

KENDALL ROUNDS CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Christchurch yachtsman and adventurer, Graeme Kendall has now rounded the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, in his attempt to achieve one of the last major world sailing records - sailing solo non stop around the world via the Arctic Northwest Passage.

Kendall left Auckland on 26 April and has covered over 10,000 nautical miles on his journey. The rare East-West solo rounding of the Cape marks the countdown to the Arctic, which will be around 50 days away.

"Just over nine weeks out and now past Cape Agulhas. Cape of Good Hope. Have said goodbye to the Indian Ocean, a brief hello to the Southern Ocean, and welcome to the Atlantic. Some testing times, but all is well with body and boat," said Kendall today from the bridge of the Astral Express. "Early accounts describe the Cape as 'Extremely hazardous and the most dangerous on earth' I'm glad to have it behind me. Timing is everything, there are a lot of currents and some fairly strong Westerlies that can be tricky. Now the focus is on the Atlantic and getting to the North West Passage in good time and in good shape."

Life on board the Astral Express, despite the solitude, is never dull. Kendall says there is always plenty to do around the boat, and around the Cape there were plenty of ships to be wary of.

"I am always busy, cleaning fixing things. Your body gets tuned in to the elements surrounding you, the weather etc so you start to notice a lot more around you. There was also a lot of shipping around the bottom of Africa. I think I was near a couple of oil rigs at one stage, so that kept me on my toes. I can pick up most traffic on the radar fairly early on though."

The voyage is being funded entirely by Christchurch, N.Z., based Kendall, who has secured **0900 CHILD**, which has been sign-written along the side of the boat to raise money for charity. Primarily he will be raising money for Variety – The Children's Charity.

This is an extraordinary solo round the world yacht trip. Not only will Graeme achieve a notable yachting first, he will also, potentially, raise a great deal of money for deserving children.

Ends

Follow Graham's progress and check out his diary at:

www.astralexpress.com



Background Information

Graeme will pass north of Australia and then head around the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, then north across the Atlantic to the northern coast of Canada and Alaska through the Northwest Passage. He then travels south across the Pacific Ocean, returning to Auckland. It is estimated the trip will take 150 to 180 days and cover 28,000 (40,000km) nautical miles, unaided with no stopovers, but relying on the latest technology available.

The Northwest Passage has only recently become a navigable reality with the aid of satellite technology, which has given sailors the ability to monitor ice flows, and therefore a safe passage, during the months of August and September. With recent navigation of the Northwest Passage by private yachts and given similar warm Arctic conditions this milestone should be achievable.

The Astral Express

Designed by world renowned marine architect Greg Elliot, the Astral Express is a fast 12.5 metre cruising yacht with a deck saloon-pilot house with inside steering necessary for Arctic conditions.

Built of Kevlar to a specification stronger than alloy, with a reinforced bow, and steel retractable keel to attain a minimum four foot draft. This is a high performance yacht developed for long distance passage making, with a small easily managed sail plan.

Built from existing moulds in Melbourne and finished in Auckland, the Astral Express has built in buoyancy to render it unsinkable. Its sister ship was recently tested, on delivery from Sydney to Brisbane in moderate to severe conditions. The yacht will carry an inflatable dinghy and outboard, large windlass with extensive ground tackle and equipment for arctic conditions. The Astral Express has been constructed with each facet overseen by New Zealand's best boat builders and associated tradesmen.

Curriculum Vitae – Graeme Kendal

Sailing record - As Captain

- Lyttleton to Fiji return
- Lyttleton to Hawaii via Cooks, Society and Marquesas Islands
- Hawaii to Lyttleton via Fiji two handed
- Picton to Lyttleton and races, solo
- Picton to Sydney
- Lyttleton to Melbourne
- Around Tahiti race
- Melbourne - Osaka two handed race
- Lyttleton Chatham Island return
- Circumnavigation of South Island
- Extensive sailing about Cook Strait and French Polynesia
- Dozens of coastal trips to Marlborough Sounds and Auckland

Sailing record - as crew

- Kenwood cup yacht race series Hawaii
- Whitbread Round the World Yacht race
- Bluff to Lyttleton with Sir Peter Blake
- Many delivery trips

On yachts of his own, has cruised and raced over 100,000 miles during the past 35 years to become a competent seaman, navigator and cook. With the necessary experience and temperament to make a successful attempt on this record.

Being a fit sailor, has in the past nine months, helped deliver yachts from Tonga to New Zealand, Sydney to Brisbane and Auckland to Picton.

The Northwest Passage



The Northwest Passage is a famous sea route linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It was expected to provide an alternative and shorter passage from Europe to Asia, but as the sea is frozen over for most of the year, this route is not very practical.

Northwest Passage - Background

1. ROALD AMUNDSEN: First Navigation by Ship

1905: In mid August, Roald Amundsen sailed from Gjøahaven (today: Gjoa Haven, Nunavut) in the vessel Gjøa. On August 26 they encountered a ship bearing down on them from the west, and with that they were through the passage. From Amundsen's diary:

The North West Passage was done. My boyhood dream - at that moment it was accomplished. A strange feeling welled up in my throat; I was somewhat over-strained and worn - it was weakness in me - but I felt tears in my eyes. 'Vessel in sight' ... Vessel in sight.

