

Mick Dawson

Ocean-going adventurer, filmmaker, record-breaker

Motivational speaker Mick Dawson is a former Royal Marines Commando, sailor and adventurer. He saw active service in the Falklands War at the age of seventeen and then again in the Middle East. Following on from his military career he pursued his lifelong passion for the ocean and became a professional sailor skippering luxury yachts across the globe.



Desperately seeking an exciting challenge, Mick became aware of an extreme adventure race to row from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean. Together with his brother Steve he set off in the race on a twenty-one feet long rowing boat, on a voyage of some three thousand miles and successfully crossed the mighty Atlantic Ocean (for the first time) in 2001.

Two years later inspired by his amazing voyage across the Atlantic, Mick attempted to become the first person to row solo across the fearsome North Pacific Ocean; from Choshi in Japan to the iconic span of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Major equipment failure after a series of massive storms ended his attempt less than a thousand miles from the start. Bowed but not beaten he returned to Japan, refitted his boat and undeterred set off again the following year.

What followed was one of the most incredible experiences of his life, braving typhoons, collision, sharks and killer whales Mick rowed four-and-a-half thousand miles across the mighty North Pacific Ocean. Equipment failure meant practically the whole of the voyage was undertaken with no communications to land. On day 109, two thirds of the way into the voyage, and with a successful world-first finish tantalisingly close, disaster struck.

His vessel was capsized by a freak wave and, trapped inside the sinking cabin with his trusty rowing boat upturned and crippled, Mick battled against all the odds to escape and survive in the freezing, unforgiving waters of the North Pacific until rescue arrived the following night. A precarious rescue operation followed which saw Mick plucked, quite literally, from the jaws of death by a passing container ship.

Amazingly, undeterred by this second near fatal setback and with the loss of his cherished rowing boat Mick vowed to return to the North Pacific to complete his epic voyage. Designing and building a state of the art, brand new rowing boat, Bojangles, Mick set about preparing for his third North Pacific rowing adventure.

However there was one final crucial twist to the North Pacific story yet to come. Working for the Atlantic Rowing Race Organisers in 2005 as a safety skipper and ocean-rowing consultant, Mick rescued a two-man team early in the race after a medical emergency and brought them and their

vessel safely back to port. Once there and with one team member unable to continue Mick was 'persuaded' that he should replace the injured crewman and two days later he set off on his second two-man Atlantic crossing.

What followed was one of the most dramatic Atlantic rowing races ever held. From a fleet of 26 vessels seventeen would experience at least one capsize; six vessels eventually would be lost (though no crews) as the Atlantic produced some of the worst weather on record. However Mick and Andrew Morris (his last-minute new rowing partner) battled through everything that was thrown at them and successfully arrived in Antigua after an unforgettable sixty-day voyage.

Having completed such an exhausting and challenging crossing of the Atlantic with a partner he hardly knew, Mick realised the key to North Pacific success was in attempting it as a two-man team, not solo. Chris Martin, an accomplished world champion bronze medallist flat-water rower and successful Atlantic rower, was Mick's natural choice for the job and in 2006 the North Pacific Endeavour became a two-man project.

Departing Choshi, Japan on 8 May 2009, what would follow would be one of the greatest maritime team efforts of all time. Rowing a punishing routine of two hours on, two hours off, around the clock the two friends would be at sea for 189 days 10 hours and 55 minutes before completing their goal and rowing 'Bo' beneath the iconic span of the Golden Gate Bridge on Friday 13th November. Battling extreme heat and cold, typhoons, hurricanes, starvation and all that Mother Nature could throw at them, they relentlessly overcame every challenge put before them. A world first, they were the first and only people ever to successfully row almost 7,000 miles across the North Pacific Ocean into San Francisco.

Discovery Channel subsequently produced a documentary of this epic voyage, *Rowing the Pacific*, which aired for the first time in the UK May 2012 before being released to a global audience across the Discovery network.

Mick Dawson brings his unique, thrilling and inspiring maritime adventures to life in hugely entertaining presentations that appeal to a wide and diverse audience. Mick's honest and down-to-earth delivery, along with a wealth of information, stories and anecdotes derived from over 400 days at sea in a rowing boat on some of the harshest ocean environments on the globe, inspires and motivates audiences around the globe.

Mick Dawson talks about:

- **Brothers rowing the Atlantic** - The story of the 2001 Atlantic Rowing Success when Mick and his brother teamed up to take on the mighty Atlantic Ocean and his passion for rowing the North Pacific was irreversibly ignited.
- **Solo across the North Pacific** - The story of the two solo rows on the North Pacific, the heartbreaking set-backs, dramatic sinking and desperate rescue at sea as well as the lessons learned which would lead to the record-breaking success on the Pacific in 2009.
- **Rowing the Atlantic by mistake** - The bizarre and humorous events that led to an

unplanned last-minute second crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by two strangers who became brothers and formed an unlikely partnership to row across the Atlantic Ocean during some of the most challenging conditions ever recorded.

- **189 days in May** - The definitive story of the world's first successful two-man crossing of the North Pacific in a rowing boat - from Japan, 7,000 miles to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.
- **The complete story** - A presentation covering all of the dramatic setbacks, highs, lows and challenges over a decade, five separate rowing projects, almost 20,000 miles and over 400 days at sea which led to the unique success in 2009, rowing a boat for the first time across the North Pacific Ocean successfully and achieving a Guinness World Record.

Client testimonials

“ Mick Dawson is the type of adventurer who built the California West, the dreamer of impossible dreams who earns in most daring fashion the right to pass through the mighty Golden Gate into San Francisco. He takes us with him on a voyage that is equal parts conquest of nature, marvel of the sea's cruel beauty, exploration of our own dreams and our strength to realize them... with a grateful measure of good humor.

- *San Francisco Chronicle*

“ Your presentation at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park was outstanding. For anyone with an appetite for adventure, your voyage across the Pacific, powered only by your own strength and determination at the oars, represents the pinnacle of what it means to reach for a dream. Your account of this epic journey reminds us just how beautiful and fragile are the oceans that connect us all.

- *San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park*

“ Mick is an engaging speaker with just the right mix of humor, insight, and narrative. To vicariously experience his epic journey is truly inspiring. If you ever had a dream, Mick will first show you how a dream can become an ambition, and then inspire you to believe that what you thought was out of your reach is attainable through perseverance, determination, and faith. Through the telling of his story, subtle yet powerful messages emerge on the themes of partnership, creative problem-solving, goal-setting, nurturing strengths, and managing challenges. Mick's story is a testament to what the human spirit can achieve and is an apt metaphor for any area of personal or organizational growth. Our students and faculty were entranced and enthused by Mick's informative and entertaining talk.

- *Gateway Elementary, Santa Cruz, California*

“ I have been fortunate in my career to have listened to many first class public speakers in the world of sport including Olympic and Paralympic athletes and professional sportsmen but the presentation given by Mick Dawson was the most impressive and motivational I have heard.

We hope that he will accept an invitation to return in the future.

- Devonport High School for Boys, Plymouth, England

“ Mick Dawson gave an inspirational and humorous talk that had 420 students and staff spell bound as he recounted his dramatic voyage during an hour-long assembly. The adventure and Mick’s ability to grasp the audience and hold them with dramatic and breathtaking details of all his voyages was exceptional ... Mick Dawson had an extraordinary impact, he will continue to be discussed and referred to many times over the coming months.

- Ivybridge Community College, Hartford Road, Plympton, Devon

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