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For immediate release

NEWS RELEASE

Local family man aims high at Africa's tallest peak to help his wife's rare liver disease.

Matt Walmsley, 41 of Bamber Bridge will swap his native Lancashire for the African plains next month to climb the highest freestanding mountain in the world, Mt Kilimanjaro as he embarks on the ultimate challenge to raise money and awareness for PSC Support. Joined on his quest by 3 friends he hopes to raise over £4,000 by summiting Mount Kilimanjaro during an 8 day attempt to conquer the mountain 17-24th June. Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is the highest free-standing mountain in the world, the highest mountain on the African continent at 5,895m. (19,341ft) high and has approximately 50% less oxygen available at its summit than you'd find at sea level. Temperature can range from +35 Deg C at the base down to an arctic like -25 Deg C at the summit – plus wind chill! Summiting Kilimanjaro is not an easy task; there are significant risks and many people don't make it to the summit.

Matt said: 'I decided to take on in this challenge for PSC Support because my wife Martine suffers from Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC), a rare and little understood liver disease. When Martine was diagnosed our daughter Sophie was just 15 months old we were given a very grim prognosis and almost no information about the disease or its care let alone where you could get help and support. It was an exceptionally scary and distressing time for us all and the future was very uncertain. Martine once described having PSC as "*living with a time bomb in your chest and not knowing when it'll go off*". Through the work of PSC Support we became better informed and they helped us come to terms with Martine's PSC. I now want to help such support to be available to others so they don't have to go through the emotional trauma Martine and I experienced. I'm also keen help PSC Support fund vital medical research toward treatments and ultimately a cure for PSC.

I can't wait to start my Kilimanjaro attempt as I've always had an adventurous streak and used to enjoy adventure sports in my younger years. However in recent times I became more of a couch potato, my fitness disappeared and weight ballooned up to a clinically obese 18 stone. So I've had plenty of work to do to get into shape.

I've been preparing myself for the attempt through improving my diet, exercising at the gym and getting plenty of training hikes in. I've lost over 3 stone of weight, I'm significantly fitter and feel I'll be ready for the challenge even though I expect it's going to be the toughest thing I've ever done.

The challenge is self-funded so it's great to know that every single step I take up Kilimanjaro and every pound of sponsorship will be helping to support PSC sufferers and fund research to find treatments and a cure for tomorrow - that'll keep me motivated when things get tough. I've been focused on this project for over a year now, so I hope it pays off!

To follow Matt's preparations and progress on his climb or to sponsor him you can visit his blog at

<http://kilimattjaro.com>

Notes to editors:

About Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC)

PSC is a rare auto-immune disease that has no known cause, cure or treatment. It causes the bile ducts both inside and outside the liver to become scarred, narrowed and eventually blocked. As more ducts become blocked, bile becomes trapped and damages the liver, leading to cirrhosis and liver failure. Symptoms along the way can often include:

- Chronic, debilitating fatigue
- Severe, uncontrollable itching
- Dangerous infections of the bile ducts
- Pain in the body's Upper Right Quadrant
- Jaundice

PSC sufferers often have associated autoimmune diseases, most commonly inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis. As well as all that they also have a significant increase in the risks of bowel, liver and pancreatic cancers.

About PSC Support



PSC Support is the UK charity that helps people affected by PSC, including sufferers themselves, and their families. Donations to PSC Support will make a real difference and will help provide information and support to those affected by PSC, promote PSC and organ donation awareness and develop effective partnerships with those involved with treatment and vitally needed research into PSC.

For more information about PSC and PSC Support please visit <http://www.pscsupport.org.uk>