



Matron May farewell



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High seas adventure



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Fish fracas



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Adventurer relates worldly tales

by Lesley Watson

BRITISH ocean pedaller Jason Lewis kept passersby at the Marina Mirage enthralled this week with tales of high sea adventures.

The 32-year-old adventurer has made Port Douglas his home for the past month since he docked his 8m (26ft) pedal boat Moksha at the Port Douglas Yacht Club on August 18, after a 32 day, 1700km crossing from the Solomon Islands to Australia.

Jason plans to be the first person to circumnavigate the world by human power and has set up a display at the marina to raise money for the next stretch of his 52,000km journey.

The intrepid explorer has so far spent six years on his journey, Expedition 360, after setting out from the Greenwich meridian in England on July 1994 — cycling through France and Spain to Portugal, before braving the Atlantic in the traditional river boat.

Recalling his 111-day Atlantic crossing, Jason said: "It was tough and challenging. We were almost run down by a massive fishing trawler, flipped on our side by a whale and knocked down by a freak 35m wave.

"Steve Smith, my pedalling partner at the time, was washed overboard but miraculously caught his leg on a desalinator hose, before we self-righted. It would have been impossible to turn the boat around to rescue him."

Once the Moksha made landfall at Miami, Florida, Jason took to rollerblades to cross the US, but was hit by a car in Colorado and ended up in hospital with broken legs.



FUNDRAISING for his expedition ... around-the-world adventurer Jason Lewis.

"Ironically, I was awarded damages, which has kept the expedition going for the past two years, but that was not a very practical method of fundraising," Jason quipped.

In 1998, Jason tackled the 11,500km Pacific

carrying on deck, than in our other gear.

"When April saw them eyeing the cabbage up, she yelled at them to leave our remaining food alone, and fortunately they listened to her and took off."

Now high and dry in

"They had semi-automatic weapons and we had heard many horror tales of piracy ..."

— Jason Lewis

Ocean leg, accompanied by Steve from America to Hawaii, from there to Tarawa in the Gilbert Island alone and then to Australia, via Tulagi Island in the Solomons, with American school teacher April Abril.

"We avoided Honiara because of the civil unrest, but were approached by a Malaitan Eagle gunboat on our first day out from the Solomons.

"They had semi-automatic weapons and we had heard many horror tales of piracy, but the men seemed more interested in the large cabbage we were

Port, Jason has been actively fundraising for the next part of his expedition.

He plans to rollerblade to Townsville and on to Darwin, rejoin the Moksha in Darwin to pedal across the Arafura Sea to Dili in East Timor, island hop along the coastline of Indonesia by kayak, cycle through Thailand and China to the Himalayan foothills, cross the Himalayas via Tibet to Nepal, cycle to the southern tip of India, reunite with Moksha to paddle to East Africa, make landfall in Kenya, then cycle through the Middle East, eastern and western

Europe to England to recross the Greenwich line.

Unfazed by the threat of local politics or wars affecting the expedition, Jason said he would play his trip by ear. "I expect to be in the thick of it most of the way, and may have to leave out some countries or change route altogether."

Meanwhile, he has been visiting schools and service clubs on his educational and fundraising mission.

"The response from locals has been great, but I may have to return to England or the States to raise sufficient money for the next leg," Jason said.

He hopes to resume his travels in April "when it starts to get cooler" and has invited anyone with rollerblades or a bike to join him on his trip to Darwin.

Meanwhile, residents are invited to view the boat and his display at the marina until October 2 and sponsor his trip through donations. For the cost of \$20, sponsors may have their name inscribed on the side of his boat.