

British super swimmer conquers seven oceans

A SWIMMING coach has become the first Briton to complete the seven toughest ocean swims in the world.

Mr Adam Walker, 36, of Home Farm Close, Kelham, swam across the Irish Channel to become only the fourth person to complete the Oceans Seven challenge, and the second to complete every swim at the first attempt.

Mr Walker, who began his challenge in 2008, swam the Moloka'i Channel between two Hawaiian islands; the Catalina Channel between the island of Santa Catalina and California; the Cook Strait, New Zealand; the Strait of Gibraltar; the English Channel and the Tsugaru Channel, Japan.

Originally from Radcliffe, Mr Walker was a member of Bingham Swimming Club until his teens. He rediscovered his love for swimming in 2008 after deciding to swim the English Channel.

Mr Walker left Donaghadee from Robbies Point and ventured into the Irish Channel, which is infested with jellyfish.

"The Irish Channel is the toughest on paper with Lion's Mane jellyfish and hypothermia the two factors that stop most people crossing," he said.

"The temperature is only 12°C, too. A swimming pool is 29°C to put it into perspective.

"What I was not prepared for

By David Parker

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was quite how big the jellyfish can be. However, after a few stings, you realise their bark is worse than their bite."

The swim was straightforward until the last 3km when, after 8hrs 30mins, the current started to move him to the east, which meant no record was possible.

Mr Walker finished around two miles from the planned finish point at 5.30pm on Wednesday last week.

"On paper it is the hardest swim in the world, but I just treated it like any other swim and put one arm in front of the other and got across," he said.

He said he had much worse encounters on his previous swims.

"I have been stung by Portuguese Man O' War, which made me lose the feeling in my spine after more than 13 hours of swimming, and I had to carry on for over three hours in agony and almost paralysed," he said.

"I've also been chased by sharks. I've had everything thrown at me."

He said the challenge had changed his life.

"Seven years ago, I hadn't had a swim for ten years, I was overweight, I wasn't doing



● LEFT: Triumphant swimmer Mr Adam Walker.



● BELOW: During the challenge.

much sport and I was a little depressed," he said.

"Now I am classed as one of the best open-water swimmers in the world and I feel I can conquer anything.

"You can achieve anything in life if you want it bad enough.

"No matter what your dreams are, with hard work

and determination you can achieve them."

Mr Walker trained for his final challenge with six-hour swims in Loch Lomond, Scotland, and Cork, Ireland.

"I am ecstatic to finish seven out of seven swims on the first attempt," he said.

"I would like to thank everyone for all the support I have had over the past seven years to make this dream a reality.

"Without this, completing the challenge would not have been possible."

He said he would take a rest before deciding what to do for his next challenge.

"At the moment I'll rest my brain and my body but there's always swims out there and other challenges," he said.

"The next one will be one that no one has ever done.

"I will pick a country and pick a stretch of water and do it."

Mr Walker raised £7,000 for the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society during his challenges.

House raid reveals illegal cigarettes

A HOUSE in Newark has been raided by trading standards after reports it was being used to sell illegal cigarettes.

Nottinghamshire County Council trading standards officers seized ten packets of cigarettes.

They also confiscated 100 packets of cigarettes and 1kg of tobacco from a Worksop address.

The products are believed to be a mixture of counterfeit cigarettes and illicit whites (cigarettes produced for the black market).

Police arrested two men.

The council set up a task force in April to combat the problem of illicit cigarettes.

Mr Glynn Gilfoyle, chairman of its community safety committee, said: "The task force has so far concentrated on shops selling counterfeit cigarettes but we have widened the net by raiding these two houses in the county.

"We want to send out a clear message that whether you are a shop-keeper or a resident trading from your front door we will not tolerate the sale of counterfeit cigarettes."

Anyone with information about illegal cigarettes should contact the Citizens' Consumer Advice Service on 0800 555111.

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