do the 737 Challenge again?”

Megan John

Most of our class were excite but on that day I felt nervous. But when i met him i found him really normal and friendly. The impression

that is set on Richard Parks is that he's a inspiration to young children and adults, how on earth he did the 737 challenge! I like the way he is a type of person that you can walk up to in the street and just say hello. Richard Parks has inspired me to never give up even if you have a a frost bitten toe! If i could ask him 1 more question it would be if you could do the 737 challenge again what would you change? That day was a great opportunity to meet Richard Parks!

Aaron Price

My feeling was when I heard Richard Parks come through the door was that I had to go and see if he was actually here. If I was at Mount Everest with Richard Parks and if I saw his toe the way that it was, i think I would have to go back to my house because I wouldn't feel safe when he had frost bite. Before he came in, I heard that he used to play for Wales and Newport Gwent Dragons. He even used to be hairy, but now he has hardly anymore hair left.

Aimee Gronow

My feelings when I saw Richard were good feelings because he looked like a friendly and kind person. I think of him as a person that is kind hearted and a friendly person. I think Richard inspired people and us to want to try new things in the world such as what Richard did. I just think it is amazing what he did for charity. I think that Richard is kind to give all the money to charity i mean he didn't have to give it to his charity, did he? I think the charity run we did was a good idea because we were helping the man who was brave enough to do the 737 Challenge with out giving up once. So that's why i and other people like him because he is very kind.



Richard inspired me never to give up - even if you've got a frost bitten toe!

WHAT THE CHILDREN 'THOUGHT' - YR6

Andrew Griffiths

I felt amazing when Richard Parks came in, I was really excited because of what he's done. He is really amazing, not many people can do what he did! I think what Richard Parks has done is great because it takes a lot of training and hard work. You have to work hard just to do the training part of the Challenge! Not many people realise how much work he has to do, lots of people don't realise the scale of the challenge and I think we all should!

Ben Allan

On the day I felt excited to see him and once I heard Richard's story I was very excited. When we questioned him I think everyone was nervous but thrilled by him and everyone was ready to ask away and my question was "What was the most scary moment in your childhood?" and his answer was "Probably when I was dirt biking but I lost my sponsor when I was 9".

Richard Parks was very inspirational because he was qualified to do so much like a dentist, a rugby player and a climber and to achieve this much in his life at a young age is really good.

And we also did a charity run which I took part in. The aim was to reach £100 but we did even better we raised £130 and we gave it to Richard Parks charity and his Marie Curie charity which helps cancer and we were all happy to give it to the charity because it is a good cause.

Ella Scoberg

I really liked it when Richard Parks came to our school, because he is a professional climber that inspires people to make dreams come true. I'm also inspired by him because I love climbing! It was strange that somebody famous was in our school! Sometimes people who are famous are not as pleasant as Richard, I think he is a good, kind man. Everyone was shouting "Richard Parks is here Ahhhhh!"

After all I had heard, I was so excited I had butterflies in my tummy! It went better than I imagined. My favourite bit was the equipment that he brought in. He brought in bags that you had to pick up your poo with! We put on big puffy gloves and tried to tie our laces. It was an unbelievable achievement that he has done. I'm proud to be Welsh! He must have felt tired

and amazed at what he had achieved. It was the best day ever!

Georgia Rees

When I first heard about Richard Parks, I was amazed by what he'd done but I wasn't that interested. But after I had learnt more about him, I grew to know him as a very inspirational person and I started to wonder how he had done it? Didn't he miss his family? How long was he away? What did he feel like? Did he feel like he was on a horrible holiday that would never end?

I started to feel like I wanted to do it too and I started wondering if I could ever do something like that. In the end I did, I climbed Pen-y-fan, one of the Brecon Beacon Mountains. I know it wasn't much but it was pretty big. While I was up there I found out that climbing a mountain isn't easy, although it is fun, it's scary and exhausting.

I learnt that it is a once in a life time experience and that Richard is a brave person to have done something like that. I know what I did wasn't even half of what Richard Parks has done, but for me it was an amazing achievement that was very big to me and it's all thanks to Richard Parks.

My impressions of Richard have changed since I first heard about him because now I see him as an influential person instead of just someone who climbs mountains.

