

## BEAR GRYLLS... WHEN MAN MEETS WILD!

Host, author and seasoned adventurer Bear Grylls began a lifetime of exploration at an early age. Bear grew up on the Isle of Wight, and as a young boy would go mountain climbing with his father.

He served three years with the Special Air Service, a special forces unit of the British army. During his service, he broke his back in three places in a parachuting accident over Southern Africa. Despite the accident and severity of his injury, Bear went on in 1998 to become, at age 23, the youngest British climber to complete a summit and descent of Mount Everest. He wrote about his experience in the book, *The Kid Who Climbed Everest*.

Not content to slow down, Bear achieved another first when he and his Everest climbing group circumnavigated the United Kingdom on jet skis. He also led the first unassisted crossing of the frozen North Atlantic Ocean in an open rigid inflatable boat. His book about this adventure, *Facing the Frozen Ocean*, was shortlisted as the U.K.'s "Sports Book of the Year." Bear was awarded a commission in the Royal Navy in honor of leading this record-breaking expedition.

In June 2005, Bear broke a world record by hosting a dinner party at a table suspended below a hot air balloon at 24,500 feet. He rappelled from the balloon's basket to the table, where in full naval uniform he ate a three-course meal before saluting the queen and skydiving to earth. His goal was to support the work of two charities: the Prince's Trust and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Bear hosted a 2005 television series for the U.K.'s Channel Four, called *Escape to the Legion*, in which he took a group of young men to the Western Sahara Desert to undergo the French Foreign Legion's infamous basic training. A second Channel Four series, titled *Born Survivor: Bear Grylls*, completed its U.K. run in April 2007.

On May 15, 2007, Bear set another world record when he became the first person to fly over Mount Everest by powered paraglider. Supported by the GKN Mission Everest Team, Grylls and fellow pilot Giles (Gilo) Gardozo flew specially developed paramotors. Though a fault in Gilo's machine forced him to abort only 1,000 feet below the summit, Bear continued to ascend until he reached 29,500 feet and was able to look down on Everest as he circled above some of the most famous peaks in the Himalayas. Then his own engine developed problems and he, too, had to glide back to safety — but he had achieved his goal. The mission raised \$1 million for the Global Angels Foundation, a charity that supports children in Africa. Filmed by the *Planet Earth* team, Bear and Gilo's undertaking will be made into a two-hour documentary for Discovery Channel and Channel Four in the U.K.

Bear's most recent book, *Born Survivor: Survival Techniques From the Most Dangerous Places on Earth*, was released in spring 2007. It is already listed on the *Sunday Times* Top 10 Best-Seller List.

He has hosted the Discovery Channel's *Man vs Wild*, in which he strands himself in remote locations to demonstrate localized survival techniques, since November 2006.

Bear lives on a converted barge on the River Thames with his wife Shara and their young sons Jesse and Marmaduke.

Questions for students:

- Where did Bear's career begin?
- Where did he get his training?
- What was his first major achievement?
- What was his second career 'first'?
- I heard he also crossed the North Atlantic ocean. What's so special about that?
  
- What success did his book 'Facing the Frozen Ocean' achieve?
- What world record did he break?
  
- What was his first TV series?
- What was his second TV series? !

- What world record did he set in May 2007?
- What is his most recent book called?
- What Discovery Channel show does he host?

