

A happy day for patient Gerry Walker as Air Products engineer Rob Teague collects the oxygen equipment



Best foot forward for Gerry Walker



Gerry Walker as his illness was progressing

Oxygen patient Gerry Walker has at long last said goodbye to his oxygen cylinders and concentrators. Gerry had struggled with cystic fibrosis for 46 years before his double lung transplant in July of this year.

As a young man Gerry was incredibly fit and active, with his love of the outdoors, mountains and hills taking up most of his time, enjoying treks in the Alps and expeditions as far afield as the Rockies in the USA.

Staying a little closer to home and looking for ways to raise funds for charities close to his heart, he spent 48 hours climbing all the peaks in Ireland over 3,000 feet high, raising impressive amounts of money for cystic fibrosis charities.

By 2003 Gerry's condition had worsened to the stage where he was having to use oxygen throughout the night, but his illness progressed

rapidly and very soon he was dependant on oxygen for 24 hours per day.

However, Gerry Walker was not going to let his illness or dependence on oxygen stop him walking! He continued to travel to all corners of Europe, from the wild Scottish Highlands to the villages of the Alps in Corsica, organising oxygen to be supplied for him on each of these adventures.

In 2004 these adventures had become less frequent as Gerry's cystic fibrosis was affecting his everyday life, with him having to take antibiotics continually as well as the oxygen and was struggling to complete basic tasks and hold down his job as a census statistician.

July 29, 2008 in the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle is a day that Gerry describes as the day he got his life back, with the double lung transplant he had been waiting for transforming his life completely.

Removing the oxygen supply from Gerry's house was also a joy for Air Products engineer Rob Teague, who said that 'taking equipment from a patient's house on such a happy note makes me smile at the end of the day'.

The mountains are back in range, with Gerry heading up the Four Peaks Challenge in aid of cystic fibrosis donor awareness. Now it seems that Ben Nevis, Snowdon, Scarfell Pike and Carantouhill are no match for Gerry!

The aim is to finish this massive climb by July 2009, to mark the first anniversary of his new life, and celebrating his life as a whole as it is also his twentieth wedding anniversary. It seems there's no stopping Gerry now!

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