



Arctic Foxes Update
www.arcticfoxes.co.uk

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BATTLING THE ELEMENTS: TESTING CONDITIONS KEEP ALL FEMALE ARCTIC TEAM ON THEIR TOES

Despite a disappearing road, potentially lethal crevasses, and (of course) dramatic weather conditions, The Arctic Foxes' quest to become the first all-female British team to cross the Greenland ice sheet is on time and on target.

Ten days into the challenge, the four-woman team report that morale is still high despite a number of difficulties – the first of which was being unable to find the man-made road that makes getting up onto the ice sheet itself much easier. Speaking from the ice sheet in the first of a series of weekly podcasts, Arctic Fox Rachel Pearson reports: "Getting up onto the ice sheet, there were a lot of crevasses and Felicity fell up to her waist in one of them. Pulling the sledges up was really difficult – we're pulling 50kg each, and they kept breaking. At one point we had to stop, put up the tent for two hours, and spend a couple of hours fixing a broken pole with superglue."

They have also encountered some harsh weather, with temperatures down to -20°C and snow storms that mean visibility has been exceptionally poor: the Foxes have at times been unable to see sky or horizon, making navigation very difficult.

Greenland has one of the harshest environments on the planet, an icy, hostile terrain inhabited by polar bears. Each day the team walk for about 16 hours, covering 30-40km, and they hope to complete the trek (from Kangerlussuaq in the west to Ammassalik in the east) in around 16 days. They will then make the return journey with the aid of power kites, capable of attaining speeds of up to 35km per hour, with the aim of breaking the world speed record for traversing the ice cap – just 6 days and 23 hours. In total they will have travelled an astonishing 1,300km. The Arctic Foxes are consuming 8,000 calories a day to offset the enormous effort required to complete their each day's gruelling journey.

Along with Rachel, 33, from Devon, a charity fundraiser, the other Foxes are: Felicity Aston, 28, a travel and adventure writer from Kent, Jenny Pugh, 28, a software designer from Birmingham; and Jo Vellino, 25, from Kent, a teacher. The team will be raising money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer.

Video / stills / audio / copy available to the press:

For full biographies of the Arctic Foxes, and the latest updates visit www.arcticfoxes.co.uk

From w/c 1st May, you can hear Arctic Fox stories as they happen by downloading their weekly podcasts from The Sun Online <http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0,,2-2006190345,00.html>.

Photographs of the team are available from kate@arcticfoxes.co.uk

For further details, telephone Kate Abel on 07785 520766.

Video footage and stills are being sent back from the edge of the ice sheet in Greenland as the ground team wave goodbye to the Foxes. This footage and accompanying stills are will be available to the press as soon as they are received in the UK. Please contact Kate Abel for more information.

Audio sound bites recorded during conversations with the Foxes on the ice sheet should also be available. Please call for more information.

Notes for editors:

1. Greenland is the largest island on earth, covering more than two million square km. It is part of the Kingdom of Denmark, although it was granted self-government in 1979.
2. Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen led the first crossing of Greenland in 1888. The first all-female team to cross the ice cap was led by Norwegian Explorer Liv Arneson in 1992, closely followed by Ann Bancroft and her American team in the same season.
3. Breakthrough Breast Cancer Is the UK's leading breast cancer charity: its vision is to create a future free from the fear of breast cancer. For more information visit www.breakthrough.org.uk
4. The Arctic Foxes will be using flexifoil kites ranging in size from just 3.5m to a massive 8.5m. The smaller kites are used in strong winds while the larger kites produce more power in lighter winds.

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