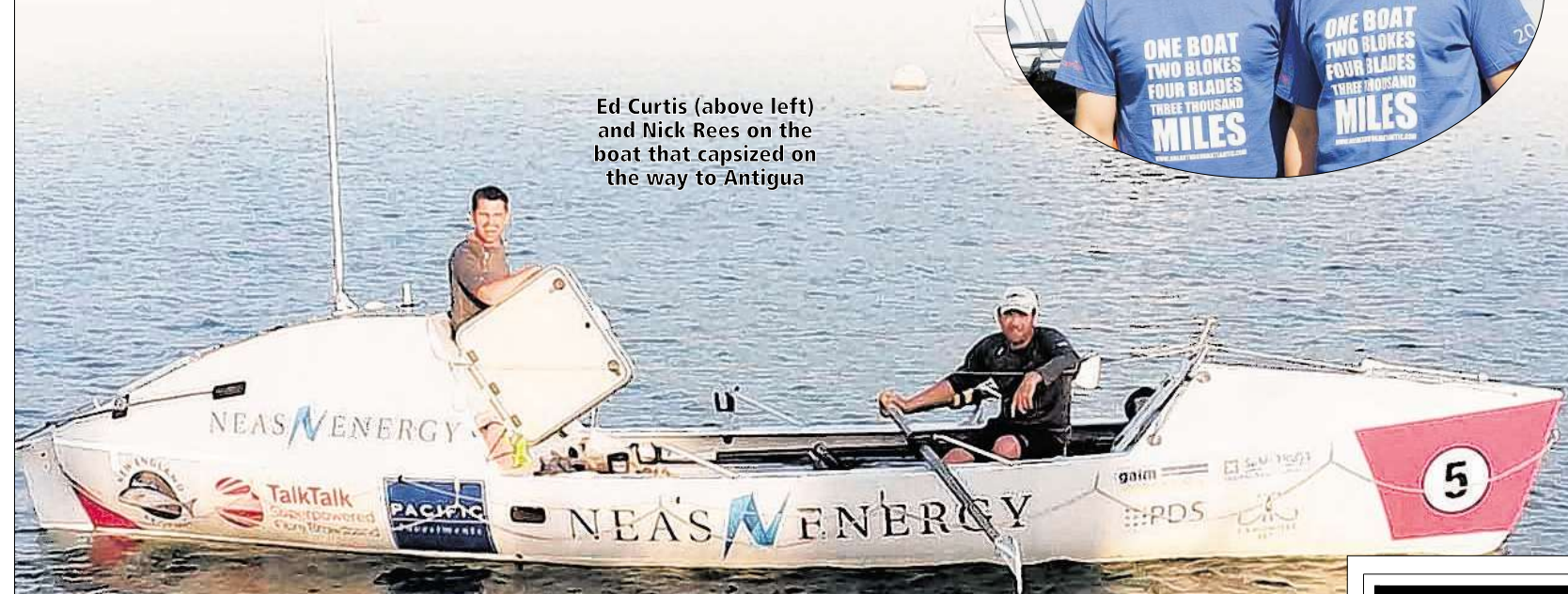




# Rowers rescued after capsizing in Atlantic



Ed Curtis (above left) and Nick Rees on the boat that capsized on the way to Antigua



**PLUCKED TO SAFETY ONTO CARGO SHIP IN CHARITY RACE**

By **DAVID POWELL**  
@DPConwyNews

TWO rowers have been rescued by a container ship after their boat capsized in bad weather during a trans-Atlantic charity rowing event.

Ed Curtis, of Penmaenmawr, and Nick Rees from Surrey were plucked to safety during the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

Mr Curtis, 38, and Mr Rees, 37, are now onboard the container ship heading for Gibraltar after disaster struck on Tuesday afternoon and expect to be home for Christmas.

The friends, whose team name is Team Neas Energy, were trying to raise £250,000 for Breakthrough Breast Cancer, inspired by Mr Rees' wife Ellen's determination to beat the disease after she was diagnosed in 2009, aged 33.

The race saw 16 teams set off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to row some 3,000 miles to Antigua, rowing 24 hours a day in shifts for around six weeks.

A team spokeswoman said: "They capsized off Gibraltar over the weekend and rolled twice. We thought they were about to pull out of the race but fortunately, they carried on. Yesterday (Tuesday) they capsized again and the coastguard couldn't trace them because there was a fault with their tracking device. Their boat was damaged and it was unsafe to carry on."

A support vessel was following and a message was sent to a Singaporean container ship run by a company

called K Line and heading from Brazil to Gibraltar.

It diverted "a few miles" and picked up the rowers to take them on to the British territory. The spokeswoman said: "The container ship is called Sunshine Bliss, which is ironic considering the weather was so bad."

She added: "I spoke to Ed by phone this morning. He sounded well. They're a bit shaken and frustrated because they have been planning to enter this race for two years. The main thing is that they're safe and going home to their families for Christmas."

On arrival in Gibraltar, they will be flown to London and then travel home.

Competitors, including the Row2Recovery team of servicemen - two of whom have lost limbs - can expect to burn around 8,000 calories per day and lose around 20% of their body weight, while enduring 40ft waves, tropical storms, sleep deprivation and sweltering heat.

Mr Curtis and Mr Rees have already raised £100,000. Mr Rees' wife Ellen previously said: "I feel they are setting all of our children a wonderful example of how to embrace life's challenges, take social responsibility and make a difference in the world."

Carsten Heron-Olsen, chief executive of race organisers Atlantic Campaigns, said: "The safety of our crews is of the utmost importance. A race support vessel is always on the water offering 24 hour support, safety advisers constantly monitor the fleet, and we work very closely with the maritime authorities."

## Cannabis plants seized by police

POLICE have uncovered a cannabis factory in an Anglesey town.

North Wales Police said 171 cannabis plants were seized at the house in Newry Street in Holyhead.

A police spokeswoman said: "On Tuesday, December 17, North Wales Police conducted an operation in Holyhead which uncovered a cannabis factory. 171 cannabis plants were seized along with a quantity of high-value hydroponics."

"No-one was arrested in connection with the operation, but police enquiries are currently on-going."

Inspector Kev Bratherton said: "This is the latest in a series of proactive intelligence-led initiatives targeting criminality on the island. A number of significant targets have been positively dealt with, and with the help of the community we will continue to pursue those responsible for criminality in our communities."

A Holyhead resident who lives nearby said there had been a "terrible smell" in the street for days before the operation.

Police were said to still be at the premises yesterday.

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