

IN AT THE DEEP END

ATLANTIC ROW DIARY UPDATE

In our new column, All at Sea throws willing guinea pigs in at the deep end to try a totally new watersports experience. Read on to discover if our newbies sink or swim...

Anglesey rounding prepares rowers for Atlantic

With five months to the start of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, Breakthrough Atlantic and her crew, Ed Curtis and Nick Rees, are well on the way to being ready (ish!) for an incredible adventure.

BOAT prep and fundraising have been the priority for Nick and I in the last few months since we last updated All at Sea readers.

Our proudest achievement to date is the £75,000 we have raised for our chosen charity, Breakthrough Breast Cancer. Our target is £250,000 and we feel confident we can reach this with the help of our family and friends.

Welcoming NEAS Energy as our title sponsor has given the campaign a real sense of security and we can't thank them - and all our sponsors - enough for getting involved.

Fitting in physical training sessions around family life remains a challenge, but we have managed and are now in much better shape. The night this idea emerged as a result of a few too many beers back in February 2012 is a distant memory!

TESTING THE WATERS

To test our new-found strength and endurance - and to give boat and equipment a good shakedown - we set out on a mini adventure to circumnavigate Anglesey on board Breakthrough Atlantic.

On 7 July we departed from Felinheli Marina on the Menai Strait at 1030am to catch the ebbing tide to Llandwyn Island.

From Llandwyn to South Stack was a real battle against a 12-15 knot headwind - Atlantic rowing boats do not like a headwind! By this stage we were losing the tide and had to make a dash for Holyhead harbour, avoiding Stena Nordica on the way. We eventually tied up at 1am.

A few hours rest and then off to the Skerries and

a real catapult around the island on the flooding tide to Point Lynas and then Red Wharf Bay. Anglesey is a stunning part of the world and what better way to see it?

PROUD MOMENTS

Another wait for the tide under anchor gave us a chance to tidy the boat and assess our achievement. Puffin Sound was next, and to my surprise my wife Nicola and our children Osian and Betsan stood on the rocks cheering us on. By the time we reached Beaumaris they were stood on the pier with lots of other supporters.

Another short wait at Menai Bridge on a mooring for the 10.24pm slack water in the Swellies and then we were off and back to Felinheli in time for a beer at the local!

The weather was fantastic over the 37 hours it took us to get around this stunning island. The heat was a great simulation of what we might expect - although the incredibly calm seas were probably not very representative of the Atlantic. We tried out different rations and the water maker, and we certainly learnt a lot about our shift patterns.

We were very proud of our 70 mile row and quietly confident that no other Atlantic rowing boat has completed this trip before.

For now, our fundraising and awareness campaign on behalf of Breakthrough Breast Cancer continues, as do preparations for our Atlantic adventure later this year. The countdown continues...

www.breakthroughatlantic.com

