



JOCK WISHART AND CREW MAKE HISTORY AS WORLD'S FIRST OARSMEN TO ROW TO MAGNETIC NORTH POLE*

British 'Old Pulteney Row to the Pole' expedition successfully navigates hazardous 450 mile Arctic route

British Arctic explorer and adventurer Jock Wishart today (26th August 2011) claimed a momentous world first as he and his six-man crew completed their ambitious 'Old Pulteney Row to the Pole', reaching the magnetic north pole (recognized and certified in 1996) at 12.30am GMT.

The momentous expedition, which is sponsored by Old Pulteney Single Malt Scotch Whisky, set out from Resolute Bay on Friday 29th July to conquer some of the harshest conditions on earth. The voyage, which was four years in the planning, was rowing through waters which are only open water for a matter of just weeks each year due to the recent increase in seasonal ice melt in the Arctic.

The voyage has been the challenge of a lifetime for Jock and his crew of adventurous rowers, as they steered the small 'Old Pulteney' ice boat through ice-strewn seas. The open water is still frequently filled with ice bergs and floating ice. They have had several incidents of collisions and have had to wait and watch the weather and ice blocking their way as Arctic ice closed in, threatening to put the expedition in jeopardy.

Throughout the journey, the crew has worked with scientific research partners to deliver fresh environmental data into the impact of arctic deterioration on the polar landscape. They have also used the opportunity to study wildlife, having had close encounters with some of the Arctic's most impressive species, including beluga whales, walrus and polar bears.

The intrepid team has lived for almost a month on the compact, specially designed ice-boat the 'Old Pulteney', sleeping in shifts between grueling rowing stints and surviving on 7000 calorie-per day dry rations. The detail and drama of their 4-week adventure has been captured by a BBC cameraman for a documentary on the expedition.

For most of the voyage the crew has rowed through open water, taking advantage of favourable weather to make good headway, however the real challenge lay in the second and most significant part of the expedition – rowing all the way across to Ellef Ringnes Island. In the last few weeks of summer this area was the last to melt and break up, so the crew was confronted with both solid and floating sea ice which they painstakingly picked their way through – with the last part of their journey being a race against time as the ice closed in.

Today a triumphant Jock Wishart commented: *'The final leg of our journey started on Wednesday night when a possible route through the disintegrating ice began to open up. We'd been pinned down for days by ice and heavy winds. But the conditions suddenly changed and we were able to pick our way through. The last three miles proved to be the hardest of all when we had to take the boat out the water and then haul it over the ice.*

We're all absolutely exhausted, but elated. No one's ever even tried to do this. In fact most people did think it was impossible. But we've done it!"

Said Old Pulteney Senior Brand Manager Margaret Mary Clarke: *'Huge congratulations to Jock and his team from everyone here at Old Pulteney Single Malt Scotch Whisky. We've tracked their progress with excitement and bated breath over the past month and we're thrilled their efforts have been rewarded. Old Pulteney's partnership with Jock and this expedition stems from the brand's age old heritage of supporting maritime adventure, so it's a proud day for us to be part of this momentous achievement'.*

Note to editors:

*The Magnetic North Pole's certified position was established in 1996. The position is 78°35.7N 104°11.9W / 78.595°N 104.1983°W.

Since then, this 1996 certified position has become an established expedition objective for Arctic expeditions and adventures. The biennial Polar Race takes place between Resolute Bay in northern Canada and the 1996-certified location of the North Magnetic Pole.

Old Pulteney Row to the Pole

Jock Wishart

Jock is established as one of the UK's leading adventurers and explorers, with a successful background in polar exploration, rowing and extreme navigational feats. He led the team which established fifteen new world speed records for powered circumnavigation and captained the team that broke the London to Paris rowing record in 1999. He has a lifetime interest in polar exploration and in 1992 journey he was part of the first team to walk unsupported to the Geomagnetic North Pole.

Old Pulteney

Old Pulteney Single Malt Whisky, is diligently crafted at Pulteney Distillery in Wick. It is the most northerly distillery on the UK Mainland and was founded in 1826 by James Henderson at the height of Wick's herring boom. The distillery lies in the heart of 'Pulteneytown', which was created for all the fishermen at the time, and is embedded in the deep rooting history of this coastal town, which used to be one of the most important and biggest herring fishing ports in Europe.

Wick became known around the world for its precious barrels of silver and gold – silver being the herring and gold being the fine whisky - which left the port in vast numbers.

Old Pulteney Single Malt whisky has a long standing association with the sea and is also known as the 'Genuine Maritime Malt'. Its carefully crafted taste carries the windswept and rugged character of the North, the salty and fresh air of the North Sea and the distillery's rich maritime heritage runs through every drop of this fine malt.

As a strong supporter of Wick's community, Old Pulteney is delighted to be continuously supporting the Wick RNLi Station, the Wick Pipe Band, Wick Football Club and Hockey Team and furthermore as the 'Genuine Maritime Malt', Old Pulteney is also involved with some of the most prestigious sailing events in the country including the Port of Dartmouth Royal Regatta, the Round the Island Race at the Isle of Wight and the Old Pulteney IRC Scottish Championship.

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www.rowtothepole.com

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