Some famous people are not pleasant...I think Richard is a good, kind man



WHAT THE CHILDREN THOUGHT - YR6



Jake Thomas

If there was going to be another time in the future that Richard Parks came again the questions I would ask him would be "How did you do it?" Because it was definitely tiring for him, and, "What was the hardest point of his journey?" Because he had frost bite and he fell in a crevasses and he had to put his excrement in a bag, so it must of been hard for him. I would also ask him, "Would you ever do something similar and if so what would you change to make it a better experience?" Because he may want to raise more money for Mary Curie so he can feel very good about himself and finally "Who inspired Richard Parks?" because he didn't just wake up and say, "I'm going to do the 737 challenge." Someone must have inspired him, so those are the questions I would ask him.

Molly Thomas

I felt really excited when Richard came in and I felt gob smacked. I was really lifted up because he is a very big inspiration for me because I love climbing. Me and my friends kept running in from the playground and running back out. That is how much I was inspired by him. Richard is a really nice man, very kind and generous, so I would love to just take a glimpse and watch videos of him doing the 737 challenge and pictures of him again. It was really nice to see a famous person in our school because then everybody got a chance to meet him. I love climbing gargantuan heights and it is one of the things I want to do when I'm older. I think that Richard is very brave accomplishing the 737 Challenge because its about time a hero like him has done that challenge in less then a year. And it also takes a lot of effort for training and exercise in this competition. In our class, we did a sponsored run to raise money for Richard Parks' charity 'Marie Curie' which is for cancer. When he came in we gave him a cheque of a £100.00 from only year 6 being sponsored for the charity run! If I had to ask him one question it would be; Did you enjoy the 737 Challenge and if so what was your favourite part? I hope he enjoyed coming into our school because we certainly enjoyed him coming in.

Sian Waters

When I went downstairs that morning, at home, I was so excited.

Then, when I got to school everyone was jumping up and down waiting to see Richard Parks. A few girls felt sick when they knew Richard Parks was almost in school. They were screaming 'HE IS HERE!'

Richard Parks is inspirational, a great person and greatly loved by everyone. He is an inspiration to everyone. I found Richard Parks inspirational, to me, because he did so many good things like climb Mount Everest and all the other mountains. Also doing it for Marie Curie Cancer Care and then getting sponsored.

When Richard Parks almost lost his big toe, he must have been horrified and might have thought that this accident would wreck his life! When I saw his toe I felt sick! and so did everybody else. The mountains that he climbed are: Everest, Mount Vinson, Elberus, Aconcagua, Kilimanjaro, Carstensz Pyramid and Denali. When he climbed them and came into school, it was like some sort of miracle that nobody would ever think of dreaming about. When Richard Parks brought in his equipment everyone was excited to see what he brought in. He brought:

1. A helmet,
2. Some long rope,
3. A pair of boots,
4. 2 pairs of gloves,
5. Snow shoes,
6. Cramp- ons,
7. A poop bag.



When
Richard Parks
almost lost his big
toe, he must have
been horrified

WHAT THE CHILDREN 'THOUGHT' - YR6

Evie Gibbins

My feelings were on the day that I was excited to meet him. I couldn't believe it when he was here. I really wanted to see what he looked like, and what his personality was like. My first impression of Richard Parks was he was tall! He was not what I was expecting. When he was asking questions he was really polite and kind. Richard Parks was very inspirational for me because when he climbed all the mountains, I really want to climb Mount Everest when I'm older. I am amazed on what he had accomplished, I thought it was amazing what he did, I would never be able to climb all of those mountains. Before he came we did a charity run to help him raise 1 million pounds for his charity ' Marie Curie.'

Molly Quick

I felt inspired when I heard Richard's story about doing it for his Dad and Grandma because they had cancer so it was a big thing if he did not complete his Challenge but he did more than that. His enthusiasm helped his journey. The journey depended on his life, actually that happened at one point he had a frost bite on his big toe that almost took a bite out of his adventure. My feelings on seeing Richard just said to me he was and still is a hero. He could teach every one on how to be a hero, he can do anything. I found Richard inspirational because he had done something nobody normal would do, so it stood out to me. In school we did a charity run. I took part in it because if Richard can do 7 mountains in 7 months, the least I can do is do a run around the school field a couple of times.

Nathan Howells

I was very gutted because I was ill the day Richard Parks came to school. I reckon it was a hard experience for him because Richard had to know the risks and danger like frost bite hypothermia and how steep the the mountains were. When I went up PenyFan, I thought it was very hard.

