



Pink Lady® Atlantic First

JONATHAN GORNALL **Crew Member**



Jonathan Gornall is a senior journalist on *The Times*. After covering the progress of Mark Stubbs' 2002 record attempt in Skandia Atlantic Spirit, Jonathan now finds himself performing the role of fully-fledged crew member on the Pink Lady® Atlantic First project. However, Jonathan's experience of ocean bound expeditions is not limited to simply reporting on them; on the contrary, he already has previous exposure to the world of Atlantic crossings.

In 2001 Jonathan built his own 24 foot rowing boat and then ventured solo 1200 miles into the Atlantic, after his partner quit in the first week of an east to west double-handed rowing race. Unfortunately, Jonathan did not manage to finish the entire crossing by himself, but this in itself serves as ideal motivation for completing this latest project. As far as Jonathan is concerned, the Pink Lady® Atlantic First crossing is all about unfinished business and about completing a journey that he started over three years ago. And as with his fellow crew members, all of whom have tasted defeat at the hands of the sea at some point in their lives, he has emerged from his previous experience stronger, wiser and more determined than ever:

"I learnt a lot about myself during those 45 days alone and a lot about the Atlantic Ocean. Rarely a day goes past when I don't look at a picture of my boat, burnt mid-Atlantic as a hazard to shipping after I abandoned her. I also learnt a tough but invaluable lesson about team spirit and I am now determined to put all of that to good use."

When not writing features for *The Times*, Jonathan likes to spend his time running marathons and sailing. He is also an accomplished triathlete. Such hobbies provide the perfect basis for pre-departure fitness training, but on top of this Jonathan also trains for up to three hours a day, alternating between rowing machine sessions of either one or two hours at a time, weight training routines, running and swimming. Such a gruelling training programme might sound excessive, but it is entirely necessary if the Pink Lady® crew is to beat both the 35-day absolute record, set by an 11-man French team during an east to west crossing in 1992 and the current 55-day record for the more technically challenging west to east crossing.

As well as his daily gym routines, Jonathan also takes part in the regular team training expeditions on the water. These arduous sessions see the four man crew rowing in pairs for two hours at a time, non-stop for a 24 hour period. This is the best possible way to practise their Atlantic routine, which they will adopt continuously for their 33 days at sea, starting from the moment that they leave St John's. Not only are such practice expeditions good endurance training, but they also allow the team to rehearse

onboard operating systems. Even practising changeovers is a vital part of the training programme, since minutes lost whilst swapping over rowers will all add to the overall crossing time over the space of their 2100-mile Atlantic journey.

It is difficult to imagine in any detail the hardships that Jonathan and his fellow team mates will suffer. Physical and mental exhaustion go without saying, but it is the smaller, less-obvious ailments such as blistered hands, sore backside and constant sleep deprivation that will ultimately contribute to the overall discomfort of the journey. However, Jonathan is determined that this crossing be something that he enjoys, rather than something that he simply endures. Even so, one can not help pondering over the depths of human endurance required to survive such an ordeal. At times the crew will be tired, aching and demoralised and the only thing that will keep them driving forward across the North Atlantic and into the record books, will be the support of each other. In Jonathan's own words:

"Our excellent team morale and camaraderie is such a bonus. And it was Mark Stubbs' inspirational leadership in the first place that persuaded me that here was a boat and, most importantly an inspired crew that could take the record".

www.gopinklady.com

www.oceanrow.com

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