



Debra Searle

At the age of 35, Debra Searle has achieved more than most people would dream of achieving in a lifetime, including a first class honours degree, launched two companies, won World Championship medals, presented on the BBC, has had books published & has successfully rowed solo across the Atlantic Ocean. In 2002 HM The Queen awarded Debra an MBE for her achievements.

Debra, one of an identical twin, was born in Plymouth. She completed the family line-up: Robin & Christine Newbury now had four children – two boys & two girls. Debra grew up in Devon & attended Hazeldown Primary School followed by Stover School on the foothills of Dartmoor National Park.

After school, Debra's love of the outdoors led to her choosing to study a BEd in Physical Education, majoring in Outdoor Education. She graduated in 1997 with a first class honours degree & a whole string of instructor qualifications including Canoe/Kayak Instructor & Mountain Leader. Her lifetime ambition of becoming a Professional Adventurer was more alive than ever. She was later awarded an Honorary Masters from De Montfort University.

Debra went on to gain a place in the Great Britain Dragon Boat Racing Team & spent much of 1998 & 1999 committed to intensive training for the European Championships in Rome, followed by the World Championships in Nottingham. The team came home with a collection of bronze, silver & gold medals.

Sadly, Debra's father died of Leukaemia in between the two Championships. One of the most special moments in Debra's life was going up to receive her medals in Rome with her Mother & Father looking on during a break in his chemotherapy treatment. Robin Newbury's death spurred Debra on to start to live out her dreams & the race to become a full time businesswoman & adventurer began.

Debra started her career teaching physical education & outdoor education at St. Margaret's School in Exeter, Devon & then later at Claremont Fan Court School, Esher, Surrey.

Aged 24 Debra turned her attention to setting up an internet based art company. Debra formed The Well Hung Art Company in 1999 with two friends, specialising in Corporate Art Consultancy & promoting the work of lesser known artists via the internet. She finally sold this company in 2004 when her childhood dream of becoming a full time adventurer became a reality.

Having launched her second company, Shoal Projects Ltd in 2002 she is now focused on building up work in the three major areas of adventures in collaboration with a sponsor, adventures for television/writing & adventure based motivational speaking. Debra works with organisations large & small (IBM, Lloyds/TSB, Microsoft, Boots) to motivate & inspire their workforce.

Debra's ease in front of the camera & natural enthusiasm has led to a number of TV presenting opportunities outside of the adventure arena working regularly for the BBC. As well as presenting on **Grandstand**, Debra has also presented **Big Strong Boys & Builders & Sweat & Tears** for BBC 1. She has also completed work for **CBBC Education**, was the subject of a documentary for the BBC **Extreme Lives** & presented a 1-hour documentary on the **Southampton Boat Show** alongside Vicky Butler-Henderson & Ben Shephard.

Whilst at sea, Debra discovered a passion for writing. She wrote over 60,000 words about her experiences which she completed on her return to dry land - **Rowing it Alone**. Debra has subsequently published her second book, **The Journey** & has contributed to three further books. She has also written a number of features for the Daily Express & The Daily Telegraph.

After an impassioned speech for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award General Council Conference in 2002, Debra was delighted to accept an invitation from Prince Philip to become a Trustee of The Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. After Prince Edward, she is the youngest person to hold such an esteemed position on the board.

The work is full of extremes & takes Debra on visits to juvenile prisons one day to meetings at Buckingham Palace the next! Debra completed her Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award while at school & it's had a lasting impression on her. She set her heart on becoming a full-time adventurer after completing her Gold Expedition so really owes her career to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award!

**For more information on Debra Searle,
Contact: 0113-239-2222**