Olivia B-Cook

When I saw Richard Parks I was amazed. I saw him when I was going to put my coat up in the cloakroom, I was so scared. He looked really scary and hairy, tall, he also looked very interesting.

The impressions of Richard Parks were as I

said, he was scary and hairy but when I spoke to him I was scared at first, but when I spoke to him he was ok and was lovely and kind because when our class was coming up, I was really nervous, but when I spoke to him he was really nice. He was also was very interesting. What was very amazing is that he is the only living soul living on this planet that did the 737 Challenge in the time that he tried to beat. I was so amazed when I saw him. The day that I met him was my best day in school.

Rhys Davies

When Richard came down the corridor it was like a dream happening it was like every body sensed he was coming. When he came in to class, every one was smiling. When he spoke every one probably wanted to scream. So then he told us all about his trip on the 737 Challenge, he said it was really hard work. It's called the 737 Challenge because he did it in just under 7 months. On Mount Everest he had frostbite on his toe and he nearly had to have it cut off and he showed us a picture of his toe it was disgusting. We were asking him questions, he even asked us some questions then we went up to the hall to ask him our ultimate question. Mine was "What was your favourite teacher that inspired you?"

Then he showed us all his kit and someone took a photograph of us. I was one of them we saw in his kit, it was cool. His gloves and boots were massive.

Abbie Powell

On the day that he came in I felt really excited because I had never really met a famous person before.

When I saw him I could hardly speak because knowing that the person that was right in front of me had done something that amazing as he had done, the only word in my head and that I could think of was "WOW" because I just couldn't get my head round who was in front of me!

How would you feel if someone who had done something as amazing as this how would you react?



WHAT THE CHILDREN THOUGHT - YR6



Holly Edwards

When I first saw Richard Parks I was excited and scared, because I've never met anybody that has ever achieved the 737 Challenge. My first impression of Richard was he was a nice, warm, kind hearted person who is very hairy. I found Richard inspirational because I want to be, a dentist when I'm older but, I don't think I would have the experience but now, I will train like mad to be a dentist.

My thoughts on the things Richard has achieved, was that I was really glad he finished the 737 Challenge and didn't die and the main thing was that he raised the money for the charity Marie Curie, (and to be honest i would like him to be my big brother).



Nia Thomas

When I got to school on the day Richard Parks came in, all you could hear were the other people from my class saying (or in their case, screaming) "He's here! He's here!" This made me really excited and certainly everyone else! When it came to meeting Richard Parks, I started to get butterflies because I didn't know what he would be like. After a while, my butterflies had gone.

He acted like an average person, proud of what he did. When Richard showed us a video of his challenge, it made me feel inspired. He also chose a charity to give all the money to which was Marie Curie Cancer Care. We all knew this, but we didn't know why. We soon knew when we were shown a slideshow. He chose Marie Curie as his charity because his Dad and his Gran had cancer.



I enjoyed the film of Richard Parks doing the challenge. It was called the 737 Challenge. This was because Richard climbed 7 mountains and 3 poles in just under 7 months. The seven mountains were; Elbrus, Kilimanjaro, Vinson, Denali, Carstensz Pyramid, Aconcagua and Everest. The 3 poles were; Everest, North and South. I was absolutely amazed that he managed to do all of it. I definitely wouldn't be able to do it no matter how old I am!

I didn't want Richard's visit to end, but it had to. It was really sad to see him go thinking I might not see him again. Still, I really enjoyed his visit and would love Richard to come again. If he did, I would ask him, "How are you doing?"

And have you done any more exciting adventures?"

Cerys Thomas

The day I met Richard parks was really scary, but I was happy because I was meeting a person that raised money for other people and wouldn't stop until he had done it because he was a kind and caring man and one of his family members had cancer but Marie Curie charity cured it so that's why he cared so much about that charity.

Meeting Richard Parks was a life time opportunity because he cured a lot of people and he did the 737 Challenge for lots of money towards Marie Curie Charity and then we did a sponsored run to raise some more money for Richard Parks.

Alex Pennock

Most of our class were excited but on that day I felt nervous. But when I met him I found him really normal and friendly. The impression that I get from Richard Parks is that he's an inspiration to young children and adults, how on earth he did do the 737 Challenge! I like the way he is a type of person that you can walk up to in the street and just say hello.

Richard Parks has inspired me to never give up even if you have a frost bitten toe! If I could ask him one more question it would be if you could do the 737 Challenge again what would you change? That day was a great opportunity to meet Richard Parks!



