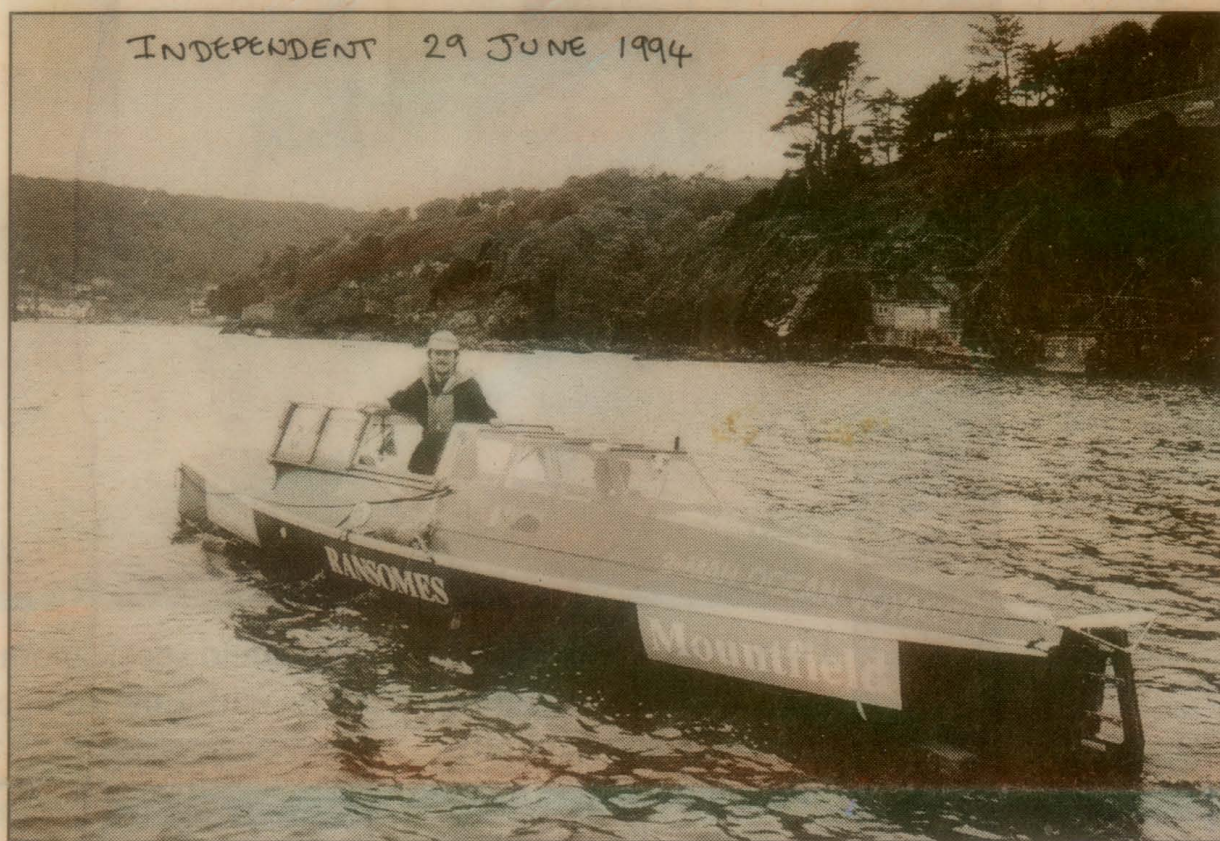


PEDAL FOR THE PLANET
PRESS CLIPPINGS

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Pitting pedal power against the waves



Two men plan to circumnavigate the globe by boat and bicycle, talking to children en route about the environment. **Oliver Gillie reports**

A STRANGE boat will leave England next month to begin the first circumnavigation of the globe by muscle power alone. The two-man crew will use their pedal-powered boat for sea crossings but will take to bicycles for the land stages of the journey.

The project, called "pedal for the planet", has been dreamt up by two men whose passion is for the environment, rather than the sea. Sailors have circumnavigated the world "forwards" and "backwards" while oarsmen have crossed both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, but until now no one has attempted a circumnavigation by human power alone.

Steve Smith, 27, and Jason Lewis, 26, thought of the idea because they wanted to travel round the world. Bicycles were chosen as a simple way of travelling by land and the boat was a logical development from that.

"At first we thought we would use a canoe or a rowing boat to

make the sea crossings but we were persuaded that this would waste all the fitness we had built up in our leg muscles," Mr Smith said. "We met Alan Boswell, who designed the boat, through the Exeter Maritime Museum when we were looking at their collection of transatlantic rowing boats. He persuaded us that pedal power was the logical way to go."

The boat, built from wood, is eight metres long, one-and-a-half metres wide, and cost about £25,000 to make and equip. One person pedals and steers the boat from a seat in the rear of the covered cockpit while the other cooks or sleeps in a small cabin in the bows. The boat will make an average speed of three knots, a fast walking speed, if wind and weather are not against it.

"We can get the speed up to four knots if we really go for it but after that the boat makes a bow wave and however hard we pedal it would not go much faster," said

Mr Smith. The two men are planning to pedal more or less continuously 12 hours a day in two- or four-hour shifts, seven days a week. Mr Smith has cycled from England to Marrakesh achieving more than 100 miles a day pedalling for 12 hours between overnight stops.

However, during their circumnavigation they plan to average only 40 miles a day over land because they want to spend time talking to children about environmental issues, under a scheme organised with the Council for Education in World Citizenship.

After crossing the channel in their pedal boat *Moksha*, which means freedom in Sanskrit, they will cycle to Cape St Vincent on the south-west tip of Portugal. The boat will travel on ahead of them by trailer. They will then pedal across the Atlantic, aiming for Florida; cycle across America to Alaska and when the ice melts they will take to the water once



Jason Lewis in the pedalling seat. Left: The boat he and his partner will use to circumnavigate the globe Photographs: Kenny Brown/FSP

more pedalling down the Yukon river to Anchorage. The boat will take them across the Bering Sea and down the Kamchatka peninsula to Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan, arriving in August or September 1995.

However, determined though they are, the men have only enough money to last until they get to Florida. So far they have failed to raise any financial sponsorship for the project perhaps because it does not fit into any of the usual categories of derring-do.

Their aim is simply to complete a journey which has never been attempted before.

Mr Smith, who keeps financially afloat and fit for the journey by working as a cycle courier, said: "We have tried to prepare ourselves for nightmare experiences at sea. The first storm will be the most frightening, after that we will know that the boat is able to cope with the forces of nature. In the end it boils down to will-power and discipline. We have that and the determination to succeed."