



# OUR MAN IN HONG KONG

Sir Ranulph Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes arrives at Hong Kong's Ritz Carlton hotel dressed to kill – dinner suit and black tie.

ON HEARING THAT the hotel has 118 floors he says, “Dear me, where will they stop, in 100 years time where will they be?” If you were to ask the same question 100 years ago many wouldn't have believed some of the achievements that Sir Ranulph himself has made in his extraordinary lifetime. The adventurer, who had a triple heart bypass six years ago, is the first man to have crossed both ice caps via both Poles and to have climbed 29,035ft to the world's highest peak, Mount Everest (aged 65). In October 2003, he ran seven marathons in seven days on seven continents, despite suffering a major heart attack and double bypass operation in June of the same year.

Described in 1984 as the “World's Greatest Living Explorer” by the Guinness Book of Records, his expeditions around the world include the first surface journey around the world's polar axis during which he and Charles Burton became the first people ever to reach both Poles by surface travel; North Polar Unsupported Expedition – the furthest north unsupported record; Anglo Soviet North Pole Expedition; co-leader of the Ubar Expedition which in 1991 discovered Ptolemy's long-lost Atlantis of the Sands, the frankincense centre of the world; leader of the South Pole Expedition which achieved the first unsupported crossing of the Antarctic continent and the longest unsupported polar journey in history.



A man of astonishing force, with a lifetime of tales of motivation, determination and breaking new ground, Sir Ranulph was born in 1944 and educated at Eton. He served with the Royal Scots Greys for a time before joining the SAS. In 1968 he joined the Army of the Sultan of Oman and in 1970 was awarded the Sultan's Bravery Medal.

It was a chance film audition in London that launched Sir Ranulph's career as an explorer when he was invited down to London to audition for the role of James Bond. He recalls how, with no money at the time, he and his wife couldn't afford to travel to London. But when a telegram came from an acting agency offering to pay for their trip, they accepted. Among 280 hopefuls, he made the last six before meeting film producer Albert Broccoli, who Sir Ranulph describes as "a little bloke who didn't smile." He recalls, "I marched up to see Broccoli and he said to the other fellow, "This one looks like a farmer", which I took to be a bad thing."

Roger Moore was given the role but Sir Ranulph used the opportunity of being in London to secure a place on a Ministry of Defence expedition to British Columbia in Canada.

"Roger Moore got the job and I got to lead the big expedition," he says "My first big trip with a BBC documentary film crew, which is what really got me and my wife going."

Sir Ranulph's in Hong Kong to speak at the Third Annual Help for Heroes charity dinner at the Ritz-Carlton (which raised HK\$2.2 million through auctions and raffle ticket sales).

He's raised over £7 and a half million for various UK charities, including the Multiple Sclerosis Society, (which has enabled the building of Europe's first MS research centre in Cambridge), Breakthrough Breast Cancer and the British Heart Foundation. In 1993 he was awarded an OBE for human endeavour and charitable services.

In true Bond style, after charming more than 700 guests for over an hour with stories of daring and adventure, Sir Ranulph is whisked away to the airport immediately after, still wearing his dinner suit.

Help for Heroes provides direct, practical support for wounded British servicemen and women and fund projects and initiatives that make a real difference to the lives of those injured. The charity has raised more than £100 million in public donations - just three and a half years after it was formed - and has spent almost £90 million on various projects, currently building five personal recovery centres for wounded servicemen across the UK.