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Press Release

RNHRD consultant to paddle 100 marathons in 100 days for Rheumatology Charity

A consultant rheumatologist at The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases Foundation Trust (known locally as the 'Min') is undertaking an incredible 2,600 mile kayak challenge to raise £100,000 for the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS). Dr Martin Lee is planning to paddle around the UK mainland, covering a distance equivalent to 100 marathons, in just 100 days.

Dr Lee will start his epic Round the Isles for Rheumatoid journey on 1 April 2012, from the Ahoy Centre in Deptford, South East London and is hoping to return to the centre at the end of July. He is one of the first people to attempt this circumnavigation solo and unsupported.

Dr Lee, who learnt to kayak as a teenager growing up in Poole, Dorset says "I wanted to raise a significant amount of money for the NRAS, it's a wonderful charity that provides help and support for people living with Rheumatoid Arthritis and their carers."

Rheumatoid Arthritis is a painful disease which can occur at any age, causing joint inflammation, stiffness, extreme fatigue and in some cases permanent disability. Over 680,000 people currently live with the condition in the UK.

Dr Lee has been inspired to take up this challenge by his aunt, who suffers with this condition.

Dr Lee explains "My aunt has suffered from an aggressive form of Rheumatic Arthritis for most of her life yet despite her pain and discomfort she remains positive and cheerful. My aunt has been an inspiration to me and is also the reason I started studying medicine knowing that I wanted to specialise in Rheumatology.

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I am delighted to be working as a consultant rheumatologist at the 'Min' which has an excellent reputation for helping people with all kinds of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases. The Round the Isles for Rheumatoid challenge is another way I can help people living with RA, their families and carers”

Dr Lee acknowledges he has set himself a formidable task “Conditions are likely to be difficult at times and there may be days when strong winds force me off the water, but I hope to show the same resilience as my aunt and I look forward to paddling back to the Ahoy Centre and hopefully raising a significant amount for a worthy cause.”

As well as taking unpaid leave from his role as a consultant at the Bath based hospital, Dr Lee will be covering all kayaking and living expenses himself: “I want to ensure that every penny raised will go straight to the charity.

Dr Bhalla, Medical Director at the 'Min' said “This is a remarkable challenge Dr Lee has taken on, we are very proud of him and wish him fine weather, kind seas and a safe return.”

To sponsor Dr Lee or for more information about the challenge please visit:

www.martinkayaking.co.uk or donate directly at

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/martinkayaking>

Dr Lee can also be contacted via his facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/martinkayaking> and is tweeting @martin_kayaking and blogging martinkayaking.blogspot.com as he prepares for his challenge.

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Notes for Editors:

- Dr Lee is available for interview
- Images available

- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people, the trust has expertise in general and complex:
 - Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
 - Neurological rehabilitation
 - Chronic pain management
 - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME
 - www.mhrd.nhs.uk
 - www.nras.org.uk