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Pedal power takes Briton 7,000 miles across Pacific

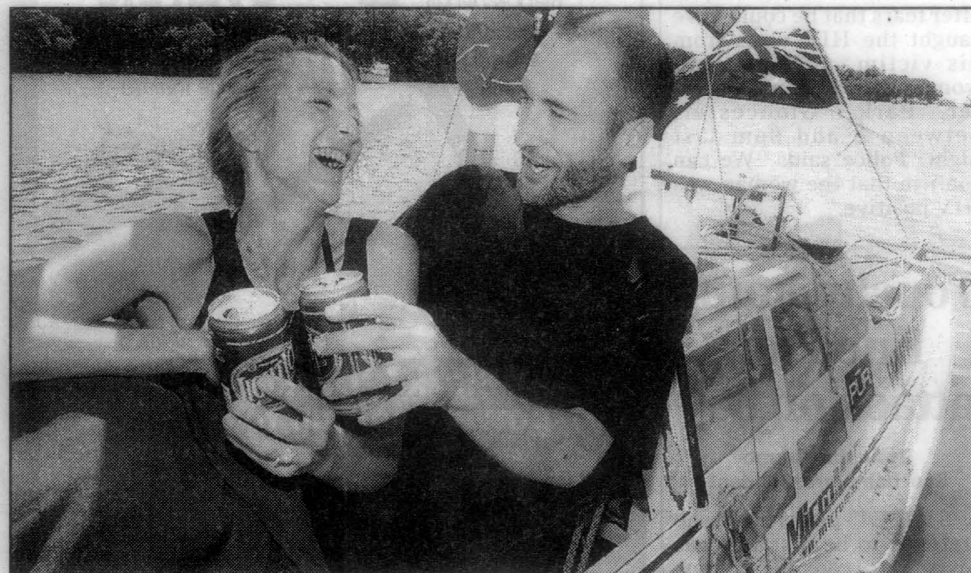
A BRITISH adventurer who is travelling around the world by human power alone yesterday completed his 7,000-mile crossing of the Pacific in a pedal boat.

Jason Lewis, 32, from Bridport, Dorset, celebrated with cold beer after pedalling from the United States to Australia.

With him was April Abril, a teacher from Rye, Colorado, who helped pedal the 26ft Moksha into Port Douglas, Queensland. She was one of three friends who took turns helping him on island-hopping legs across the ocean.

She suffered sea sickness and was transferred off the £26,000 vessel for a medical check-up once they had been towed through the Great Barrier Reef. But Miss Abril was well enough to pedal the final nine miles of the 1,100-mile leg from the Solomon Islands to Australia.

With no charts for the area, the pair accepted an



Can do: April Abril and Jason Lewis celebrate in Port Douglas yesterday

11-mile tow through the treacherous reef following a week of adverse tides, huge seas and 25-knot winds which blew them 130 miles north of their Cairns target.

"It is so great to be off the boat, but it is only just sinking in what has been achieved," said Mr Lewis, whose epic journey began in London six years ago.

"We have just crossed the biggest ocean in the world by human power."

Miss Abril, who had made her first sea voyage, said:

"It was such a test of perseverance to hang in there. I lost quite a bit of weight, but I never lost my desire to pedal."

Mr Lewis's journey began in Greenwich in July 1994 and he has travelled more than 20,000 miles. He is short of money but hopes to raise sponsorship to cycle and skate across Australia before heading across Asia and Europe to arrive in London in about four years.

He started with Steve Smith, from

Wolverhampton, who helped pedal Moksha 2,200 miles from San Francisco to Hawaii.

Then Mr Lewis landed his craft on Tarawa, in the Kiribati Republic, in July last year after a 2,200-mile solo voyage from Hawaii.

He was joined this summer for the 1,100 miles from Tarawa to the Solomon Islands by Chris Tipper, 34, from Brighton, who built Moksha but had never sailed her.

Then Miss Abril took over.