



FOXES WITH A TASTE FOR ADVENTURE

Four women are going to Greenland to try and beat a world record and raise £25,000 for charity, writes Emma E Forrest

PEOPLE will go to great lengths to raise money for charity, but few aim to break world records and plan to put their lives in extreme danger.

The four members of the Arctic Foxes will be the first British all-female team to cross the Greenland ice-cap. They are also attempting to beat the world speed record, set at just six days and 23 hours.

Their itinerary will take them from Kangerlussuaq on the west coast of Greenland to Ammassalik in the east, and back. This gives them two chances of breaking the record.

NARROWING DOWN THE NUMBERS

On top of that challenge, the Foxes hope they can raise more than £25,000 for Breakthrough Breast Cancer. The odyssey was the idea of team leader Felicity Aston, a travel and adventure writer, who had just

completed the Polar Challenge, a 360-mile endurance race across the Canadian Arctic, and was looking for her next trial.

Aston placed an ad calling for participants and more than 200 women responded. She replied with a long email spelling out the level of physical, mental and time commitment involved, and the numbers were narrowed down.

She met the remaining 60 candidates during a sort of speed-interview session over two days in a London bar, narrowing it down to eight applicants who joined her on a weekend's camping.

The final three are software designer Jennifer Pugh, Rachel Pearson, an events organiser, and Jo Vellino, who works in human resources for a law firm in the City. "In the end it was easy to whittle it down," says Aston. "I just got a feeling for who would be capable of spending six weeks in a

tent in very stressful conditions. I was looking for three things; passion and enthusiasm for the project, gritty determination to follow it through and a good sense of humour — if you can't laugh, you'll cry."

WATCH OUT FOR THE POLAR BEARS

The expedition involves covering a distance of 1,300km in ravaging winds and temperatures of up to minus 40.

They will have to haul sledges carrying food, fuel and equipment that weigh more than they do.

The women will also glide across the snow on ski kites, which will allow them to travel at up to 35kmph and boost their chances of breaking the speed record. As well as enduring unforgiving weather conditions, the Arctic Foxes will have to brave a potentially hostile environment, dodging polar bears and attempting to circumvent

The Arctic Foxes — Jo Vellino, Rachel Pearson, Felicity Aston and Jenny Pugh — leave for their 1,300km expedition today

the crevasses that lie hidden beneath the snow.

It's hardly five-star travel; the team will spend four hours a day melting snow to drink and get next to no sleep, thanks to the 24-hour daylight and the pressure to be as fast as possible.

The Arctic Foxes have to be incredibly fit for this extreme challenge. On the 16-day journey the women will burn up to 8,000 calories a day.

STAMINA AND STRENGTH

In the last eight months, they have been training rigorously to build up stamina and strength, getting used to the bulk of their sledges by dragging tyres around Richmond Park, as well as power-kiting, doing weights, circuit training and spin classes at the gym. They've also been getting support and guidance from Dr Justin Roberts



The edge of the Greenland ice cap, which the Foxes hope to cross in record time. Picture: GETTY

Right: In training



'They have the support of dynamic dames Ellen MacArthur and Kelly Holmes, but it's not too late to make corporate offers'

at the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences at the University of Hertfordshire, and undergoing physiological and psychological testing there.

MENTALLY DAUNTING

Apart from the physical endurance, the team will also have to deal with the psychological aspect of this epic journey that will take them through some of the most desolate landscapes on earth.

"I am also daunted by the isolation of the expedition, not in a physical or geographical sense, but mentally," explains Vellino.

"Not really being able to talk to the other girls as we go along and being alone with my thoughts for such long periods of time will be a nightmare for me.

"I know that I am going to have to be mentally very strong to keep focused and drive

myself along in those dark hours." The team leave for Greenland today.

They already have the support of dynamic dames Ellen MacArthur and Kelly Holmes and have sponsorship from individuals and companies. However, it's not too late to make corporate offers, allowing these adventurous women to inspire staff with their focus and spirit of adventure.

STYLISH T-SHIRTS

In the meantime, Arctic Foxes fans can show their support by wearing the stylish T-shirts and sweatshirts available on their website.

The mission doesn't stop when the team leaves Greenland; when the Arctic Foxes get back to Britain they'll be working to raise awareness of climate change in schools by sharing stories about their adventures.

www.arcticfoxes.co.uk

ROW FOR CHARITY

Olympic winner James Cracknell is supporting the Childline in the Pull Together Rowing Challenge. He said: "I'm really excited to support the Pull Together Challenge and this great opportunity to help make a difference to the lives of the millions of children who turn to ChildLine for help. For children to make a call to ChildLine takes huge courage and it's now your turn to show what you're made of and help us raise vitally needed funds to ensure that ChildLine can better support these children. The City is



famous for its competitive spirit and determination - you can enter as a team or as an individual so let's Pull Together this May."

