



PRESS RELEASE

17 July 2003

BLACK TO BLACK BACKWARDS

On 1 August two Durham graduates will attempt to row down the Danube for charity. Charlie Blair and John Travers are making what is believed to be the first ever rowing expedition down the Danube. A journey of 1,800 miles through 10 countries. Starting in Germany in the Black Forest and ending eight weeks later at the mouth to the Black Sea. Rowing to raise money for The WWF and WaterAid.

WaterAid works to supply the most basic of human needs: clean water and sanitation to the world's poorest people. Chosen because the Danube supplies drinking water to over 20 million people and because it is currently the UN International Year of Fresh Water, WaterAid works on the premise that investment in basic infrastructure and education is the essential first step in helping communities in the developing world.

The WWF runs the international Danube-Carpathian Programme, which encourages co-operation and sustainable management between the states that surround Europe's most important body of freshwater. It aims to conserve the many ecosystems that are unique to the Danube, particularly the Danube Delta - a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve - while still allowing important socio-economic development to take place.

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Charlie and John both 22 met at Durham University having been educated at Eton and King Edward VI, Chelmsford respectively. They share a huge interest and concern in the environment and its future. Having secured a first in Geography and a 2:1 in Maths and Physics between them they will on their return be starting at Imperial College, London, Charlie in Environmental Technology and John in Photonics and Optics.

Commenting on their forthcoming adventure they said: "We are extremely excited about our journey! We have been planning it for three years and can't wait to get on the water. The Danube has witnessed the making of many histories and the rise and fall of many different cultures, we hope that by rowing it we will catch a glimpse of this and meet the peoples that have lived through it all. It is great that we can combine such a fascinating and challenging expedition with support for the charities that do so much good work. If we are successful we would like to attempt the Nile sometime in the near future."

Their enthusiasm was bolstered further after receiving a comment from Mathew Pinsent OBE: "What a great idea! I wish you every luck with this incredible voyage and with your fundraising. It's great that people like you both see what our sport has to offer and obviously have such fun with it. I only wish I could take time-out on the way to Athens to row a bit of that river with you (certainly not 1,800miles though!)."

Notes to Editors

- **MEDIA/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

John and Charlie will be on the water and available for photographs and questions:

***On:** Tuesday 22 July, Midday*

***Where:** Imperial College Boathouse, Putney Embankment, London SW15 1LB*

for further details please call Emma Sykes as below or on Tuesday 22 July contact Vanessa Starling of Emma Sykes PR on 0787 987 6324

- Donations/Sponsorship should be made out to 'Rowing the Danube' and sent to 2 Piercing Hill, Theydon Bois, Essex, CM16 7JN.
- Their web site with more news and information which will be updated regularly during the journey is: www.rowingthedanube.org.uk

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