

# ATLANTIC ROWING RACE 2007

<b>Start Date</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2007
<b>From</b>	La Gomera, Canary Islands
<b>To</b>	English Harbour, Antigua
<b>Distance</b>	2550 Nautical Miles / 2900 Miles
<b>Crossing Time</b>	39 – 110 Days!
<b>Current Record</b>	40 Days and 5 Hours
<b>British Record</b>	40 Days and 14 Hours



A Global view of the route the race will take

## History

In 1966 Chay Blyth and John Ridgway were the first pair to row across the Atlantic in the twentieth century, crossing from Cape Cod to Ireland in a time of 92 days. Over three decades later, in 1997, Sir Chay Blyth organised the first trans-Atlantic rowing race. There have been three further races in 2001, 2003, and 2005.

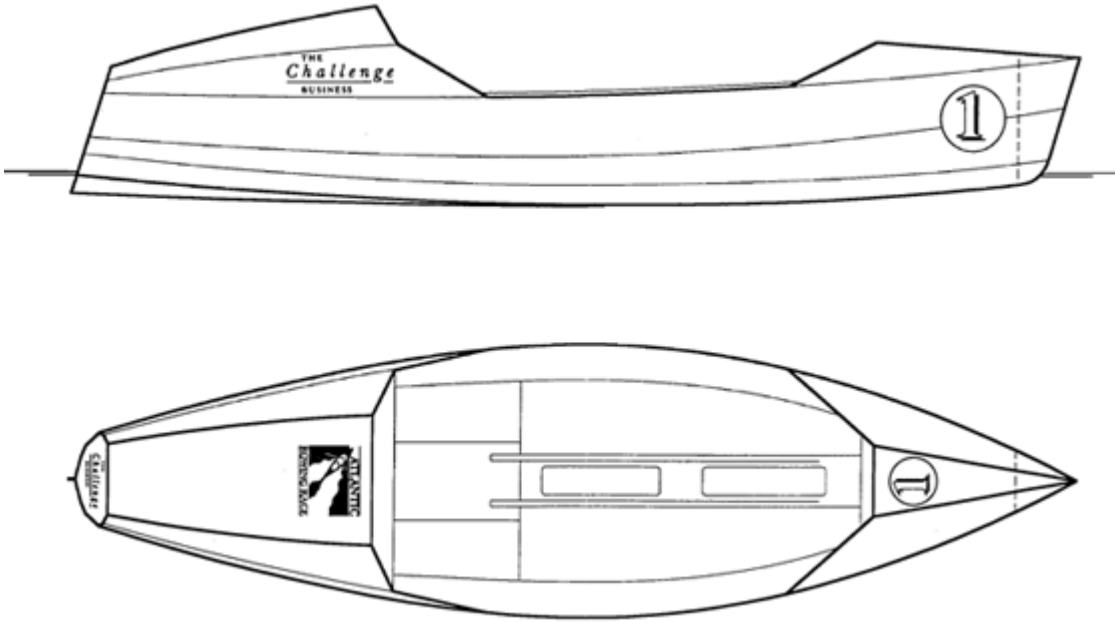
## The Race

Organized by Woodvale Events, all rowers will be completely self-sufficient from start to finish. All food, water, navigation equipment, and safety equipment will be stored on the boat.

We will aim between us to row 24 hours a day (weather permitting), for the duration of the race and aim to beat the time set by James Cracknell (Olympic Rower) and Ben Fogle (TV Presenter) of 49 Days and 19 Hours.

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## The Boat



24 feet long, 6 feet wide, and 3 feet deep. The boat will weigh approximately 1 Ton fully laden. The boat is made of 6mm thick marine plywood with a thin coat of epoxy resin for strength and resilience to water. If water gets between the layers of timber in plywood, it separates the layers and the wood falls apart.

A six foot long cabin provides shelter for the electronics and navigation equipment – and us.



A picture of a standard Ocean Rowing boat in action. All boats must be made to the same specification

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Woodvale Events are holding the next Atlantic Rowing Race, reportedly the hardest rowing race in the world, in December of 2007. I have entered a pairs team with my friend James Burge. The fastest pairs boat have completed the race in just over 40 days, which given the right conditions is certainly an attainable target. In the last race in 2005 James Cracknell and Ben Fogle completed the race in 49 days, 19 hours and 8 minutes, which we aim to beat.

