

Sale firefighter's world record ocean row attempt

11:00am Thursday 2nd December 2010

FIREFIGHTER Mike Palmer will be swapping his hose reel for oars when he embarks on a epic 2,600 mile ocean-crossing trip.

The dad-of-three, from Latham Grove in Sale Moor, is one of 12 men who will be rowing across the Atlantic Ocean from Tenerife to Barbados in a record-breaking attempt.

Mike, 45, who has been a fireman at Manchester Airport for 14 years, will set off on the 39ft boat Britannia III on January 12, the 40th anniversary of the first-ever Atlantic Ocean crossing by cousins Geoff and Don Allum - a 73-day journey.

The team, organised by Woodvale Challenge, are hoping to beat the current world record for the journey, which stands at 33 days seven hours and 30 minutes.

The men will row in shifts on the boat, surviving on dried food and water and will be linked to the outside world via satellite phone.

A six-person femal crew is also embarking on the challenge - attempting to beat a 50-day record.

Mike was inspired to take-on the challenge after watching TV presenter Ben Fogle and double-gold winning Olympic medallist James Cracknell complete it five years ago.

A former Iron Man triathlon competitor, Mike is already very fit but thinks the trip - and 16 hours of rowing each day - will be hard work.

He is looking forward to seeing whales and dolphins but said the journey would be 'absolute hell' and he would really miss his wife Helen and daughters Charley, 20, Emily 10 and eight-year-old Beth.

"It's a chance of a lifetime. I am most looking forward to arriving in Barbados having beaten the record, with his family waiting for me by the dock," he said.

Mike has spent £8,000 on the trip and is appealing for large sponsors to help towards the cost.

He will also be raising funds for Francis House and anyone who would like to sponsor him can visit justgiving.com/michael-palmer65.