**[EDIT HIGHLIGHTED AREAS AS APPROPRIATE]**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Cumbrian widower to pass through LOCATION during 1,800 mile walk across the UK in memory of wife**

A Cumbrian man will walk 1,800 miles across the UK in memory of his late wife to raise vital funds for the MS Society. He will take a break to meet with members of the LOCATION MS Society to talk about their support for people with MS in the local area, his challenge and MS research.

Gary Rushworth, 64, from Barrow-in-Furness, lost his wife Moira in February 2020 following complications related to her multiple sclerosis (MS). The loving husband will walk coast to coast twice, firstly across southern Scotland and then after walking Land’s End to John O’Groats, across northern England. Gary will be stopping at many locations that hold special memories for him and Moira.

The MS Society group in LOCATION has been operating since YEAR and provides a variety of social activities and support groups for people with MS – generating opportunities for people to meet with others who are experiencing similar issues (EDIT AS APPROPRIATE). The group has XXXX members and is open to all those affected by MS – including friends and family.

Gary’s grueling challenge began on Thursday 14 April in Carlisle, the place and date Gary and Moira first met. It will end on Sunday 25 September in Longtown, Cumbria – Moira’s place of birth and on her birthday. Other special occasions Gary will mark include:

* First date – Canonbie, 17 April
* Engagement – Malham Cove, 21 June
* Wedding – Holy Trinity Church, Darlington, 19 June

**Gary, who retired in 2014 to become Moira’s full-time carer, says:** “This year is an important year for me as it will be Moira’s 60th Birthday and our 35th wedding anniversary. I very much want to achieve something for which she would be proud. Moira and I both had a love for walking and it was one of the first loves that MS stole from her. Ultimately, this prevented us from having the twilight years of our lives walking the paths of this beautiful country together.

“There are currently very few treatment options for people living with progressive forms of MS and this meant Moira’s condition worsened over time, leading to extended periods of time in hospital and a weakened immune system.”

**Gary adds**: “I want to use this opportunity of walking across the country to meet with as many local MS Society groups as possible. It’s important to me to be able to share my experience with people who are going through the same things. I hope that together we’ll be able to raise awareness of MS and the important research that my walk will help to fund.”

Gary will be raising money for Octopus, the world-first mega-trial for progressive MS funded by the MS Society. Octopus, so called because of its multiple arms, is a revolutionary clinical trial that will transform the way treatments for progressive MS are tested – and could deliver desperately needed new options up to three times faster. Recruitment for the trial will begin in summer 2022.

More than 130,000 people live with MS in the UK. MS damages nerves in your body and makes it harder to do everyday things, like walk, talk, eat and think. It can be relentless, painful and disabling.

**NAME, Group Coordinator at LOCATION, says:** “We’re so grateful to Gary for sparing time on this amazing challenge to share his story with our group and hear about the ways we are supporting people living with MS in the local area.

“More than 130,000 people live with MS in the UK and we provide support at our local group through our monthly support sessions, coffee mornings, and exercise classes. (EDIT AS APPROPRIATE)

**You can follow Gary’s walk on social media at:** [**https://www.facebook.com/WalkingforMS**](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/5pZkCAN7nhN0K0KIG-R1-?domain=facebook.com) and [**https://www.instagram.com/walking\_for\_ms/**](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/tB7TCBN7gh7qXqXT6Cht0?domain=instagram.com/)

**To sponsor Gary and help stop MS visit:** [**https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/walking-for-multiple-sclerosis**](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/walking-for-multiple-sclerosis)

ENDS

**Notes to editors**

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**About multiple sclerosis**

* Over 130,000 people live with multiple sclerosis (MS) in the UK
* MS damages nerves in your body and makes it harder to do everyday things, like walk, talk, eat and think
* It’s relentless, painful and disabling
* Research has got us to a critical point. We can see a future where nobody needs to worry about MS getting worse
* Our Stop MS Appeal needs to raise £100 million to find treatments for everyone with MS

**About the MS Society**

* The MS Society is here to make life better for people with MS, through research, campaigning and support
* For information about MS or to donate visit [www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)