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**Guinness World Record attempt, Friday April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

A six-man crew from Surrey will attempt to break the world record on 23<sup>rd</sup> April when they row down a length of the River Thames, from Lechlade Bridge to Southend Pier (185.88 miles), in less than 38 hours and 43 minutes – the current world record time.

The crew will row continuously in a Thames skiff, a traditional rowing boat, from the morning of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> intending to finish late morning on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April and regain the world record, which they held in 1988 until 1993. Their efforts will be raising money for 2 local Surrey charities, Cherry Trees and The Crescent Resource Centre, Kingston. The attempt is being generously sponsored by British Telecom, Isaac Lord Limited, David Powell Bakeries, Avon Inflatables and Energy Contract Co.

The crew, all experienced rowers and members of the Dittons Skiff and Punting Club, include Mike Hart MBE, a former silver Olympic medallist (1976).

Team member, Mark Hobson said:

"Rowing 186 miles in less than 38 hours is a challenging undertaking. The club has held the record before, but we know of at least 5 unsuccessful attempts in the last few years. On the day you can suffer from an injury or bad weather, which could really make it very tough. We are feeling confident that we will beat the existing record by a good margin. We are not taking anything for granted and have trained hard to achieve our goal."

The crew are hoping that crowds will turn out to cheer them on and support this world record breaking attempt while helping to raise money for charity.

Ends

**For more information, interviews with the crew or details of the route and photo opportunities, contact Fiona Doyle on 07770-747255.**

## Notes to editors

1. Crews from the Ditton Skiff and Punting Club have set four (and still hold two) Guinness world records in the last 16 years: The Giant Meander in 1988, the furthest distance rowed in 24 hours in 1993, the fastest row across the Channel in 1997 and the fastest row from London to Paris in 1999. Each of these has been a formidable challenge, requiring extensive training and preparation.
2. The crew consists of Richard Carless, John Graham, Mike Hart MBE, Mark Hobson, Chris Millward and Simon Leifer, all members of the Ditton Skiff and Punting Club and experienced rowers.
3. The Giant Meander is from Lechlade Bridge to Southend Pier, a distance of 185.55 miles. It is called a meander, due to the winding nature of the Thames. In 1988 the Dittons crew of Kevin Thomas, Malcolm Knight and Simon Leifer completed this in 39 hours 27 minutes. In 1993, a 5 man crew from Lower Thames Rowing Club beat this with a new record time of 38 hours and 43 minutes.
4. A Thames Skiff is a traditional rowing boat, which has undergone very few technology changes over history. They are clinker built (overlapping planks) from hard wood, and much heavier than modern racing boats. Generally, there are no moving parts: no rigger or sliding seats.

Skiffs were a Victorian luxury, and featured in “Three men in a Boat”. Today they are leisure craft, frequently appearing at Henley Royal Regatta, and we race in the summer months at Regattas organised by the Skiff Racing Association.



5. The event will raise money for the following charities Cherry Trees and The Crescent Resource Centre, Kingston. Cherry Trees provides respite care for children who have severe learning and physical disabilities. The Crescent Resource Centre provides day care and facilities for elderly and disabled people in Kingston. Primary funding is provided by the Borough, but extra facilities, trips out and the other bits that make life more worthwhile are funded by the users, where able and by voluntary donations.