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Brits to pedal from Lagos to Miami



Englishmen Steve Smith 27, and Jason Lewis 26, are currently staying at Lagos Marina in the Algarve after having cycled 1700 miles from England. If you're thinking that this feat deserves acclaim, the trip so far represents a mere 5% of a planned two and a half year, 29000 mile trip entitled "Pedal for the Planet".

Around September 15th, the two men will leave Lagos Marina in an eight metre vessel named *Moksha* driven by pedal power alone, and attempt to reach the Miami coast with around ten shopping days left for Christ-

mas. This is just the first 4000 miles of a gruelling trip that will take in around twenty countries in three continents, and a total of 9000 miles on the planet's oceans.

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Atlantic pedal crossing

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The News met up with Steve and Jason last week at the marina, after they had cycled down from Cascais Naval Club. Steve told us that the trip, supported in name by UNESCO, has the objective of "inspiring the world's youth, and promoting international understanding". Both men have a passion for the environment, Steve having ditched a career as environmental researcher in Paris to do the trip, and if they succeed, it will have been the first ever circumnavigation by human power alone.

On reaching Miami, they plan to head for Alaska on bicycles. From there they will navigate the treacherous North Pacific to Japan, one of the more unpredictable stages of the journey. From Japan they will pedal to China, and then cross Nepal, India Pakistan and Iran, coming into Eastern Europe via the Ukraine on the final leg back to London. British delivery company DHL have promised to carry the boat across land.

During the land journeys, they plan to spend time talking to children about environmental issues under a scheme organised with the Council for Education in World Citizenship, which has been responsible for such projects as building libraries in Kazakhstan.

The boat cost 25,000 pounds to build and equip at the Exeter Maritime Museum, and it was there that the men were initially persuaded against the idea of canoes or a rowing boat. The vessel is capable of around three knots, a fast walking pace, and Steve or Jason plan to do three or four hour shifts pedalling while the other cooks or sleeps. The gearing is 5:1, and it drives an 18in propeller at the rear.

For the Atlantic crossing, they will take 250kg of dehydrated Arctic rations supplied by the British

Army, and they also have a method of desalinating sea water to drink. Steve and Jason will feel more than confident knowing that the boat is fitted with an Argos and Epirb satellite locating system.

Steve smiles as he tells me that luxury items have been limited to walkmans, and a "Sonic the Hedgehog" Gameboy computer game given to him to while away the endless hours. When "Sonic" has lost his appeal however, Steve plans to try his hand at astral navigation. Jason is currently learning the blues harmonica, and plans to have the skill perfected before the Miami coastline comes into view.

The vital ingredient still desperately needed to complete the mammoth trip however, is a major sponsor, and debts are still outstanding after the construction of the boat. They have already received good coverage from several British TV companies, and the British press including The Times, the Independent, and The Guardian have all run extensive news items. With regards to future publicity, a further 47 minutes of world-wide television has already been guaranteed.

Steve and Jason would appreciate any support they can get, and will welcome any visitors to Lagos Marina who would like to see the boat and maybe pay ten pounds to have their name written on the side of the boat. They are also after a Sony Hi 8 video recorder so that their extraordinary trip around the world can be recorded.

The start of the Atlantic crossing, part of the overall trip that will "spice up life" in Steve's own words, is dependant on a four day "weather window" ensuring enough time to hit open sea, and from there, will-power, discipline, determination and strong knees will be needed to arrive back in London in 1997.