

SIR RANULPH FIENNES

that really stirred something in me and ever since then I really wanted to visit Antarctica," he says.

"My favourite book at school was an atlas. I would look at places and think: 'I wonder what goes on there.'"

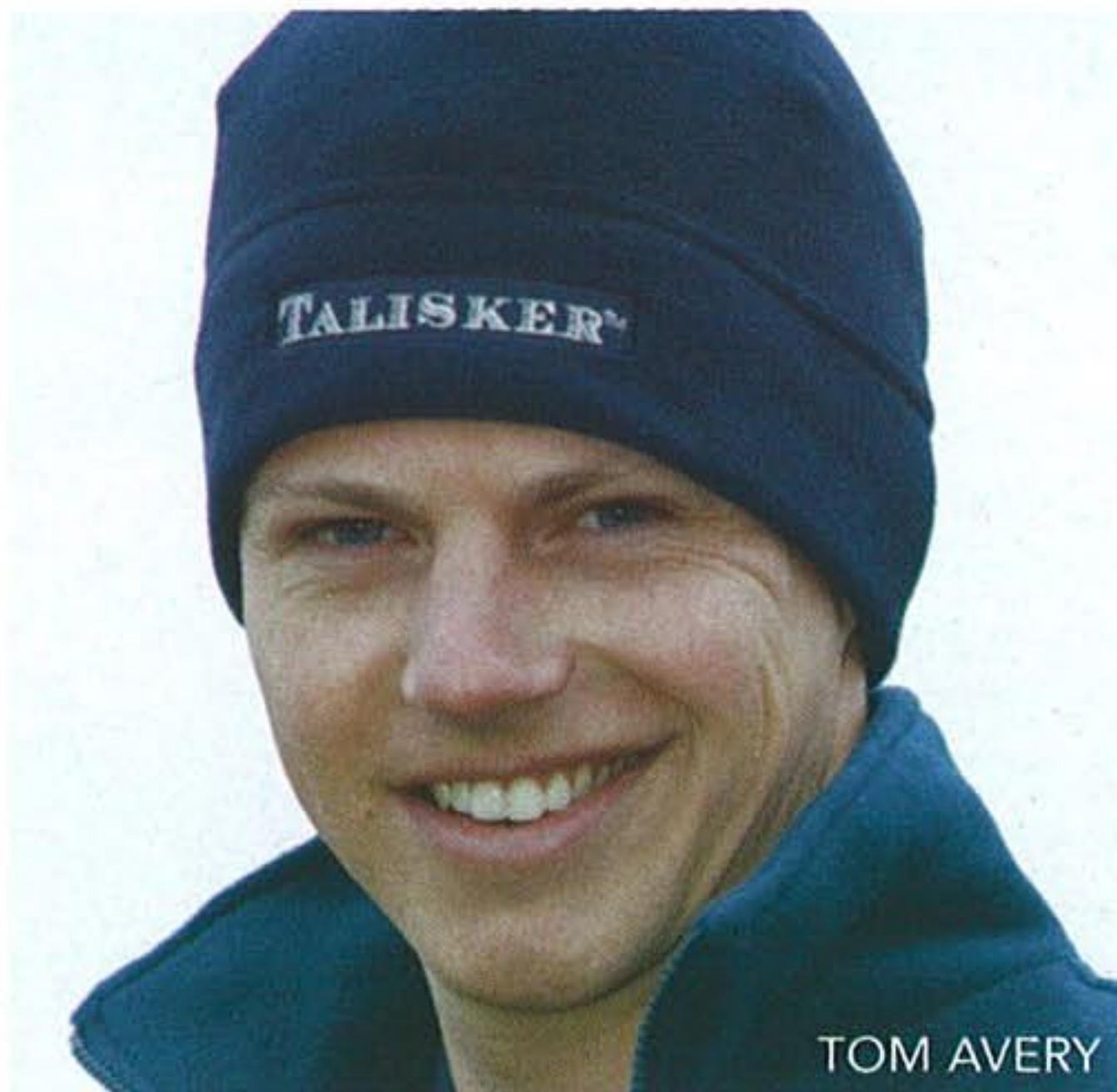
And yet the fact that he is around to tell the tale and has achieved so many feats where others have failed is testament to the fact that he knows when to push his luck and when to hold back, when the fun stops and the serious thinking and the months or years of planning kick in.

"There was a time, when we were going to the North Pole, that the ice was breaking up all around us and we had to decide whether to stop and make camp or keep going.

"We were racing against the clock and everyone had fallen into the Arctic Ocean at one point or another. That was pretty scary." He talks causally about his near-death experiences.

"There was another day when we were in a blizzard. I was in front that day and I remember looking back to see the others, only I couldn't see them. Then I made out these figures that looked like two of my team mates and I waited for them for about 10 minutes and I skied back and they were just two bits of ice. I only had my jacket and skis and it suddenly dawned on me: 'This could be very serious indeed'. But by luck more than anything else we managed to find each other. They were on a completely different course and it made me think that perhaps we had been pushing ourselves too far."

Avery is more than happy, even flattered, to be able to impart some of his extensive experience and



TOM AVERY

knowledge on the trek, but the icing on the cake is the chance to bring in his idol, mentor and friend, from whom he learned much of it in the first place.

"It's a real honour to have been asked to do this and to be able to do it with Ran. He's a phenomenon and was one of my childhood heroes. He's 61 now and is still doing the expeditions and is a real inspiration to us mere mortals."

Whatever the weather, the 2006 Talisker Trek promises to be an unforgettable experience.

"It's going to be a lot of fun and I hope a lot of people will get a lot out of it," says its leader. **LS**

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ISLE of SKYE

The Talisker Trek 2006 will take place over the weekend of May 5 to 7, 2006. Organised by Talisker Single Malt Scotch Whisky in association with The Woodland Trust.

Visit [www.taliskertrek.co.uk](http://www.taliskertrek.co.uk) before March 22 to register for a place on the trek.

See Event Previews on pages 46-47 for more information on The Talisker Trek 2006