The Pull Together Challenge is a five-day outdoor rowing event, held between 8-12 May at Broadgate Exchange, in which City companies and workers will compete against each other to see who can row the furthest, fastest and raise the most money for ChildLine.

It is not too late to join the challenge and help raise £1m. Get your entry pack from www.pulltogether.co.uk



COMPETITION DETAILS — AND HOW TO ENTER

LOG ON TO www.pulltogether.co.uk

ENTRANTS will compete on state of the art Concept 2 rowing machines, either individually or as part of a team. There are prizes in the following categories;

FURTHEST DISTANCE ROWED

Cumulative throughout the week, for company teams

FASTEST KILOMETRE ROWED

Individual, male and female

MOST SPONSORSHIP MONEY RAISED

Individuals must pledge a minimum of £500 to participate in the Pull Together Challenge

FASTEST CEO

Fastest kilometre rowed by a CEO, either as part of a corporate team or individual entry

DISTANCE AND FASTEST ROW COMPETITIONS
The rowing machines will be available during the following times — simply choose when suits you:

Monday 8 May	7am - 8pm
Tuesday 9 May	7am - 8pm
Wednesday 10 May	7am - 8pm
Thursday 11 May	7am - 8pm
Friday 12 May	7am - noon

Presentations to all winners will take place on Friday 12 May at 6pm.

Katherine Grainger, rowing world champion and Steve Williams, Olympic rowing gold medalist, will be on-hand to present the prizes to the winners of the various challenges on Friday 12 May.



HOW TO ENTER

Full entry packs can be found online at www.pulltogether.co.uk

Individual Entry is free but individuals have to pledge a minimum of £500 sponsorship for ChildLine.

Corporate entry costs £6,000, for which each team can enter an unlimited number of rowers (with a minimum of four).

All companies entering will also receive a state of the art Concept 2 rowing machine to keep following the Challenge.

Completed entry forms should be faxed or emailed to:
Liz Warner,
Camelot Group
Fax 0207 836 5971
Email: liz.warner@camelotgroup.co.uk

Or posted to:
Pull Together Co-ordinator
ChildLine
45 Folgate St
London E1 6GL

You can also email Liz Warner with any questions about the Pull Together Challenge and how to enter.

This is your chance to get fit, beat your City rivals and raise vital funds for ChildLine. Let's Pull Together!

City Aces Challenge

Last chance for Vegas

The final free online qualifying tournament to find the City's best poker player takes place tonight, (Password: Suita) Thursday 27th April at 8.30pm

This is the LAST CHANCE to make the 50 player live GRAND FINAL to be held during May in London. The winner of the Grand Final will go to LAS VEGAS on 28th July 2006 for the WORLD SERIES OF POKER. The City AM champion will pit his wits against the best players in the world in the main event with an expected top prize of \$10,000,000. This really is the chance of a lifetime with a package value of \$15,000, all courtesy of the Betfair poker team. There is ONE automatic place in the Grand Final for tonight's winner but the all important points will decide the other 42 players. The table below shows the players with a good chance but that may change after tonight. There are still plenty of points to play for and bonus points will be awarded for the player that takes out getting master and City AM columnist SAM TDRANCE.

- The full league table listing is available on the Betfair poker site
- Don't worry if you haven't played before, you will just have to win tonight to make the Grand Final.
- The challenge and online tournaments do not require any deposit or commitment of monies.
- Thanks to everyone that has played and we look forward to seeing the best in action very soon, good luck tonight!
- Are you the Ace in the pack and can you go all the way to Vegas?

Live Final Qualifiers: Danatrix villar601 bum77 Telepe chess0x6 Sunby vorpai72

Player Points	
henrich	66
MathH06	47
Dook	37
cpj	34
romans	33
hialeh	32
Jaypee	31
William	29
Juliano77	27
YaraPera	27
Wahywan	26
HORoyak	26
oscar_99	25
GAF1	24
Jaypee0	23
claw	22
erli999	22
Irish111	21
green1	21
DanielSun	20
villar60	20
Alexx	19
arxone	19
J_Fence	19
KingKille	19
rdly	19
Slim008	19
Juliano22	18
Jarvishey	18
Coan46	17
Owlman	17

BETFAIR BRINGS MORE TO THE TABLE

FOR FULL DETAILS OF ENTRY, PRIZES AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS LOG ON TO WWW.BETFAIRPOKER.COM/CITYAM

