

Jamie Andrew, Quadruple Amputee – Press Information

Background

Jamie was born on the 3rd August 1969 and brought up in Bearsden, just outside Glasgow. He went to school in Bearsden, then Glasgow, and left to study for a BEng in Electrical Engineering at Edinburgh University. After a brief spell at Bangor in North Wales to complete an MSc, he returned to Edinburgh and has lived there ever since.

In 1995 Jamie gave up engineering and took up a career as an Industrial Rope Access Technician, carrying out various maintenance and construction projects on high buildings and structures by means of abseil. Projects included building oil rigs, repairing viaducts, cleaning power stations and painting the Forth Rail Bridge [Photo 1].

He soon progressed to being a Team Leader, Safety Supervisor and Rope Access Trainer for an Edinburgh based rope access company.

Mountaineering 1986 – 1999

Jamie's great passion in life has always been mountaineering and he was an active mountaineer and rock climber for well over a decade, making many successful expeditions to mountain ranges and rock faces across Europe and throughout the world. He also made many first ascents of rock climbs in Scotland.

Climbs made included The Walker Spur on The Grandes Jorasses in The French Alps, The North Face of Cima Ovest in The Dolomites, The North Face of Piz Badille in Bregalia. In Yosemite Valley, California, The Nose on El Capitan, The North-West Face of Half Dome and The Prow on Washington Column. In South Africa The North Face of Dutoitsberg, and in Morocco all of the 4000m peaks of The Atlas Mountains.

During this period Jamie also did a lot of competitive hill running, skiing, and many other outdoor sports and he was the president of the Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club.

Summary of the Accident – January 1999

On Monday 25th January 1999, Jamie Andrew and his close friend, climbing partner and flatmate, Jamie Fisher, set out to make a winter ascent of the North Face of Les Droites in the French Alps. Les Droites (4000m) stands above the town of Chamonix in the French Alps and is part of the Mont Blanc mountain range. Its north face is a classic but very difficult climbing test-piece, particularly in winter conditions.

The pair made good progress and by the end of the second day had reached the summit ridge of the mountain. By then however an unexpected and extraordinarily fierce storm had hit the mountain and the pair were trapped on a tiny icy ledge near to the mountain summit.

For five nights the two Jamie's clung to survival, without food, warmth or shelter, waiting for a chance to escape.

On the morning of the 31st January the chance finally came. The ensuing helicopter rescue was one of the most spectacular in the history of the Alps and made news headlines around the world [Photo 2]. Tragically the rescue came too late for Jamie

Fisher. Jamie Andrew survived despite severe frostbite and hypothermia. Later in hospital, all of his hands and feet had to be amputated.

Rehabilitation 1999 – 2002

After his accident Jamie made a surprisingly swift recovery, the story of which has been described by many as inspirational. Within three and a half months he had learnt to walk on prosthetic legs [Photo 3] and had sufficiently re-learned everyday tasks such as washing, dressing and feeding to be able to leave hospital. Immediately he returned to full time work as a manager for the same rope access company he had worked for before the accident and was soon considered a valuable and fully productive member of the management team.

In June 2000 Jamie and his long term partner, Anna Wyatt, were married.

Sporting Achievements

Since the accident Jamie has participated in many sporting activities including swimming, running, skiing, snow-boarding [Photo 4], paragliding, caving, orienteering and sailing. But it was returning to mountaineering that was to provide the greatest goal and the biggest challenge.

To begin with, his local hills in and around Edinburgh and other small Scottish hills were testing enough. But in June 2000 he climbed Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, raising over £15,000 for charity in the process [Photo 5]. A 30 minute documentary, called Climb Back, was made of this ascent, screened on BBC Scotland and featured at the Kendal Mountaineering Film Festival.

Jamie also returned to active rock climbing and ice climbing and has climbed various routes in Scotland, England, Wales and France, including Little Chamonix (VDiff) [Photo 6], Christmas Curry (HS) [Photo 7], Bloody Chimney (VS), Left Twin (III), Ardverikie Wall (HS) and parts of the Cuillin Ridge of Skye.

