

All in a good cause

They walk, they trek, they cycle – and they raise millions for charity. But what motivates someone to take on an extreme physical challenge and how do they raise the funds? Chris Alden investigates

You're sitting on the train home from work, reading a magazine, and you spot an advert for a trip to somewhere you've always wanted to go. "Climb Kilimanjaro for endangered chimps!" it says. You turn the page, and there's more. "Cycle the Andes for Alzheimers! Go to Rio and save the rainforest!" Raise several grand for a charity, the ads say, and you can enjoy a memorable trip abroad into the bargain.

For a second or two, you're sorely tempted. And then you find a reason why you can't go. You're too busy at work. You're unfit. You're not sure you'd be able to raise the money. And anyway – aren't these challenges just a way to get someone else to pay for an adventure holiday in an exotic location?

If that's your reaction, then Nick Stanhope, author of the book, *Blood, Sweat & Charity* (Eye Books, RRP £12.99, or see our reader offer, p45)

has a message for you. Not only do charities derive huge benefits from people who take on these tough challenges – both in terms of funding and in terms of the awareness they create – but the experience can also be enormously fulfilling for you.

In 2003 and 2004, Nick cycled from Cape Town to London for Anti-Slavery International. With four other cyclists for company, he travelled 100 miles a day for more than six months – raising more than £50,000 in the process.

"You have to make sacrifices to inspire feeling and sympathy from other people," says Nick. "You have to put time and effort into the fundraising, you have to put time into the training, and the challenge itself has to be tough.

"At the heart of all of it has to be your relationship with the charity; there has to be a deep commitment. When people see all that, they respond to it – and they give money."

"At the heart of it all has to be your relationship with the charity"



Did you know?
Gifts to UK charities are exempt from Inheritance Tax whether you make them during your lifetime or in your will

Name: Marina Boulding
Age: 54

"My porter had to push me up to the summit"

Marina Boulding, a property lawyer from Kent, was 54 years old when she climbed Kilimanjaro, raising £14,000 for Whizz-Kidz, a charity for disabled children. She had always dreamt of climbing the

mountain – but the Whizz-Kidz challenge held a particular significance for her because she had a severely disabled child, Michael, who died at the age of five.

Marina promised herself when Michael died that one day she would climb Kilimanjaro. "I didn't want to go back to the humdrum of everyday life. But in the end, I just got a job and got on with life."

Her ambition remained unfulfilled until one day when she was commuting >



“It’s shown me how worthwhile it is to stretch yourself”

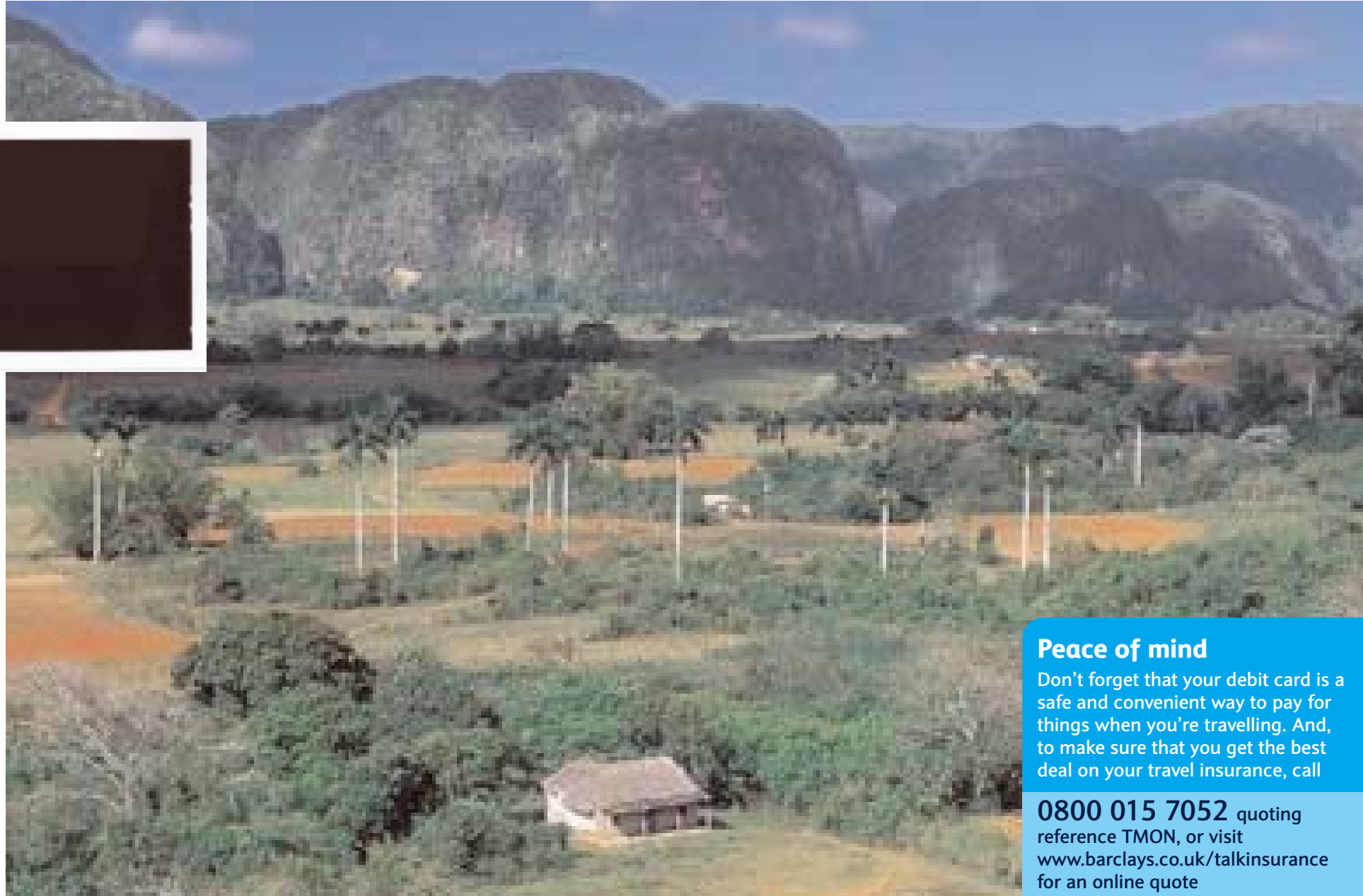
home on the train she saw the advertisement for the Whizz-Kidz Kilimanjaro expedition. She realised then that it was something she had to do.

