



MEDIA ALERT

24 December 2013

White Christmas for Two British Explorers Following in Captain Scott's Footsteps

Two British polar explorers Ben Saunders and Tarka L'Herpinere are guaranteed a white Christmas this year as they mark two months on the ice and near the half-way point on their 1800 mile, unsupported return journey from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole and back on foot.

Making the first completion of iconic British explorer Captain Scott's ill-fated Terra Nova route the duo are currently under 70 miles from their half-way mark – the South Pole – with a white surface to the horizon in all directions.

Speaking from his tent in Antarctica, Ben Saunders said. "We've spent much of the last week in at least partial whiteout which I can only describe as a bit like existing inside a ping pong ball. When the sun does break through though it's clear blue skies and a white surface to the horizon in all directions. There's none of the speculation over here in Antarctica – a white Christmas is guaranteed."

Scott and his men experienced a similarly white Christmas on their pioneering journey to the South Pole on their Terra Nova expedition in 1911/12. Read Scott's diary entry from 25 December 1911 here:

<http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/diaries/scottslastexpedition/1911/12/25/monday-december-25-christmas/>

Like Scott and his men, Ben and Tarka will have only their usual daily rations to enjoy on Christmas Day – almost 6,000 calories of high-energy freeze dried food, hot energy drinks and energy bars in place of a traditional roast turkey, mince pies and Christmas pudding.

"Christmas Day will be much like any other for us out here in Antarctica. We'll be on our usual rations and will be up early to cover the ground we need to reach the South Pole this week. We've always said that the best Christmas present we could get would be to reach the South Pole between Christmas Day and New Year. Providing the weather is kind it looks like we're going to get our wish. We're now within the last degree and we're hoping to get there on Boxing Day. We'll let you know via the blog." Ben said.

Ben and Tarka set out from Scott's historic Terra Nova Hut in Antarctica on 25 October 2013. They are expecting to reach their half-way mark, the South Pole on Boxing Day before they turn around and retrace their 900 mile journey back to the coast. They are due to complete the expedition mid-February 2014.

Christmas Day will mark two moths on the ice.

For a snapshot into the first two months on the ice watch visit <http://www.youtube.com/user/ScottExpedition/featured> on Christmas Day.

To follow Ben's daily blog visit www.scottexpedition.com/blog or track their progress across a host of social media channels:

YouTube - www.youtube.com/scottexpedition

Twitter - www.twitter.com/scottexpedition

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TheScottExpedition?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Instagram - www.instagram.com/scottexpedition

Falcon Scott (grandson of Captain Robert Falcon Scott) and Robert Swan OBE (first to walk to both the North and South Pole and Founder of 2014) are expedition patrons.

Intel and Land Rover are co-presenting partners of the Scott Expedition.

For further information or images please visit www.scottexpedition.com or contact Francesca Beeching, E: Francesca@bensaunders.com, M: +44 (0) 7538 951320

Notes to editors

1. ****Iconic British explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott led the first British team to reach the South Pole on 17 January 1912 on the Terra Nova expedition. He died along with the last of his South Pole team, Dr Edward Wilson and Lieutenant Henry ("Birdie") Bowers, on 29 March 1912 in Antarctica on their return journey.**
2. Ben Saunders is a pioneering polar explorer. One of only three people in history to have skied solo to the North Pole (a challenge Reinhold Messner called "ten times as dangerous as Everest"). At the age of 26, Ben was the youngest explorer to complete this by more than ten years. He achieved this feat in 2004, in conditions NASA called "the worst since records began", and in doing so set the record for the longest solo Arctic journey by a Briton. No one has repeated this journey since.
3. The Scott Expedition is supported by co-presenting partners Intel and Land Rover; expedition partners Kcom and Drum-Cussac; supporting partners Bremont and CF Partners; and supplier partners Mountain Equipment, Field Notes and Hilleberg.



Whiteout on the Antarctic Plateau (www.scottexpedition.com)



One of Ben and Tarka's camps on the Antarctic Plateau (www.scottexpedition.com)



Ben Saunders and Tarka L'Herpinierie on day 50 of the Scott Expedition in Antarctica (www.scottexpedition.com)