In May 2001 he returned to Chamonix, and with one of his doctors and his rescuers, he climbed the Cosmiques Arete on L'Aiguille du Midi, subject of a 50 minute documentary for French television called Le Defi de Jamie, broadcast on France 3 and winner of several film festival awards.

In April 2002 Jamie ran the London Marathon, raising over £22,000 for charity on the way [Photo 8].

He returned to the Alps several times in 2002 and climbed several mountains including Mont Blanc du Tacul (4200m) and The Monch (4099m). He also made an attempt on Mont Blanc (4800m), Western Europe's highest mountain, but was forced to turn back just 300m below the summit due to closing bad weather.

In January 2004, Jamie and three other disabled mountaineers made an all-disabled ascent of Kilimajaro (5895m), the highest mountain in Africa. The ascent raised over £5,000 for a Tanzanian leprosy centre situated on the slopes of the mountain [Photo 9].

Charity Work, Honours and Other Achievements

Jamie has raised money for charity during all his major mountaineering and running projects and has so far raised a total of over £42,000. Good causes have included The British Red Cross, The Across Trust, The John Muir Trust and the Upendo Leprosy Centre [Photo 10].

In March 2003 Jamie travelled with the British Red Cross to war-torn Angola, to experience at first hand the plight of that country's many thousands of amputees, most of whom are victims of landmines and of the war.

In 2000 Jamie was awarded the RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) People of The Year Award. He was also presented the Junior Chamber of Commerce Young Scotland Personal Achievement Award.

From 2000 to 2003 he was the honorary president of Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club.

In 2002 he was the overall winner of the Lloyds TSB / Sunday Mail Great Scot Award. He also won the Peter Bird Trophy for determination and courage.

Writing and Public Speaking

In July 2001 Jamie left the company for which he was working to pursue personal projects.

His autobiography, *Life and Limb*, will be published in March 2004 by Piatkus Books. He has also written numerous articles about his adventures and experiences, published in *The Scotsman*, *The Observer*, *Scotland on Sunday*, *The Sunday Mail* and various climbing magazines.

Jamie regularly gives lectures, public speeches and motivational talks to companies, conferences, mountaineering clubs, schools and universities.

Jamie also runs a business, Jamie Andrew Equipment Supplies, which retails abseiling equipment to industrial rope access companies.

The Future

Jamie has achieved an incredible amount in the last few years, yet he still feels there is so much to achieve. He can cook a three course meal but he can't do up the top button of his shirt. He can wire a plug yet he can't hammer a nail. He can drive a car but not ride a bike. He wants to continue climbing mountains and to run more marathons. He wants to run a hundred metres in under twelve seconds and to travel the Arctic on skis.

Jamie always has fresh projects up his sleeve, however the arrival of his and Anna's first child in the spring of 2004 is likely to put a hold on all mountaineering activities for a while!

He wants to continue to write about his life, and to talk about it, in the hope of inspiring others, but most of all he wants to live a full, active and happy life.

Photos

The accompanying photographs may be used for publication providing they are credited to Jamie Andrew Collection, and they are used on a one time only basis.

Photo 1 – At work on a North Sea oil rig prior to the accident.

Photo 2 – A picture taken from a helicopter as the dramatic rescue takes place.

Photo 3 – First steps. Learning to walk again on prosthetic legs.

Photo 4 – Jamie snowboarding at Nevis Range in Scotland.

Photo 5 – On the ascent of Ben Nevis, June 2000.

Photo 6 – Little Chamonix, a climb in the English Lake District.

Photo 7 – Jamie climbs Christmas Curry on the cliffs of North Wales.

Photo 8 – Running the London Marathon in April 2002.

Photo 9 – The all-disabled team, on the summit of Kilimanjaro, January 2004.

Photo 10 – Jamie meets residents of the Upendo Leprosy Centre in Tanzania.