Marina and her husband signed up for the challenge – and for the nine months’ training, including weekends in the Lake District and Snowdonia, and three trips a week to the gym. To attract funding, she kept a diary on her website. “I sent it out to anybody I could think of, saying: ‘here’s what I’m doing, if you haven’t donated yet, please do’.”

The trip itself was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and the summit attempt on the last day a battle against altitude sickness and fatigue. “Just before the summit there’s a scramble,” recalls Marina. “My porter, Chino, got behind me and pushed me up. He kept saying, ‘Keep going mama, keep going’.”

“By then I was starting to have hallucinations. The expedition doctor gave me something to help with the altitude sickness so I was able to make it to the top. I got there, vomited and came back down!”

Images: Getty



Name: Nina Jackson

Age: 58

“Sore bums, sore knees”

Nina Jackson, from Barnes in south-west London, was 50 in 1998 when she took part in her first charity challenge: a five-day cycle ride across Cuba for NDCF, the charity for deaf children. The trip was organised by the company Classic Tours, and Nina had to raise a minimum of £2,000. But she got so much out of the trip that she went on to become an organiser for other charity

bike rides around the world – raising £500,000 net to date.

“In Cuba we put up with sore bums, sore knees, searing heat and dodgy tummies and we still kept cycling!” recalls Nina. Happier memories included “old American cars and mile after mile of sugar cane.” Nina says that it was team spirit that got the group up the steepest of hills – and that there was a huge sense of achievement at the end.

As a result of her Cuban experience that Nina began to organise other trips – to Vietnam in 2000, Chile in 2003, and Madagascar in 2005.

Peace of mind

Don’t forget that your debit card is a safe and convenient way to pay for things when you’re travelling. And, to make sure that you get the best deal on your travel insurance, call

0800 015 7052 quoting reference TMON, or visit www.barclays.co.uk/talkinsurance for an online quote

How to raise the cash

The most important rule when raising money for charity, says Nick Stanhope, is that “people give money to people: they don’t give money to causes and concepts”. So your challenge needs to be inspiring to get people to part with their cash. It’s also important to make it easy for people to give:

- Get a link to a fundraising page
- Set up a website
- Send people stamped addressed envelopes and print tear-off forms
- Visit www.justgiving.com or www.bmycharity.com – they make it easy for donors to tick the Gift Aid box so charities can reclaim the tax on your gift if you’re a UK taxpayer
- Fundraising events are another good way to raise cash – people will often donate venues, food and drinks, or give prizes for raffles
- Don’t forget corporate donors – if you let companies know early in the year, they can submit the request to their annual fund donation.

Book offer



Blood, Sweat & Charity by Nick Stanhope (RRP £12.99) is the ultimate guide to charity challenges, from fundraising to training. You can buy it for just £10, including postage and packing. To order, simply call xxxx xxx xxx and quote ‘Talk Money Charity’. Offer ends 31 August 2006.