2. ST. ROCH: First West-East Crossing

1940-1942: The St. Roch was given the task of demonstrating Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. It was ordered to sail from Vancouver to Halifax by way of the Northwest Passage.

The St. Roch left Vancouver in June 1940 and on October 11, 1942, it docked at Halifax - the first ship to travel from the Pacific to the Atlantic via the Northwest Passage. The journey had taken almost 28 months.

3. ST. ROCH: Northern Deep-Water Route (East-West)

1944: The St. Roch was the first ship to travel the Northwest Passage through the northern, deep-water route and the first to sail the Passage in both directions.

4. FRANKLIN EXPEDITION: Attempt

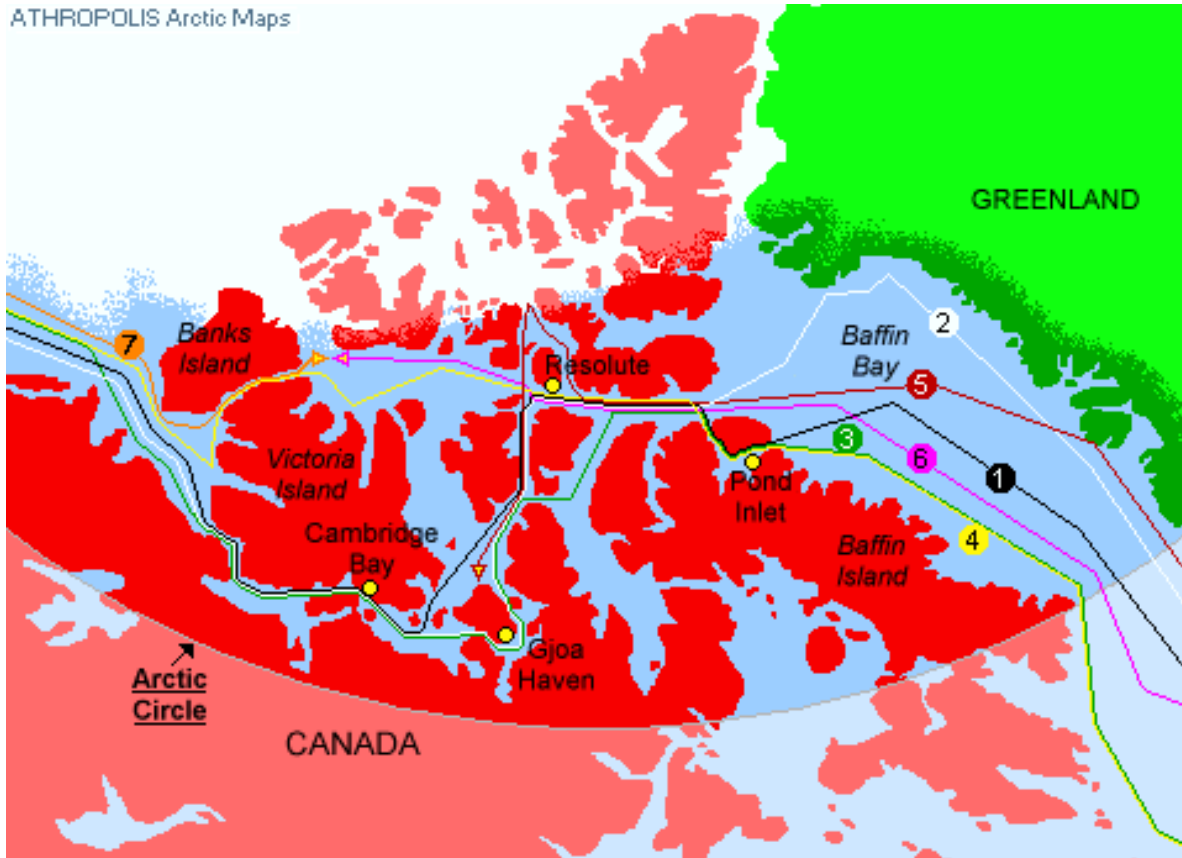
1845-48: Although Sir John Franklin was on the right track, his ships, the "Terror" and the "Erebus", became frozen in the ice near King William Island. The ships disappeared and all 129 men were lost. MORE...

5. SIR WILLIAM EDWARD PARRY: Attempt

1819-20: Parry led a number of expeditions in search of the Northwest Passage, and he was almost successful. One of his expeditions qualified for the £5,000 prize offered by the Board of Longitude to the first vessel to cross the 110th meridian in high northern latitudes.

6. ROBERT McCLURE: Proved Route Existed

1850-54: While his ship was trapped in the ice, McClure set off by sledge and discovered a passage between Banks Island and Victoria Island. Coming west to east, this linked up with Parry's previous position coming east to west. McClure and his crew were awarded the £10,000 prize for finding the Passage.



1. Typical Northwest Passage Route (Black)
2. Roald Amundsen: First navigation by ship (White)
3. St Roch: First West-East crossing (Green)
4. St Roch: Northern deep water route
5. Franklin Expedition: Attempt (Dark Red)
6. Sir William Edward Parry: Attempt (Purple)
7. Robert McClure: Proved route existed (Orange)