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WEST ADVENTURER GOES IT ALONE AS PARTNER QUILTS ROUND-WORLD VOYAGE



After 29,000 miles and five years sharing a pedal boat, Steve finds a different passion in life

By Sarah Harris

FOR mile after sweat-stained mile they pedalled Moksha through the seven seas, seeking to conquer the world.

In a pedal boat made for two, Steve Smith and Jason Lewis braved mountainous waves and other threats to their lives for five gruelling years.

The adventurous duo shared a dream - to complete a record-shattering 29,000-mile trip around the globe.

But the daredevil double act broke up when Steve decided to jump ship in Hawaii, where the pair were preparing for the second leg of their voyage across the Pacific.

Steve, aged 32, plans to go New Zealand, where he hopes to set up a sustainable living centre.

His decision leaves Jason, from Bridport, Dorset, to pedal on alone - and in increased danger - for the rest of the journey.

Jason, 31, said: "Steve has found a different passion in life than being on a pedal boat."

And Kenny Brown, the Pedal for the Planet expedition's documentary maker, said: "Steve felt he would be better doing his thing in one place as opposed to charging round the world."

Steve will be keeping in touch with Jason's progress, and hopes to be in New Zealand at around the time of the Moksha's planned landfall in Australia.

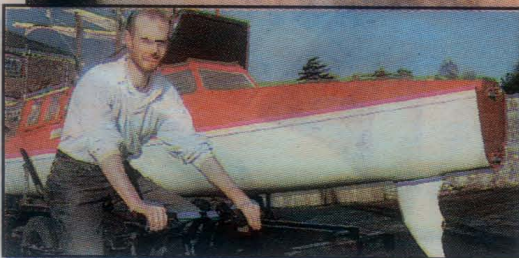
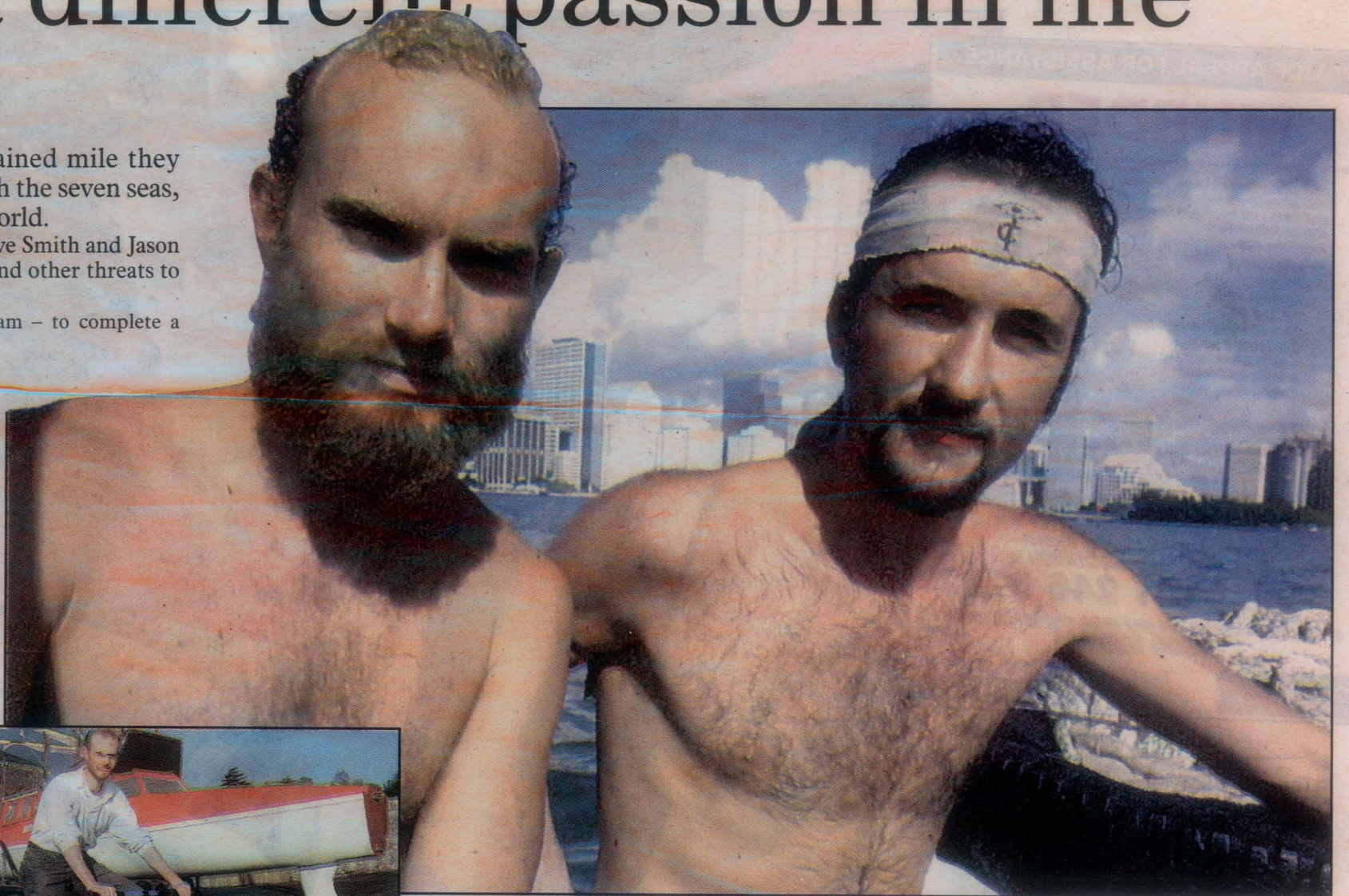
Jason is now a day into his solo 2,200-mile, 70-day journey from Hawaii to the tiny atoll of Tarawa in the Kiribati group in his 26-foot craft.

Once in Tarawa, Jason will decide whether to recruit another expedition member.

Next stop after Tarawa is Australia, around 2,300 miles away, which Jason hopes to reach in time for the Millennium.

He is also planning to fit in a break - returning to Britain to attend his sister's wedding.

Jason and Steve reached Hawaii last



I want to be alone: After five years pedalling Steve Smith and Jason Lewis are going their separate ways
Above: The pair on the Caribbean leg of their epic voyage. Inset: Steve and Moksha

November after a two-month voyage from San Francisco.

The pair set out on their odyssey from the Greenwich Meridian in London on July 12, 1994. They pedal-boated across the English Channel and mountain-biked to Portugal.

From Portugal, they voyaged 4,500 miles across the Atlantic to Miami in 111 days - the first east-west pedal-powered crossing of the Atlantic.

Steve then cycled east-west across the USA, with Jason making the trip on in-line skates - and suffering double leg fractures on the way when he was hit by a car.

After months of preparation, and improvements to their tiny craft, the pair set off from San Francisco to tackle the first leg of the Pacific.

The Pacific voyage is the third sea crossing for the pedal boat, which was

built at Exeter Maritime Museum in Devon.

The expedition's plan was to canoe and mountain bike thousands of miles across Indonesia, Asia and Europe back to UK.

The pedal boat, driven by a propeller, has a global positioning system, a system for collecting rainwater and solar panels to power communications, including a web site so schools in the

United States and Britain can keep in touch with the expedition's progress.

Just hours after setting off on his own, Jason said: "I am intrigued about what doing this leg on my own is going to be like."

"I am a little bit apprehensive about being asleep on my own without someone else aboard looking out for shipping, other than that I am fine about it."