



23th June, 2008

COUNTDOWN BEGINS WITH BRONZE MEDAL WINNER MEETING MARATHON SWIMMER AHEAD OF BEIJING AND 'THE OCEAN GATEWAY CHALLENGE'

James Whittaker, director of development for Peel Holdings, met with Great Britain's Olympic bronze medal winner Steve Parry to discuss both the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing and James' attempt to swim 36 miles up the Manchester Ship Canal to launch Peel's "Ocean Gateway".

James quizzed Steve for some training tips as he prepares for his world first swim in September. The challenge will aim to add a further £250,000 to the £1.3 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

Liverpool born/Manchester resident (*change for region*) Steve Parry is one of Britain's greatest swimmers. One of his finest achievements was competing at the 2004 Athens Olympics, swimming his way to a bronze medal.

"I'm sure that a lot of people would agree with me when I say that James is a mad man! Nevertheless, this will be fantastic feat to achieve, to attempt to swim over 18 miles a day is an amazing effort. I urge as many people as possible to sponsor James and support 'The Ocean Gateway Challenge 2008'.

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. His preparations so far have been perfect, including a recent challenge swim at the Coniston Lake in the Lake District, swimming 5.5 miles in 2 hours and 30 minutes. The challenge took place at night in very difficult conditions, with all swimmers

having to cope with water temperatures of just 13 degrees therefore a great deal of mental strength was required from all those that took part.

On the day of the challenge (5th and 6th September), Peel will announce more details of the £50 billion '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.

Ahead of the Olympic Games in Beijing this summer, James Whittaker was delighted to meet a bronze medal winner.

"Steve's achievements at Athens 2004 were remarkable. I was inspired by meeting him and he has passed on his advice which is sure to help me with my challenge."

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For further information, please contact Hatch Communications on 01943 855630