

## Media Information



**May 19 2004**

### **British rowers set to break north Atlantic record**

FOUR British rowers are to set out from St John's, Newfoundland this summer to create a new record for rowing across the north Atlantic.

Former Royal Marine Mark Stubbs, 40, Times journalist Jonathan Gornall, 48, ex-SAS man Pete Bray, 48 and navigation expert John Wills, 33, hope to break the 55-day record set more than 100 years ago by two Norwegian fishermen.

Their vessel is The Pink Lady®, a 30ft high-technology carbon fibre boat, light and designed for the job in hand: a rapid 2,100 mile unsupported crossing of the North Atlantic in conditions that can range from flat calm to raging seas.

The team's first hurdle will be the treacherous Grand Banks, the fishing grounds that extend for 350 miles off the coast of Newfoundland and were the setting for the film *The Perfect Storm*. The relatively shallow banks can transform swells moving across from the deeper Atlantic waters into steep waves.

Another hazard the men must tackle before they break through to the deeper waters of the Gulf Stream is the Labrador Current, which runs down the eastern seaboard and brings with it fog and icebergs from the frozen north.

The crew must carry with them everything they need for the voyage. The boat is equipped with a desalinator for making seawater drinkable, solar panels and a small generator for electricity and six different types of high-calorie dehydrated expedition food. Pink Lady carries GPS navigation, satellite communications and two independent satellite tracking and SOS systems.

The official finishing line for the crossing will be the line of longitude running through the Bishop Rock lighthouse, Britain's most southwesterly outpost, just west of the Isles of Scilly. From there the four men, who are also hoping to become the first rowers to complete an Atlantic crossing in Britain, will head directly for Falmouth, Cornwall, where they plan to dock at the National Maritime Museum.

There have been 29 attempts to row across the North Atlantic from west to east. Only ten have been successful, not one has reached mainland Britain and, since 1966, six rowers have died in the attempt. Their names are recorded on a limestone memorial erected by the Ocean Rowing Society on cliffs overlooking the Atlantic at Kilkee in County Clare, Ireland.

This will be skipper Mark Stubbs's second attempt on the record in this boat. In 2002 he and three other men had been at sea 21 days and, with over 1,000 miles behind them, were on schedule to smash the record when disaster struck. The boat's rudder was damaged irreparably and the attempt had to be abandoned. The men and the boat were lifted on to a passing ship.

Skipper Mark Stubbs said, "When I was 18 I was in active service in the Falklands. It made me appreciate my life and with the rest of the crew I am relishing the battle with the elements to break the world record and enter the history books in a positive way.

"We are fanatical about keeping fit so we couldn't wish for a healthier sponsor than Pink Lady® apples."

The training diet includes a plentiful supply of Pink Lady® apples and, for the crossing itself, to reduce unnecessary weight, the apples will be freeze-dried like the rest of their rations.

It is anticipated that school children will follow the journey via the internet to heighten their awareness of geography, fitness and healthy eating.

Andy Macdonald, representing Pink Lady® says, "The additional challenge for Pink Lady® and the rowers is to go some way towards countering the trend for unhealthy and manufactured snack foods. Obesity linked to poor health, especially children, is of national concern. The Pink Lady® message is all about sound health and with this endeavour we are attempting to go some way to redress the balance."

The rowers expect to arrive in Falmouth, Cornwall, at the beginning of August.

[www.gopinklady.com](http://www.gopinklady.com)  
[www.oceanrow.com](http://www.oceanrow.com)

- Ends -

Photographs of the Pink Lady® boat and crew are available on request or download high resolution images from: <http://www.yesconsultancy.com/PinkLadyAtlanticFirst>

Interviews with skipper Mark Stubbs and crew available on request.

Please contact Paul McCaffrey (020 7569 3043 / [paul@yesconsultancy.com](mailto:paul@yesconsultancy.com)) or Tina Fotherby (020 7569 3042 / [tina@yesconsultancy.com](mailto:tina@yesconsultancy.com)) at The YES Consultancy for further information.

**Pink Lady and the flowing heart logo are the registered trademarks of Apple and Pear Australia Ltd**