"I didn't want
Richard's visit to
end, but it had to!"

WHAT THE CHILDREN THOUGHT - YR6

Ben Jones

My feelings on Richard Parks were really nervous but I was really excited to have the experience of meeting a world record holder and a professional rugby player.

He was very loving because he raised a million pound for Mari Curie cancer. My first impressions of Richard Parks was quite scary at first but when I started to talk to him I found out that he was a very nice person who wasn't scary at all.

I really enjoyed him coming in to school with all of his things on his journey up all of the famous mountains.

Isobel Bass

My first impressions of Richard Parks when I saw him were "Wow."

I was so excited about actually meeting him and I knew that my whole class were too. I could feel the excitement in the air.

When I asked him my question, I just wanted to ask him loads more about him and I liked how he gave lots of information about the questions all of us asked.

He is an extremely inspirational person, especially by the fact that he risked death for charity. If I met him again the one question I would ask him would be, "How are you?" Because famous people sometimes get a bit angry when all people do is ask them for autographs and other things.

I would probably ask him if he had raised the whole amount of money he wanted to.

Kaylee White

When Richard came to talk to us, I felt happy and amazing that I could actually talk to him. I was scared at the same time because he was a little bit tall.

My first impression of Richard was scary and nice at the same time but he was friendly and it was great to talk to him.

My question to Richard was "What did you feel like when you did the 737 Challenge?"

Ollie James

My question to Richard Parks was; How did you feel when you won the Arthur Boucher award for the most promising player at Newport?

The second question I asked him for Nathan was; What are your memories of winning the Principality Cup?

His answer to number one was that winning the Arthur Boucher award was one of the most surreal moments of his life but it was so many years ago that he couldn't remember much.

His answer to number two was winning the Principality was really good for him as much as the rest of the team back then.

It was amazing meeting Richard Parks because he has had one of the biggest achievements in history to succeed the 737 Challenge.

It was even better to speak to him and learn about him in such detail. He arrived when I was in breakfast club and everyone was screaming and I was wondering what was going on, then I saw Richard so I started screaming too!

Now he has inspired me to be more brave at things.

I asked him about Arthur Boucher and he was astonished to hear that people still remember about it. It was a thrilling experience and I will always remember it!

"Richard is an extremely inspirational person, especially because he risked his life for charity."



The Adventures of Henry - A story by Callum Everest, inspired by his meeting with Richard Parks

Do you ever wonder what it would be like to be an explorer?

Henry Higglestomf and his friends, Jack and Peter sat under a tree reading a book called 'Indiana Jones and the Curse of the Crystal Skull.' Henry had ginger hair, blue eyes and glasses to help him read. Jack was the tallest so he was the leader of the group. "The 'Reading Rebels" they called themselves and Peter, well he was their supplier. He got any book he liked. (But not from stealing of course, his dad was a librarian so he could borrow any book he wanted.)

When they were walking down the street, Henry realised he had left his book by the tree. As lazy as he was, Peter said Henry had to go get it because it was a rental. When Henry got there he saw a dark muddy hole below him. With out thinking he wedged his head in and had a look around. The ground shook. Henry was terrified. He wiggled his head back and forth but that made it worse.

Struggling for survival, he found himself lying on a glass floor. Henry looked up. He was in some sort of glass cage. Now, Henry was claustrophobic so this was not the best of places. "Help! Help!" he screamed. But he was trapped. Suddenly, the lights came on. Henry stood up, and in astonishment he looked up and said to himself "This glass cage is a lift." Looking around, he saw some golden buttons. M.D, M.K.J, M.K.P, U.D and M.E. Without thinking, he pressed M.E. thinking it was Mali Estate. Speeding at 200mph he shot out the ground like a bullet from a gun. He looked to the sides but everything was so blurry. Suddenly the lift stopped and he fell to the ground with a thud! He looked up and he saw a box on the roof of the elevator and a parachute popped out of it. Slowly but surely the elevator dropped to the floor.

When Henry decided to get up. He walked to the doors. Henry went to open them. He placed his hands on the doors. "They're f-f-freeezzing!" he yelled. He had no luck anyway the doors were frozen shut. He

remembered the box, Henry tried to climb out but he couldn't move the box.

Suddenly there was a ping! Henry turned around-the doors were open. Cautiously, he stepped outside. He had a look around. There was a sea of snow surrounding him. In front of him was nature's beast. "Now I know what M.E stands for: Mount Everest."

