

# OUT OF HOURS

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## No step too far

Danny Lavender, Local Compliance, London

“ There are 530 steps to the top of St Paul's Cathedral in London. I climbed them 25 times in one day.

It's part of a series of extreme challenges I'm doing to raise funds for the Cure Parkinson's Trust.

I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, for which currently there is no cure, six years ago, when I was 41. That was a massive shock, particularly as I was an endurance athlete. Parkinson's

is often seen as being an old person's condition but 15 per cent of sufferers are under the age of 40.

Last summer I read about Alex Flynn, a 36-year-old lawyer and ultra marathon runner who's also been diagnosed with Parkinson's. He's trying to raise £1 million by doing extreme challenges to help find a cure. He's now my friend and my inspiration.

The first challenge I did was to spin cycle for a total of 12 hours within the time frame of 12 hours and 20 minutes, which raised £2,010.

Then I decided to take on the challenge of climbing the steps of St Paul's Cathedral 15 times in eight hours which had never been done before.

I work in Woolwich so to train I climbed up the 13 floors 41 times in four hours. Afterwards my legs - in particular my calf muscles - were like lead balloons and I had severe cramp. That's why I was so amazed to not only complete the St Paul's challenge but to exceed my original target.

Kevin Diedrick, who also works for HMRC, and another

friend did the challenge with me. We started at 9.30am and kept going until 4.45pm, with only short stops for drinks, snacks and stretches. There was a paramedic on hand but he wasn't needed. The steps were still open to the public and at times got very busy, particularly in the afternoon, but instead of the 15,000 steps we aimed to climb, we actually did 26,400.

I'm now planning a 26-mile stationary row in October. As well as raising funds, I'm hoping to achieve a greater awareness of Parkinson's disease.

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