

BEN SAUNDERS



British Polar Explorer

Ben Saunders is a polar explorer and a record-breaking long-distance skier, with five North Pole expeditions under his belt. He is the youngest to ski solo to the North Pole and holds the record for the longest solo Arctic journey by a Briton. Since 2001, Ben has skied more than 3,000km (1,860 miles) in the high Arctic, and has spent two percent of his entire life living in a tent.

Born in 1977, Ben grew up in Devon, was educated at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and lives in London. He is passionate about the great outdoors and spent four months walking and climbing in the Nepalese Himalayas aged 19, going on to work as an instructor at the John Ridgway School of Adventure in the Scottish Highlands, once billed as "the UK's toughest management training school".

Between October 2013 and February 2014, Ben and his teammate are setting out to retrace Captain Scott's ill-fated return journey to the South Pole on foot, one of the most ambitious polar expeditions in a century. More than 100 years after Scott's last expedition, this four-month, 1,800 mile expedition will be the longest unsupported polar journey in history, and the first time that Scott's journey is completed.

Ben is a keen athlete – after an unpromising start ("I was the podgy kid at school that was always picked last for the football team") he discovered mountain biking in his teens and went on to race bikes on and off-road at national level. He has run seven marathons (New York is his favourite course and 2:55 is his best time, set in London in 2007) and three ultramarathons, including an attempt at the inaugural 250-mile Thames Ring Ultra in summer 2009.

Ben is a Global Brand Ambassador for Land Rover and Intel, an Ambassador for The Prince's Trust, a Patron of the British Schools Exploring Society, an honorary member of the Cordon Rouge Club, a Fellow of the British American Project, supports the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Orchid Cancer Appeal. Ben is also an acclaimed motivational speaker, described by TED as a "master story teller".

Topics (Selection):

- Why bother leaving the house?
- To the South Pole and back — the hardest 105 days of my life
- Why did I ski to the North Pole?