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Teams prepare for world's daftest race

► As if doing 1000 miles along frozen Siberian rivers wasn't bad enough, these guys are doing it on 1940s Urals ► British team prepare for -40° conditions



Take part in a caper like this and you'll never complain about the UK weather again

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In just a few weeks 15 teams will race 1000 miles across the frozen rivers of Siberia on a fleet of 1940s Russian Urals sidecar outfits with temperatures of as low as -40°C.

Competitors will have to find their own route to the finish line and camp along the way. Brit Simon Limpus, 31, and New Zealand team-mate Dave Murray, 32, are one of the 15 teams competing in Urals sidecar outfits currently preparing for the potentially lethal journey.

Limpus said: "We're under no illusions how hard this trip is going to be but it will be a fantastic challenge for both of us and the other teams to complete something so difficult. The cold is obviously the biggest concern but we hope the preparations in terms of clothing and navigation will be good enough."

They set off on February 8 and hope to

finish by the end of February after travelling from the river Ob to Salekhard in the arctic circle. Limpus is raising money for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME research having suffered from the condition for seven years. He wants to use this trip to raise awareness and support for the charity which helped him.

While modern Urals sidecars would shrug off a mere 1000 miles across frozen landscapes without drama, none of the competitors have them. Instead, everyone is using older World War II vintage models which have been supplied by the race organisers and are almost certainly going to break down. A lot.

Temperatures at this time of year are expected to be anything from a balmy -10°C to a skin-blistering -40°C. In summer the only way to get to the northern end of the Ob is on a boat or an aircraft. But for half the year Siberia is frozen under several metres of ice and snow. The only way to cross this icy wilderness is by a network of ice roads which snake over and alongside the frozen rivers.

The biggest challenge, putting aside the weather, is that there is no route; it's entirely up to competitors to navigate their own way from the start to the finish.

To sponsor Limpus and Murray visit: www.icerun2012.com. Look out for updates on the team's progress as the race kicks off.

"We're under no illusions how hard this trip is going to be – it's a great challenge"

SIMON LIMPUS



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