



PRESS RELEASE

2 BOYS START THEIR ATTEMPT TO BREAK WORLD RECORD WITH ATLANTIC ROW & RAISE OVER £100,000 FOR BREAST CANCER CARE

DATE: 4 December 2013

Race Tracker: <http://www.taliskerwhiskyatlanticchallenge.com/race-tracker/>

Blog: www.blog.mailasail.com/2boys Website: www.2boysinaboat.com

Luke Birch and Jamie Sparks (both 21) have today started their two-person non-stop challenge to cross the Atlantic Ocean's 3,000 nautical miles as part of the 'world's toughest endurance race'.

Childhood friends Luke Birch from Lincolnshire (Doddington; also an Edinburgh student) and Jamie Sparks from London (Islington; also a Bristol student) are attempting to break the World Record for the youngest team to row the Atlantic. At the same time, they are raising funds for Breast Cancer Care*. Their target is £100,000 – they have already raised over £80,000.

Luke and Jamie have been training since summer 2012. Luke is currently studying at Edinburgh University and is no stranger to pushing himself to the limit: in 2010 he swam the English Channel in 14 hours and 45 minutes as a solo swimmer (at the time only 50 people aged 18 and under had completed the swim). Jamie is studying at Bristol University and is from Islington, London. He played rugby for Middlesex (U18s and U20s) and cycled 1500 miles from Gibraltar to London.

The Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge is described as the 'world's toughest endurance race'. Teams – including Luke and Jamie rowing as '2 Boys in a Boat' – will row more than 3,000 nautical miles non-stop in two hour shifts across the world's second largest ocean, the Atlantic. Rowers started today from the Canary Islands (La Gomera) and finish in Antigua; it will take 40-55 days to complete the challenge – depending of course on the weather. There are currently twenty teams entered in the race; twelve are British.

As part of their preparations, Luke and Jamie – apart from rowing thousands of practice miles on their boat and rowing machines - have had to gain an RYA Yachtmaster Ocean Theory certificate, a First Aid certificate and an RYA Basic Sea Survival course completion certificate. During the race, they will not be allowed any outside assistance and Luke and Jamie will have to survive with onboard supplies, making up their dehydrated food with water produced by a solar powered desalinator.

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Luke and Jamie have purchased their boat – the Maple Leaf - using their savings and some help from their families, though the plan is to sell the boat afterwards to offset some of the cost.

For more information please visit www.2boysinaboat.com.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Media relations handled by: Amy Claridge MCIPR on 01522 698 698 / 07770 764446. IMAGES AVAILABLE.

*The 2Boys are raising money for Breast Cancer Care, as Claire Birch (Luke's mother) had treatment for it last year. She is happy to be interviewed about it. Claire is also the challenge's fundraising and sponsorship manager.

www.2boysinaboat.com

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