



KEVIN GASKELL

ADVENTURES

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I grew up in North Wales, UK, where the land and the sea meets the mountains. For as long as I can remember, my happiest times were when I was challenging myself to reach the peaks of mountains or exploring the wild places around the shores. This is where I get my relaxation and do my best thinking – where the wifi is weak, far away from the businesses. As I have grown, so have my adventures. Each one of them teaches me something new about people, determination and efficient implementation. Some are listed below.



In an open eight metre rowing boat, the Ocean5 crew of Sam Coxon, Matt Gaskell, Chris Hodgson, Will Hollingshead and I rowed unsupported across the Atlantic Ocean. We covered 3,000 miles across 100 million square miles of ocean between Spain and the Caribbean. Landing in Antigua after 35 days, 19 hours and 50 minutes of non-stop rowing we won our race and set the new World and Guinness record for the fastest ever 5 man crossing. This expedition, and the business lessons from it, form the basis of my latest book 'Catching Giants'.

Puncak Jaya or Carstensz Pyramid, is located on the island of New Guinea in the Sudirman Range of the western central highlands of Papua Province, Indonesia. It is one of the seven summits and with an elevation of 4,884 m (16,024 ft), is the highest mountain peak of an island on Earth. Matt and I were members of a four man team which trekked in through the Sudirman jungle before successfully summiting the peak. As we returned from the mountain, we found ourselves caught up in a separatist/militia gunfight which added a certain spice to the expedition.



CARSTENSZ PYRAMID

2017



WINTER MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND

2016

In order to gain skills and qualify for our planned assault on Carstensz Pyramid Matt and I climbed Ben Nevis (1,345 metres, 4,413 ft) and surrounding mountains during winter. The weather conditions made this a very tough time to climb the UK's highest mountains with strong winds, heavy snow and poor to zero visibility on the upper parts of the mountain. These conditions challenge even the most capable climbers and so they certainly tested us!

SWISS 4000M PEAKS

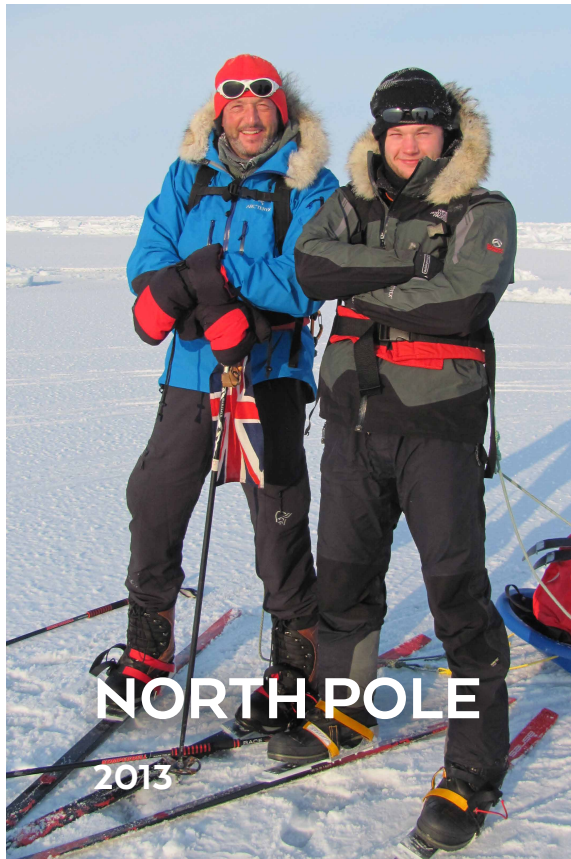
2014

Switzerland has 48 mountains above 4,000 metres (13,100 ft) of which 41 are located in the Valais Alps. Climbing 4000m peaks is one of the classic challenges of alpine mountaineering. Based in the Saas valley and areas such as Zermatt and Val D'Anniviers, this expedition was an enjoyable and varied tour of high ice peak climbing.

EXTREME CLASSROOMS EVEREST

2013

Acting as a mountain mentor, I supported Alan Chambers MBE (see www.alanchambers.co.uk) with his initiative to encourage youngsters with serious behavioural problems. The 'Highest classroom on Earth' selected students from special schools all over the country and invited them to embark on a life-changing challenge — trekking the Himalayas towards the world's highest mountain, Everest. It was a physically and emotionally testing expedition as the students were supported to develop their skills and confidence in conditions and situations which challenged them to their core. This expedition was filmed and broadcast by the BBC.



NORTH POLE

2013

I returned to the North Pole, this time with my son Matt who had been too young to attempt the trek when I first walked to 90 degrees north in 2006. It was a demanding traverse of the polar ice cap as conditions were poor and our team of four were frequently diverted by breaking ice and open water. After many detours we eventually reached the north pole (and no, there is no pole, or anything but ice, there).



SPAIN SKYDIVING

2013

Both of my children are keen skydivers and even though I have climbed a number of big mountains, they know that I struggle with heights. Obviously, they felt that this was the perfect reason to encourage me to adopt skydiving as a new hobby. After the initial wobbles I came to really enjoy the experience of freefalling and qualified as a fully-fledged skydiver.



ELBRUS

2011

Mount Elbrus is the highest mountain on the European continent. It is part of the Caucasus range and is situated on the southwestern side of Russia. One of the seven summits, Elbrus consists of two peaks, both of which are dormant volcanoes. The west summit is the highest at 5,642 metres (18,510 ft), whilst the east summit stands at 5,621 metres (18,442 ft). While this is not a particularly technical climb the weather was atrocious with heavy snow and 120 kph winds. Matt and I spent days trapped in our tents at 5,000 metres before heading for the summit.



KILIMANJARO

2009

Mount Kilimanjaro is a dormant volcano in Tanzania. It has three volcanic cones: Kibo, Mawenzi, and Shira. As the highest mountain in Africa, it is another of the seven summits and the highest single free-standing mountain above sea level in the world. At 5,895 metres (19,341 ft) and about 4,900 metres above its plateau base it is a majestic sight. Climbing with Alan Chambers MBE we ascended by the Rongai route.

SOUTH POLE

2008



The Antarctic interior is a vast, untouched desert visited by fewer than five hundred people each year. The traverse across 5 million square miles of blue ice in temperatures around minus 45C is a privilege. It was a very special experience to share the trek with my son Matt knowing that we were in one of the most remote places on Earth. Arriving at the South Pole base station is a weird transition as, after weeks alone, we were suddenly surrounded by engineers and scientists conducting deep space experiment. Fascinating.

SCOTLAND

2007



My son Matt and I set ourselves the challenge of crossing Scotland, east to west, by canoe and foot without following the usual Great Glen route. When we weren't able to paddle, we portaged (carried) and in some particularly steep areas, dragged the boat and all of our kit up and down some very big hills – to the amusement of the watching deer! A great way to see the beauty of Scotland (and get very, very wet).

NORTH POLE

2006

Pete Goss MBE is a friend of mine. He is a sailor and adventurer who is best known for doing extraordinary things in boats (<https://petegoss.com>). He had an idea to build a land yacht and sail it across the ice to the north pole. Realising that he needed to fully understand the arctic terrain he decided to walk there first and invited me to go along with him. Together with Alan Chambers MBE (am I the only one without an MBE?) a small team of us trekked across the arctic ice and reached the north pole. The land yacht has yet to follow!



EVEREST

2000

After years of climbing much smaller mountains I set myself the goal of exploring Everest. The majesty of the Himalayas and the sheer scale of the peaks was wonderful and confirmed for me that I would spend the rest of my days exploring the glorious mountains of the world and exploring the wildest places that I could find.