

## STEVE BATE MBE

Stephen Stanley Bate attended Mount Albert Grammar School from 1991-1994. His testimonial was written by Warwick Gibbs. It was mentioned that, in the classroom in his junior years, Stephen had been first in Music and Science, second in Technical Drawing and third in English and Social Studies.

He was the vice-captain of the Second XI Cricket Team and played rugby for the 5As. Mr Gibbs went on to say:

“Stephen is a young man committed to doing his best. He has made a special effort in English where he topped his class and he observes deadlines reliably. He has shown ability in and flair for design work, while in Music he has performed as a trumpet player in the Jazz Band. He has a pleasant, polite personality and is co-operative in class. His outgoing nature makes him friends easily, thus he works well in team situations where he also shows leadership. His attendance and punctuality are excellent and he is always well presented.

Stephen is keen to study Carpentry and became a qualified builder. He leaves us with our warmest recommendation.”

He did make progress as a carpenter. In May 2000 he moved to live in Moray in the north-east of Scotland and later moved to Yorkshire. He has a love of the outdoors and testing his physical and mental limits.

In 2011, at age 34, he was diagnosed with the incurable degenerative eye condition, retinitis pigmentosa, with just 10% vision. In 2013 he set out to climb the sheer vertical face of El Capitan, Yosemite National Park, Sierra Nevada Mountains, California. He was the first person to climb the 900m structure with such reduced vision, and he did it solo.



Photo of El Capitan



Photo of Steve Bate climbing

After meeting the inspirational Karen Darke, a wheel-chair academic and Paralympic hand-cyclist, he was, after being persuaded by her, to take up cycling in a serious way. Dr Darke gave clear-eyed advice that no-one cared about him as a cyclist unless he put in the time to do serious training. He did. After many domestic events, he and his signed pilot Adam Duggleby were selected to cycle in tandem events for Team GB in the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Summer Paralympic Games.

They won Gold in the Individual Pursuit B [Blind] in world record time. They also won Gold in the Time Trial and Bronze in the Road Race. They ride domestically for Vive le Velo.



Steve Bate was awarded an MBE in the 2017 New Year's Honours List for services to cycling.



In 2017 he rode the Mallorca 312. This is not a race, it is described as a sportive and one of the biggest in Europe. It is a full lap of 312km around the island with punishing hill climbs. The event is over closed roads and there are about 8000 solo riders.

Later he did the Deloitte's Ride Across Britain, the 980km from Land's End to John O'Groats, nine days are permitted. This is a fully supported charity event.



He has produced a number of short films, with sound tracks of music and talk. He is a skilful motivational speaker who relates to a wide range of audiences.

Steve is sponsored by two firms making bikes for all occasions, Sonder and Hunt. Also, he is sponsored by Alpkit, who deal in all equipment and gear for high and difficult terrain, and by Dirty Dog who make eyewear for all conditions and sports. He is an Ambassador for Retina UK.

Unlike the Ride Across Britain, his next event, while shorter, was under much more challenging conditions. He had said: "My mortgage payments depend on my ability to suffer, to put myself through the wringer to break down barriers in my own mind and hurt more than anyone else I'm riding against, and most of all to cross the line first."

He was speaking of the 2018 Rovaniemi Polar Circle Winter 150. Rovaniemi is the main city in Finnish Lapland. The race is in February when the temperature can get down to  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  and there can be reindeer and perhaps moose to contend with. There are three modes, all starting at the same time, walking, skiing and fat-bike (with 'fat' tyres). The race is 150km, one big lap around Rovaniemi. There are checkpoints and all must be over by 42 hours. It is limited to 150 starters.

There is challenging terrain, frozen lakes and rivers, forest roads and single track mountain bike trails. Bate did it with his friend Ibrahim Park. Just 26 people did it within the time, some on fat bikes, some on skis, some on foot. Steve Bate had said "... and most of all to cross the line first." He and Park did just that. They were first overall in 17 hours, 35mins, an hour ahead of the next finisher.

Stephen Stanley Bate has triumphed over adversity. He is an inspirational Albertian.

Brian Murphy