



Manchester Ship Canal  
**Ocean  
Gateway  
Challenge  
2008**



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## **MANCHESTER DIRECTOR AIMS TO SWIM 36 MILES OF MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL IN WORLD FIRST WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM PHILIP NEVILLE**

Today sees the launch of the 'The Ocean Gateway Challenge', a 36-mile charity swim in the Manchester Ship Canal to be attempted by Peel's development director James Whittaker. The challenge will launch a £50 billion regeneration of the Manchester Ship Canal corridor and Liverpool Estuary areas and raise money for Peel's chosen charity for 2008, The New Children's Hospital Appeal. Patrons of the charity, Philip and Julie Neville, will officially launch the challenge with James at Salford Quays.

Whittaker is currently undergoing a strenuous training schedule in preparation for the 36-mile record attempt, which is almost equivalent to back-to-back channel swims. The challenge has undergone rigorous safety checks and James will have numerous jabs to ensure the swim will be completely safe.

James said, "My aim is three-fold. Firstly, the opportunity to raise further funds for The New Children's Hospital Appeal. Secondly, I am looking forward to highlighting the assets of the Manchester Ship Canal through our 'Ocean Gateway' plans. 'The Ocean Gateway' is a very important development for the North West and this swim will be the first step in launching our exciting regeneration plans. And finally, to finish the 36 miles would be a massive personal achievement which I would be delighted to accomplish."

The challenge will aim to add a further £250,000 to the £1 million donated to date by Peel to their 2008 chosen charity, The New Children's Hospital Appeal. Sponsorships can be made online via [www.manchestershipcanalswim.co.uk](http://www.manchestershipcanalswim.co.uk)

On the day of the challenge (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September), Peel will announce more details of the 'The Ocean Gateway' plans and developments. Key North West opinion formers will be invited on a ferry along the Ship Canal to be given specific details of the regeneration projects, aswell as supporting James' world first swim attempt.

Everton and England International star Philip Neville was delighted when he heard about this new challenge,

"We are absolutely thrilled that James has decided to donate all the funds raised by his "Ocean Gateway" swim to The New Children's Hospital Appeal and wish him the very best of luck with his challenge. His attempt to swim 36 miles in the canal which has never been attempted before is an amazingly difficult and ambitious challenge and one that I know I would find impossible to do myself. However, I have every confidence that James will succeed and we will be supporting him every step of his journey."

The challenge swim has been endorsed by a number of high profile organisations and personnel, such as international environmental swimmer Lewis Pugh.

- Ends –

For further information, please contact Hatch Communications on 01943 855630