

PEDAL FOR THE PLANET
*****PRESS CLIPPINGS*****

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Pedal-boat adventure pair cross Atlantic

A former Wolverhampton adventurer who is trying to pedal around the world is 500 miles from completing an Atlantic crossing.

Steve Smith, aged 28, whose mother lives in Shifnal, and his fellow traveller Jason Lewis, 26, from Dorset, are the first to try to pedal the ocean east-west as part of a 29,000-mile land-sea marathon.

The pair set off on the first of their three major sea voyages from Portugal in October, and have made landfall on the Caribbean island of Providenciales, in the Turks and Caicos group.

Steve and Jason covered 4,000 miles in 97 days on their 26ft wooden boat, and they now hope to arrive in Miami, Florida, in two or three weeks.

The pair were given a heroes' welcome by youngsters in Providenciales, but their £25,000 hand-made boat suffered damage to the centre board crossing the reef.

"It was the nearest we came to serious grief as we came through the big breakers," said Steve.

"Arrival feels like being paroled into a tropical heaven after a long stretch of hard labour and solitary confinement."

Steve's mum Sylvia said: "I am obviously extremely proud."

Scares

She spoke to her son after he landed and said he was on such a high after the welcome from locals.

Steve told her they had enjoyed Christmas lunch aboard an American cable-laying ship they encountered on December 25.

Other scares included a whale using their tiny craft as a backscratcher, and two near misses from much bigger ships at night.

The adventurers hope to start the final leg of their transatlantic marathon in a few days.

They set off from Greenwich Observatory, London, on July 12, pedal-boated across the Channel, and mountain biked through France, Spain and Portugal.

After landfall in Florida, the pair will bike and boat up to Alaska, into Russia and down through the Sea of Japan, north west China and northern India.

The last leg of their 18 country, 27-month odyssey will be a pedal through Europe, before they cross the Channel again for a Thames homecoming.