

Ben Spencer, aka TubeSnapper takes on his biggest challenge yet in the form of Snowdon4Ataxia

Tuesday 6 June, 2023

Will you support Snowdon4Ataxia and help Ben Spencer AKA Tube Snapper, wheelchair user, raise awareness of his degenerative neurological condition, Ataxia, and highlight accessible travel within London and the UK when he climbs Mount Snowdon?

Where: Snowdonia National Park [Yr Wyddfa]

When: 14th June 2023

How: Snowdon Climb - Wheelchair and rollator walking device for the main climb and then the final push on two adapted walking sticks. - Travel to Snowdonia on accessible public transport to highlight travel providers who take disability travel seriously.

Support team: 4 Volunteers

Estimated climb time: 15 Hours. With travel and rest days this will be a 5-day marathon.

Ben Spencer, also known under his Instagram moniker, Tube Snapper, has recently completed the extraordinary challenge of visiting, entering, exiting, and photographing every single one of the 272 stations on the London Underground network using two especially adapted walking sticks. This was a challenge against time, as Ben wanted to make sure he did this before Ataxia took away his ability to walk. After this 4-month endeavour, Ben was in the media in the UK and internationally for 5 weeks, including TV News from the BBC and ITV, multiple newspapers, multiple BBC Radio shows, and numerous online news sites. He is now championing disability access, and highlighting issues mobility impaired travellers face on his social media channels. Releasing content every few days, he has built up a significant following from the transport and disability communities, and is followed by significant individuals at TFL, the London Transport Museum, BBC TV and Radio, Euronews Travel and Transport Enthusiasts.

Ataxia is a progressive neurological condition that disrupts the messages sent from our brains to our muscles. Not just the muscles we use to move, but those we use to speak, listen and see. Over time, people with Ataxia are slowly imprisoned in their own bodies, losing the tools they once had to communicate with loved ones. In some cases, it affects the heart muscle, making it difficult for the heart to pump blood around the body which can lead to heart failure. More than 10,000 adults and 500 children in the UK live with Ataxia. It is hereditary, it is progressive. There is no cure. Yet.

So, to help inspire all those with Ataxia and raise funds for research and supportive care, Ben has decided to undertake his biggest challenge yet – Snowdon4Ataxia. As Ben says, he's planning to: *"...get as far up Snowdon using my wheelchair and rollator. I will be using wheelchair accessible transport including a London Bus, The London Underground, the Elizabeth Line, Mainline Trains and the Snowdon Sherpa bus service to get to base camp in Wales. I will then be taking the Llanberis path, hopefully to the top of the mountain, starting in my wheelchair, then transferring to my rollator, and for the final push to the top using my adapted walking sticks."*

For his ongoing awareness and fundraising journey, Ben is receiving support from Ataxia UK. Ataxia UK CEO, Sue Millman, says: *"Most people can't conceive the access problems for disabled people when using public transport, unless they're disabled themselves or they have had close contact with somebody who is disabled. The simplest journeys can become complicated by one or two steps, or the lack of a dropped kerb."*

Ataxia UK funds research to find treatments and cures, and until one is found they offer support to families affected and look to improve treatment and care for patients. Ben is looking for help to get up Mount Snowdon as far as he can. For this he needs the help of travel providers, mobility aids manufacturers and the travel community.

Ben's story is not just that of 10,000+ people in the UK with Ataxia, but all of those that face issues while using public transport daily.

As Sue Millman put it: *"We should create an accessible world for everybody."*

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You can watch the video explaining Ben's fund and awareness raising efforts here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYntt-a6GHA>. Ben is serious, Ben is determined. For more information on Ben and his journey visit www.snowdon4ataxia.com. For more information about Ataxia, see www.ataxia.org.uk, and with any press and sponsorship-related queries, please contact Viktor Elzer on 020 7582 1444 or email Ataxia UK's communications team at: communications@ataxia.org.uk

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