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BUILD-UP BEGINS FOR 25,000-MILE CHALLENGE

Lyme Bay base set for world pedalboat bid

A PEDAL-powered craft due to embark on a round-the-world charity trip in June will soon be undergoing sea trials in Lyme Bay.

Jason Lewis (26), who comes from Askerswell, and fellow adventurer Steve Smith, from Wolverhampton, will power the craft across oceans and pedal bikes across continents during their 25,000-mile challenge.

They are now seeking sponsorship from local and national firms for their *Pedal for the Planet Expedition*, during which they will visit schools in 15 countries.

The two men, working with the Council for Education in World Citizenship, aim to be the first people to circle the Northern Hemisphere using their own power.

Their 28-month journey will take them across the English Channel, the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and through Europe, Asia and North America.

Mr Lewis said this week that although hoped-for sponsorship from a major firm had not materialised, the trip was definitely still on.

But it would probably mean their having to dispense with plans for a UK-based Press

By MAUREEN HYMAS

office, which would have provided them with a world-wide communications system.

Mr Lewis said: "With expeditions of this kind you need to have a good network of communications in order to attract major sponsors."

He added that their main sponsor to date was DHL, the express carrier company that backed adventurer Rebecca Stevenson's Everest expedition.

Mr Lewis said: "When we cycle from one end of Europe to the other, they will be flying the boat over for us and they will also be flying supplies around the world for us."

He stressed that every possible measure was being taken to ensure safety on board the craft — and that was where any further finance donated would go.

"We have inserted a lot more safety equipment into

the boat and that is our ace card," he added.

The two adventurers hoped to obtain a £4,000 satellite link, which would ensure that their position was continually monitored.

Mr Lewis said a number of firms had donated equipment as a result of their appearance at the Boat Show in January.

He added: "We have both just completed a yacht-master's course in offshore navigation."

The craft will soon be taken, for self-righting tests, to the Exeter base where it was designed. Mr Lewis and Mr Smith will then take the boat to Salcombe and into Lyme Bay for sea trials.

"We plan to live on it for a few days and may then pedal it towards Portland Bill," said Mr Lewis.

Any firms willing to help with sponsorship can contact Mr Lewis care of The Council for Education in World Citizenship, Seymour Mews House, Seymour Mews, London W1H, 9PE. Tel: 071 9351752.