



Be Comprehensive!

Find out what can you learn about Red Funnel and the good work they do...

Student Introduction

- ✓ Read the Red Funnel press release from May 2014, below
- ✓ Answer the questions on page 2, on paper or in your book

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For the last seven years Cerebral Palsy sufferer Gus has been a familiar sight on board Red Funnel Isle of Wight Ferries crossing the Solent more than 4,500 times!

Gus has used the same Giant bike for the whole 50,000 miles, but has gone through eight rear tyres, and the rear wheel has had to be repaired five times. He has also managed to wear out two saddles, two bike chains, five pairs of cycling shorts and 12 hats during his impressive feat! His cycling gear isn't the only thing to change - his music taste has altered too, with his latest favourite being Olivia Newton John and, unsurprisingly, the iconic 80's track "Lets Get Physical".

Gus has raised thousands of pounds for charity, in the memory of his late father, mother, and brother. However, that's not all - not only has Gus raised money, he has also spoken to and inspired over 2,600 people who have been affected or treated for cancer or haemochromatosis.

Gus is no stranger to fundraising through carrying out amazing physical challenges. He has performed a number of rowing challenges, including being the first adaptive rower to row all the way around Isle of Wight in 2005, and he has set two adaptive LTA (legs, trunks and arms) world records in 2011 and 2012, for 24 hour rowing on a rowing machine, both at Red Funnel's Southampton terminal.

He has also been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from Southampton Solent University in 2005, for his contribution to the community and still actively plays for local wheelchair rugby side, Solent Sharks who are affiliated to the University.

In 2009 he was picked to trial for British Paralympic Sports and on 15 July 2012 he carried the Olympic Flame in Southampton. This same year he also received the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Award for Sporting Achievement. This latest cycling challenge marks the pinnacle of his cycling career and he is planning to continue past the 50,000 mark to reach 75,000 miles!

(continued on page 2...)

Kevin George, CEO of Red Funnel said: “We are delighted to join Gus’s celebrations on what is an amazing day. To cycle the equivalent of twice around the equator is a fantastic achievement and Red Funnel has been very happy to host Gus on board since 2007. It has been humbling to watch him put himself through this gruelling physical challenge to raise money for charity. He has become a regular sight on board and our customers and crew have been very generous in their donations and very supportive of his efforts.”

Gus McKechnie added: ‘When I set out to complete this challenge I was just looking to raise vital funds for charities that had worked so hard to help my family and that close to my heart.

Red Funnel had kindly offered me the space onboard their ferries and soon after I started onboard it became clear it was more than just a fundraising mission, I was often a sign of determination to those suffering from life-threatening illnesses.

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One of Gus’ next challenges will be to complete this year’s Challenge Weymouth Triathlon on 14 September, during which he plans to complete the entire marathon section of the triathlon in a racing wheelchair. The event involves a 3.8km swim in Weymouth Bay, a 180km bike ride, and a 42km run along the seafront and through the town centre.

Questions

1. Explain why Gus’ new favourite song choice is ‘unsurprising’.
2. Find and list all of the repairs that have taken place on Gus’ bike since he started the challenge.
3. “Gus McKechnie is a truly remarkable human being.” Find evidence from the text which proves this statement.
4. Why do you think that Gus decided to complete this cycling challenge on board a Red Funnel ferry, rather than on the road?
5. What prevented Gus from giving up when things got particularly tough?
6. How does the phrase: “the equivalent of cycling twice round the equator!” help the reader to understand the distance that Gus travelled?
7. Why do you think that Red Funnel wanted to be involved in Gus’ impressive feat?

