

RELEASE IMMEDIATE – 22 APRIL 2004

Only 1 day to go before Guinness World Record attempt, Friday April 23rd

With only 1 day left before a world record breaking attempt to row 185.88 miles of the Thames, the six-man crew from Surrey attempting to set a new world record are making final preparations.

The challenge, on Friday 23rd April through to Saturday 24th April, is to set a new world record succeeding where others have failed (as recently as last week-end) by rowing from Lechlade Bridge, Gloucestershire to Southend Pier, Essex, (185.88 miles), in less than 38 hours and 43 minutes – the current world record time. This world record attempt is dedicated to Norris McWhirter in the true tradition of the original concept of the Guinness World Records – the fastest, the slowest, the biggest, the smallest!

The crew will row continuously in a Thames skiff, a traditional rowing boat, from the morning of Friday 23rd intending to finish mid-morning on Saturday 24th 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, as well as supporting the Mayor of Elmbridge's charities, BLISS (for the care of babies during pregnancy and at birth) and the Alzheimer's Society.

The crew, all experienced rowers and members of the Dittons Skiff and Punting Club, include Mike Hart MBE, a former silver Olympic medallist (1976). They are hoping for good coverage of the record-breaking attempt to help raise money for charity while promoting British success in the sport of rowing and encouraging more people to see rowing as a fun, participative sport.

DSPC President and crew member, Simon Leifer said: "All our training has gone to plan and mentally the crew is ready to go. We're really hoping that people will turn out to cheer us along in the great traditions of British sport and help us to raise as much as we can for our chosen charities. It's a nerve-racking time as we count down the hours to the start in the early hours of Friday morning and we know that so much will depend on our support teams and last but not least the weather !"

The attempt is being generously sponsored by Avon Inflatables, British Telecom, David Powell Bakeries, Energy Contract Co., Fullers, Isaac Lord Limited and Nike.

Andrew Weiss, Managing Director of Isaac Lord, said "our company is proud to be associated with the Dittons Skiff and Punting Club's attempt on the Guinness World Record for the "Giant Meander". We wish all the crew and the support team the very best of luck".

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. Timing schedule (*subject to weather/river conditions – please contact Fiona Doyle on: 07770-747255 for up to date information during the attempt or check www.dittons.org.uk*)

Proposed Depart Time	Actual Depart Time	From	Miles
23/04/2004 03:00		Lechlade Bridge	0
03:11		St Johns	1
03:26		Buscot	2
04:02		Grafton	5
04:24		Radcot	7
04:54		Rushey	10
05:38		Shifford	14
06:27		Northmoor	19
07:08		Pinkhill	23
07:26		Eynsham	24
07:56		King's	27
08:12		Godstow	28
08:39		Osney	30
09:05		Iffley	33
09:26		Sandford	34
10:13		Abingdon	39
10:42		Culham	41
11:13		Clifton	44
11:45		Day's	47
12:27		Benson	51
13:32		Cleeve	58
13:43		Goring	58
14:25		Whitchurch	62
14:51		Mapledurham	65
15:37		Caversham	69
16:06		Sonning	72
16:38		Shiplake	75
17:07		Marsh	77
17:42		Hambledon	80
18:21		Hurley	84
18:32		Temple	85

18:55	Marlow	87
19:37	Cookham	91
20:01	Boulton	93
20:25	Bray	95
21:00	Boveney	98
21:26	Romney	100
21:59	Old Windsor	103
22:31	Bell Weir	106
23:02	Penton Hook	109
23:25	Chertsey	111
23:49	Shepperton	113
24/04/2004 00:21	Sunbury	116
00:54	Molesey	119
01:30	Teddington Lock	124
01:54	Richmond Bridge	127
02:33	Kew Road Bridge	130
03:09	Hammersmith Bridge	134
03:46	Wandsworth Bridge	137
04:31	Vauxhall Bridge	140
05:10	London Bridge	143
05:34	Heron Key	146
05:50	Victoria Deep Water Terminal	149
06:17	Thames Barrier	152
06:33	Margaret Ness	154
06:49	Ford Motor Co	157
07:16	Cunis Jetty	160
07:50	QE 11 Bridge	163
08:10	Broadness	166
08:32	London Cruise Terminal	169
10:40	Southend Pier	186

2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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 natures 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.
5. 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.



6. The event will raise money for the following charities, Cherry Trees and The Crescent Resource Centre, Kingston as well as the Mayor of Elmbridge’s chosen charities, BLISS and the Alzheimer’s Society. 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

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more worthwhile are funded by the users, where able and by voluntary donations.

7. Photographs provided by Dittons Skiff & Punting Club: www.dittons.org.uk and Williams Photography South tel: 07967-107281.