Tom Avery

As one of only 41 people in history to have reached both the North and South Poles on foot, Tom Avery is quickly gaining the reputation as one of the UK's leading explorers. He achieved this remarkable feat at the tender age of 29, making him the youngest Briton to do so. To quote The Sunday Times, "Avery is shaping up to join the ranks of such British immortals as Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Dame Ellen MacArthur."

Tom Avery was born in December 1975 and brought up in Sussex, Brazil and France. His passion for adventure began at the age of eight when he first read about Captain Scott. He knew then that his life wouldn't be complete until he followed his hero's footsteps to the South Pole.

Tom's mountaineering career began at the age of sixteen with a series of rock and ice climbs in Wales and Scotland. At university he organised and led expeditions to the Andes, New Zealand, the Alps, Tanzania, Patagonia and Morocco.

After graduating from Bristol University in 1998 with a B.Sc. in Geography and Geology, he began a 15-month career as an accountant with Arthur Andersen. Eventually forced to choose between the city and the mountains, Tom chose the mountains.

The pinnacle of Tom's climbing career to date was in 2000 when he led a pioneering British expedition to a previously unexplored 20-mile mountain range close to China's western border. His team scaled nine unnamed virgin summits up to 6,000 metres high.

On 28 December 2002, days after his 27th birthday, Tom Avery became the youngest Briton to complete the perilous journey to the South Pole on foot. His team also broke the South Pole Speed Record; using state of the art kites to power them across the ice, they covered the last 47 miles to the Pole in an amazing 31 hours.

In April 2005 Tom electrified the exploration world by recreating Robert Peary's disputed 1909 expedition to the North Pole. The five-strong team travelled in a similar style to Peary with teams of Eskimo dogs and replica wooden sledges. Tom's ambitious aim was to prove the sceptics wrong and match Peary's 37-day journey to the Pole. After an epic dash across the most unforgiving environment on the planet, Tom's exhausted team rewrote the history books by making it to the Pole with five hours to spare.

A born leader, this remarkable young man runs every expedition himself, organising everything from the fundraising to the training to the logistics to the selection of his teams. His expeditions have received a huge amount of international print and TV media coverage, in the UK and the US in particular. Tom's highly acclaimed first book, Pole Dance, was published in 2003 and he is currently working on his second book about his record-breaking North Pole expedition. Tom works as an ambassador for both the London 2012 Olympics and The Prince's Trust and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.