Up above, the clouds were soldiers guarding Mount Everest. He could feel the icy wind tickling his cheeks. As he walked forward Henry could hear the snow crunching beneath his feet. "Oh no I'm gonna be stuck here forever!" he screamed. But then he thought about it. "I've wanted to be an explorer all my life. I have travelled by lift at 200mph and I'm standing in front of mount Everest."

Henry decided to go on but he knew that he needed the right equipment. He stepped back inside the elevator and had a look around. In the corner, there was a bright blue case. When he opened the case inside was a dark red suit, some spiky cleats, a pick axe, thick yellow rope and some cutlery. "Why on earth is there a fork, a knife and a spoon?" Henry muttered to himself. Putting on the suit Henry whined "This suit is too big." then some how the knife turned into a very sharp blade. "I'll use the knife to cut the suit to size." When putting on the cleats, a few spikes broke but then the fork transformed into a new pair of cleats. "This day is getting weirder and weirder. Mmm... Then I wonder what the spoon is then?" Holding it in his hand it grew 10 times bigger "Oh it's a spade." Taking all the equipment he started to climb Everest.

Half way up he could see the very peak of his destination. But then he stopped. He heard something running around in the snow. He turned around. And there in the snow was an abominable snowman "ARRRRRRGGGGGHHHHHH!" he screamed.

Luckily for him he was at a base camp the the surface was flat. When he tried to run away he fell over and banged his head. He was knocked out cold. Was this the end of Henry...?



Callum's inspiration

These pictures are of Richard during his climb to the summit of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain. It was Richard's tales of his time battling this great peak that inspired Callum to write such an excellent story.



A Wish Come True - A story by Jade Roberts, inspired by Everest and Richard Parks

Have you ever wished to be an explorer? Zak did, Zak was a ten year old boy who he loved asking questions and reading. Early one fine day, Zak was sitting on a deck chair on Brighton beach, "I'm bored now," Zak whispered to himself. His mum heard him and shouted "Why don't you make a sand castle?"

"Okay," he groaned. He started making it then he turned around to pick up some more soggy sand. He picked up some more, he then saw little pieces of steel. It was a lift. By the side of it was a little button he couldn't make out what the writing said by the side of it but he pressed it anyway.

"BANG!"

Zak was suddenly little-as small as an ant. The lift doors slowly opened. Quickly, he walked in. "BOOM!" the big steel doors snapped together like a crocodile's mouth. Green and red buttons were scattered everywhere it was like somebody had chucked them all over the place. The little buttons were codes. One was named Eve another was Den and many, many more. Slowly, Zak's finger crept towards the button that was labeled Eve. All of a sudden he fell forwards and pushed the button.

"WHOOSH!" the lift went up as fast as the fastest Cheeter in the world, half an hour went by Zak was holding onto the metal bar for dear life. "BING!" the lift stopped, the big steal doors opened with a creak, a big gust of wind blew into the lift, Zak was shaking, it was so foggy Zak tried to clear the fog away. Eventually, the fog cleared away and there was the best mountain ever.

"I know what mountain that is. It's ..." before he could say "it's Everest" a beautiful girl jumped out and shouted "It's Everest," Zak jumped , he shouted "Who are you?"

"I'm Emily Jones, who are you?" she asked politely he stood up straight and said "I'm Zak Powell please to meet you, my lady," As all of this was going on, the big, humongous mountain was just standing there. The wind was whistling, the top of the mountain was as sharp as a carving knife. Carefully and slowly Zak walked out of the lift.

The snow was crunching underneath Zak and Emily's feet, Emily's dark long hair was blowing in the breeze. "Shall we climb the mountain?" whispered Emily "But we don't have any equipment," stuttered Zak

"Yes we do," yelled Emily

"How?" snapped Zak

"Follow me!" she shouted, they started walking to the edge of the mountain. There, laying on the snow were two thick, warm and chunky coats, trousers, sacks and boots.

"What are these ?" asked Emily

"They're these things that attach to your shoes to give you grip on the snow," Zak Sputtered

"Let's do this!" Emily yelled they started putting on the equipment ten started climbing the mountain.

"Come on!" shouted Emily "You big slow coach," she yelled

"It's hard!" whined Zak

"I can do it and I'm a girl come on!" she yelled.

