



# MODERN DAY CRUSADERS

WHAT DOES A PERSON NEED TO CHANGE THE WORLD? SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH, A GENIUS IQ, INCREDIBLE ENDURANCE OR MAYBE A COMPLETE LACK OF FEAR. IT MAY JUST BE A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY BUT WHAT THE FOLLOWING BRAVE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE IN COMMON IS A NEVER-QUIT ATTITUDE AND AN INCREDIBLE WORK ETHIC. THEY ARE ALL VERY DIFFERENT PEOPLE. A PHOTOGRAPHER AND ENVIRONMENTALIST; AN ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST; A HOTELIER AND DIVER; AND A BIG WAVE SURFER AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER, BUT THEY'VE ALL DECIDED TO STAND UP AND DO SOMETHING TO MAKE OUR WORLD A LITTLE BETTER. THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS HIGHLIGHT THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS AND SAY THANK YOU.

# CHRIS BERTISH

ANYONE WHO SURFS OR FOLLOWS SURFING in South Africa knows who Chris Bertish is and what he has achieved. He pushes boundaries and tests his limits in big waves and endurance events and has a number of "Firsts" to his name. Some of the highlights include: First person to paddle in at Jaws- Peahi-Hawaii; Mavericks Big Wave Invitational Winner 2010; First person to SUP Dungeons, 2010; First person to surf Seal Island 2010. And the list goes on.

Yes, Chris is an accomplished waterman but he is more than that. He has a real job; he runs his own business; works at staying fit enough to compete in Big Wave and SUP events and also travels the world where he is in demand as a motivational speaker. Earlier this year I was lucky enough to hear Chris speak at a fund raiser and he had the audience from the minute he started speaking. It's not about whether you surf or not, it's about understanding his message. Chris has lived through some hard knocks and beaten the odds driven by his self believe, attitude and focus. You walk away from the talk believing you can also achieve great things if you just get up and try.

2013 has been a big year for Chris. He started the year off with the first ever solo, unsupported 325km paddle up the west coast of Africa. His schedule included competing in big wave surfing events and representing his country at the SUP World Championships.

A business trip to Europe coupled with a series of motivational talks in August lead to Chris thinking about a project he could tackle whilst there. "The more I researched the bigger and bigger and more detailed the project became and Project Code Red was born. The plan was to see if I could break the current English Channel crossing record on a SUP of 5h: 38, while I was over there if conditions were right, but the priority was to do the first ever official Thames River source-to-sea adventure, which included running paddling and cycling."

On the 1st of August the expedition started with a 20km run from the source in the Cotswolds, he got his SUP on the water in Cricklade and began paddling 90km's a day to reach his goal. There were over 20 locks to navigate and he had to carry his equipment across every time. The aim was to finish in 60 hours, it took a little longer.

At the end Chris noted, "First ever Thames River Source-to-Sea (run/SUP/cycle) 4.5 days, 321km, 9.5 hours sleep, completed... Lots of obstacles and challenges to overcome like most great adventures, but I'm super stoked and thanks to everyone out there for the constant support and motivational messages to get me all the way through this adventure".

He then packed up his bike and headed to the Dover for the Channel crossing. At the start of the crossing he wrote, "The white cliffs of Dover... Here we go again. Start in half hour. Goal 5h: 10 minutes, current record 5h: 38. Project Code Red-Part 2 is officially a go!" Despite waiting for three ships to pass, and doing an extra 1km by mistake, Chris still managed to break the existing record by 12 minutes.

"I wasn't really planning on doing the Channel Crossing only 12 hours after completing the Source to Sea adventure, but with the weather window looking so good, I just had to do it, no matter what. Sometimes in life you only get an opportunity once and you have to be ready any time to take it. We can always find excuses of why we can't, but you just need to focus on one reason why you can and make it happen."

These adventures were all in aid of a charity; a non-profit called the Lunchbox Fund, which supplies hungry children with school lunches. This meal is often the only meal they'll eat in a day. "I really couldn't have thought of a better reason to do both of these projects, life's all about giving back wherever you can, no matter whether it's a little or a lot."

When asked about what drives him his answer came quickly. "The element of adventure or discovery is a great motivation. To see new and unique places, push myself, my own limits and re-define what's possible, while inspiring others to have the courage to dream big and follow their dreams, while raising money and awareness for the Lunchbox Fund, to feed hungry kids in SA, that have very little."

And he's not done. Project Red continues with a plan for the first ever fastest man powered SUP Trans Atlantic Crossing as early as sponsorship can be arranged. He will also attempt to break a new world SUP Down wind record.

Chris has also been invited to defend his 2010 Mavericks Big Wave title, the waiting period starts on November 13 and runs until March 14 next year. He will get 48 hours notice to get to the event if weather conditions are right, it will take over thirty hours to get there so Chris Bertish has to be ever ready and prepared for whatever life throws at him.

"Nothing is Impossible, unless you believe it to be..."

 If you would like to hear Chris speak or to follow his adventures visit [www.chrisbertish.com](http://www.chrisbertish.com). And for those with budgets to spare, think about sponsoring Project Code Red.