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Red Széll: the first blind person to scale The Old Man of Hoy talks at Patron Greatness Lecture

Patron Capital, the pan-European institutional investor focused on property backed investments, last night welcomed Red Széll, the first blind person to have climbed the Old Man of Hoy rock stack in the far north of Scotland, who gave an inspirational talk as part of Patron's Greatness Lecture series.

Red's love for adventure started from childhood, when he was obsessed with reading about explorers and adventurers and watching their daring expeditions on television.

But his love for climbing and extreme sports was put on hold when he learnt that he had retinitis pigmentosa - a degenerative condition that meant he was going blind. His sight would be reduced to just five per cent of normal within a decade. Climbing is all about trust and he felt that if he could not trust his eyesight he could not climb.

It was in 2009 when his outlook would change forever. His eldest daughter decided to celebrate her ninth birthday at the local climbing wall and this is where his love for the sport would be rekindled. Red started climbing with a friend he had met doing the school run. Inspired in part by the achievements of those competing in the 2012 Paralympics, he revealed his dream of climbing the Old Man of Hoy – a rock stack that rises vertically to a height of 137m (449ft).

In 2013, following a grueling training schedule, Red made it to the top. Accompanied by his friend, one of the instructors from his climbing centre and a cameraman who recorded his feat, he completed a feat never imagined possible. But his journey would not end there. Having completed the challenge with a cameraman at his side, he descended only to discover that there had been a problem with the camera and that he would have to do the climb all over again the next day - after a night of rainfall.

His journey would be broadcasted by the BBC and documented in his book, 'The Blind Man of Hoy'.

Keith Breslauer, Managing Director of Patron Capital, commented:

"Red's remarkable story is about following your dreams, believing in yourself and overcoming adversity. He has proven that being blind doesn't mean leading a sedentary and debilitating life. Conquering The Old Man of Hoy is not easy - especially when you do it twice in two consecutive days and particularly in wet conditions - but his sheer determination saw him through."

"At Patron, we feel privileged to have had the opportunity to hear from Red – his experience is another reminder that anything is possible and a disability is not an obstacle when you want to pursue a true passion."

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Notes to Editors

About Patron Capital Partners

Patron represents approximately €3.4 billion of capital across several funds and related co-investments, investing in property, corporate operating entities whose value is primarily supported by property assets and distressed debt and credit related businesses.

Since it was established in 1999, Patron has invested in over 74 investments and programs involving over 65 million square feet (6 million square metres) in 16 countries, with many of these investments realised.

Investors represent a variety of sovereign wealth funds, prominent universities, major institutions, private foundations, and high net worth individuals located throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The main investment adviser to the Funds is Patron Capital Advisers LLP, which is based in London, and Patron has other offices across Europe including Barcelona, Milan and Luxembourg; the group is comprised of 76 people, including a 43-person investment team. Further information about Patron Capital is available at www.patroncapital.com