A few hours past and Emily and Zak were nearly to the summit. All of a sudden Emily slipped into a hole, Zak tried to help her up but he couldn't then somebody held onto Zak and pulled him and Emily up they turned around and saw a big, tall and fit man his beard had snow on it and he then shouted "I'm Richard Parks."

"I know who are you, I love you!" she blushed

"Oh, thank you," he whispered. They started walking up the mountain, then they reached a camp, Emily asked Richard "Can we stay here for a while ?"

"Yes, we can have a little talk then," he replied

They sat down in a tent and asked why he was climbing the mountain all by himself. Zak told Richard what happened at the beach, the lift and how he met Emily. Emily's story was kind of the same as Zak's. After they had finished they started climbing to the summit "One more step!" yelled Richard.

They reached the summit "It's freezing up here!" whined Zak. The snow on top of the mountain was like icing on top of a bun. They sat down. They slid down the mountain and fell into the lift and they were back home.

THE WISH CAME TRUE !



The Story

Left;
Is that Richard, Zak and Emily climbing to the top of Everest?

Right;
Richard Parks, the inspiration for Jade's story, standing at the top of Everest.



CASLLWCHWR PRIMARY

Would like to thank Richard Parks for his help and support in producing this magazine

When we set out on producing this magazine, we wanted to ensure that the children of Casllwchwr would receive a quality, permanent reminder of the day that they met Richard Parks. In addition to that, we wanted to showcase the work of the children, which we feel has been achieved. The fact remains that without their hard work in first learning and researching Richard's life and incredible journey, and then in the interviews of Richard before finally recording their feelings on meeting him, then quite simply, this magazine would not exist without them.

So, to all the children of Casllwchwr who took part in the work that has filled this magazine so well, thank you - you should all be very proud of yourselves.

The photographs

All the photographs reproduced in this magazine of Richard and his remarkable journey have been reprinted by kind permission of Richard, Tracy Pinder and all at his 737 Challenge organisation.

Despite how romantic and inspiring Richard's journey was, there was a very serious and practical reason behind it - raising money for an extremely worthwhile cause, Marie Curie Cancer Care.

A year on from his incredible success in becoming the first man in history to climb the highest peak on each of the earth's seven continents, visiting the earth's three poles, and all in less than seven months - hence 737 - Richard has continued to work extremely hard to reach his target of raising £1million for Marie Curie.

If this magazine has inspired you to consider raising money for Richard's chosen cause, please visit his website at www.737challenge.com where you will not only find further details on Richard and his challenge, but also how to donate.

If you just wish to donate something without finding out any more about the Challenge, then please visit www.justgiving.com/RichardParks737Challenge where you will be able to donate securely on line.

Thank you Richard

Without being too dramatic, we currently live in a world where there seem to be few heroes than at any time in the past. Sometimes, it seems harder than ever to find the correct role models to hold up to our children of examples of the people that they should aspire to be.

With the hollywood glitz, glamour and excess flooding our television screens, a man like Richard Parks strides amongst these "celebrities" like a colossus. The day he visited the school, he bonded with staff and pupils within minutes. By the end of his visit, children were talking about becoming rock climbers, mountaineers and fund raisers.

Richard is a person who puts himself out, but doesn't expect thanks, his story reinforced to the children that the only way to achieve anything in life is by hard work, no short cuts, just work hard and success will usually follow. He has endured so many set backs in his life,



"The horizon is only the limit of our sight"

but has refused to be put off by them, and he taught the children that the only option is to dust yourself down and get on with it. He made an enormously positive impact on the children.

Fittingly, the last word should go to Richard, when he answered probably the toughest question of all. The rugby World Cup was on when he visited, and his passion for Wales and rugby remains undiminished, so after he was asked this question by

Melissa Samuels, it meant so much

to him, that it took him over a minute of deep thought to respond;

If you could get your shoulder fixed, would you have preferred to have played rugby in the Rugby World Cup or to have done the Seven Three Seven Challenge?

"That's an amazingly difficult question
.....wow.....no, I'd rather be here now. I love rugby and I loved rugby. I never played in a Rugby World Cup, I was a reserve to go to the World Cup, and that's one thing in my career that I really wish I'd done, I really wish I'd played in a World Cup. But I really love where I am now, I'm the happiest I've ever been in my life, so I'd rather be here now. With all of you."

Richard Parks

For more information on Richard and his remarkable 737 Challenge, visit www.737challenge.com

You can also follow Richard's current adventures on twitter by following him on @737Challenge

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PARKS 737 MAGAZINE

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