It is very much a race for extreme athletes, it is about endurance and perseverance in the face of immense physical and psychological adversity. It is a continuous, unsupported race across the Atlantic, where you have to be completely self-sufficient for the duration of the race. It is a non-stop 24hour a day event, with each of us taking shifts rowing throughout the night while the other attempts to get some sleep. James is a former fitness instructor and is racing in an Ergo Row the Channel race in November. I am a more general adventurer, cyclist, canoeist and mountaineer. I have cycled the highest road in the world, canoed the Yukon and organized expeditions to the Amazon and Pantanal amongst other adventures.

James and I both live in Bristol, we are two local lads attempting to do something incredible, we're not celebrities or Marines, we're just two Bristol chaps setting out on the hardest race in the world.



James and I at Global Boatworks, where our boat is currently under construction

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We have decided to raise money for Bristol Zoo's Cameroon Projects, with the aim of leaving a legacy to keep these projects running for the next ten years, to ensure the survival of chimpanzees and gorillas in Cameroon for at least the next decade.

We chose to raise money for the Zoo as we are both Bristol based and have a keen interest in conservation and the environment. We chose the Cameroon bushmeat projects as this is a particularly pertinent environmental issue: the survival of our closest living relatives. We have the opportunity to raise the profile of the Zoo within the community, and to provide the funds to keep one of their flagship conservation projects running sustainably for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the Zoo have thrown their full weight behind us, their full marketing machine and their private PR company to raise the profile of our endeavour far higher than we could manage without their assistance. They have promised to facilitate celebrity endorsement of our expedition, to approach international television networks to follow our project, to host a corporate launch and as many publicity events as we require to take advantage of their 500,000 visitors a year, and to give us a full page in their Zoo News publication, which is sent to all 11,000 of their members and all corporate partners.

The opportunity for this project to have a wider effect on the South West community cannot be ignored and through the Zoo's contacts we have begun to approach local schools in the Bristol area regarding promoting conservation and sporting endeavour in schools, with a particular interest in raising the profile of rowing in the state sector. Child obesity levels in the UK are astronomical and there are many initiatives to encourage healthy eating and healthy lifestyles for school children. With the profile our project will have in the South West community, we hope to generate an interest in rowing by holding events at local schools and inviting children to look around our boat and use indoor rowing machines that we will provide.

We have been approached by the BBC who are very keen to cover our progress on their Points West News programme. We will be featured in several programmes in the run-up to the event, and in regular updates throughout the race as the BBC are keen for us to beam images back while we are racing across the Atlantic. Through our contacts at the Zoo our project has been passed on to the developers at National Geographic and Animal Planet with a view to making a documentary covering both the physical challenge we are undertaking and the conservation aspect of our project.

We have also approached the local Newspapers (the Evening Post, Western Daily Press and the Bristol Observer) who are always keen to publicise events such as this being completed by people living in Bristol.

Upon returning to the UK James and I, with the help of Bristol Zoo, will be writing a children's book documenting our project and highlighting the importance of conservation, with a particular emphasis on the importance of Zoos like Bristol Zoo in the conservation of species around the world.

To complete the race, James and I will have to raise around £50,000 in sponsorship; which will cover race entry, boat hire and transport, safety equipment and supplies; all surplus funds will be donated to the Cameroon Projects at Bristol Zoo as a trust fund that will ensure the sustainability of their projects for the coming decade and beyond.

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I have attached a couple of links which may be of interest and some pictures. I've included one of 2 guys in action so you can see the size of the actual boat.

<http://www.woodvale-events.com/Docs/Races/classicatlantic.shtml>

[http://www.oceanrowing.com/statistics/crossing\\_time\\_LESS\\_60\\_DAYS.htm](http://www.oceanrowing.com/statistics/crossing_time_LESS_60_DAYS.htm)

<http://www.bristolzoo.org.uk/conservation/wild/cameroon>



- Route – La Gomera to English Harbour, Antigua – Approx 2550 nautical miles / close to 3000 miles
- Record Time 40 days and 5 hours
- British Record 40 days and 17 hours

Many more people have stood on the summit of Everest than have completed this race!!

For any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on my mobile 07817112620 or by email on [niall@panatlantic.org](mailto:niall@panatlantic.org) at any time.

Kind Regards,

Niall McCann