

## **One man's challenge to reach the South Pole on foot in aid of the MS Society**

**On the 4th December 2019, Michael Mitten, CEO of Houghton International and avid adventurer, will attempt to trek to the South Pole, as what can only be described as one of most physical and mental challenges for any human to undertake on the coldest continent on earth.**

10 years on from a successful trek to the North Pole in 2009 in memory of his dad that raised £40,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support, Michael is taking on this momentous challenge in memory of his mum, Christine Mitten, who spent over 18 years fighting multiple sclerosis (MS) before she passed away in 2016. With an aim to raise £50,000 for the MS Society, Michael wishes to raise awareness of Christine's inspirational mission to prolong her life, and support research into the disease. Furthermore, if Michael is successful in his feat, he will be one of very few individuals in the world who have reached both the North and South Poles on foot.

Michael Mitten commented: "I am thrilled to be trekking to the South Pole in aid of the MS Society. This will be one of the toughest, yet most exhilarating challenges of my life. Knowing that the money I raise will be used to help fund research and help support for those affected by multiple sclerosis is the best part of all.

"I'm embarking on this challenge for the MS Society because I really believe in their cause and the way they supported and cared for my mum after her diagnosis. The charity helps over 100,000 people living with MS in the UK with a raft of services tailored to their specific needs, making a real difference to their lives."

With two years of specialist and endurance training behind him, Michael will embark on this epic expedition in the interior of Antarctica. He will trek across the last degree of latitude, crossing 60 nautical miles (111km) for 7-10 days across a barren and hostile environment to the South Pole, whilst pulling a pulk with 80kgs of equipment and supplies on board.

Emma Whitcombe, Executive Director of Fundraising at the MS Society, says: "We're wishing Michael the very best of luck with this incredibly daring challenge. MS is relentless, painful, and disabling and Michael's generous commitment of time and energy will enable us to help and support more of the 100,000 people who live with the condition in the UK."

The Arctic and Antarctic are extremely different environments, each with their own challenges. Despite having already completed one Polar trek and other Arctic expeditions to prepare for the challenge, Michael will have a whole different challenge ahead of him as he attempts to reach the South Pole. With temperatures ranging from -25°C to -50°C and altitudes ranging between 3,000-3,500m (10,000-11,500ft), Michael will be pushed to the extremes of physical exhaustion.

To support Michael's challenge and help in the fight against MS, please visit [www.polesapart2019.com](http://www.polesapart2019.com) and navigate to 'Get Involved'.

Picture caption:

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Notes to editors:

The MS Society was founded in 1953 by Richard and Mary Cave.

It is the UK's largest charity for people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS). It is a membership organisation with around 30,000 members, made up of people living with MS.

The MS Society has a network of 270 local branches and 5,500 volunteers, who help to raise awareness and funds for the Society, both locally and nationally, making a difference to the lives people affected by MS.

Visit [www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk) to find out more.