

# NORTHWEST DIRECTOR TO SWIM SAME DISTANCE AS MICHAEL PHELPS

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While Michael Phelps (<http://www.michaelphelps.com/2004/english.html>) is in Beijing competing for Olympic glory, Manchester based director of Peel Holdings, James Whitaker (<http://www.manchestershipcanalswim.co.uk/>), is setting out to swim the same distance Phelps will be undertaking over the course of the Olympics, by swimming the length of the Manchester Ship Canal!

Phelps' bid to win eight gold medals will see him swim over 36 miles during the course of the games. This distance will be swum by James Whitaker (<http://www.manchestershipcanalswim.co.uk/>), over two days, as he takes to the cold waters of the Manchester Ship Canal.

Great British Olympic legend James Cracknell and renowned environmental swimmer Lewis Pugh, today gave their support to James Whittaker from Peel (<http://www.peel.co.uk/peelholdings/index.html>) Holdings as he prepares for his own sporting test. 'The Ocean Gateway Challenge', a 36 mile swim the entire length of the Manchester Ship Canal, from Manchester to Liverpool.

Whittaker is currently undergoing a strict training schedule which has seen him swim over a staggering 1000 training miles, in preparation for the 36-mile record attempt including the 21 mile round trip of lake Windermere and swimming in the Irish Long Distance 10.55 mile Swim Championships and swimming two way Ulswater lake.

The Challenge which is almost equivalent to back-to-back channel swims, aims 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](http://www.manchestershipcanalswim.co.uk)

Jame Cracknell, said: "The work involved in such an event is phenomenal and I would like to pass on my thoughts and best wishes and good luck to James ahead of his swim along the Manchester Ship Canal. The Ocean Gateway Challenge will be a fantastic event and I hope that James can complete the swim to raise as much money for the hospital as possible. Get Sponsoring!"

Lewis Pugh, environmental swimmer added: "Swimming the full length of the Manchester Ship Canal, all 36 miles, will be arduous undertaking. I take my hat off to James. I also greatly admire his aim to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds for the proposed new Manchester Children's Hospital."

On the day of the world first 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, as well as supporting James' world first swim attempt.

- Ends -

For further information, please contact Hatch Communications on 01943 855630

More images of James Whittaker diving into the canal available on request, please contact James Hickman or Anna Wilson on [annawilson@hatchpr.co.uk](mailto:annawilson@hatchpr.co.uk) / [Jameshickman@hatchpr.co.uk](mailto:Jameshickman@hatchpr.co.uk)

## Ocean Gateway Challenge Interviews

James Whittaker is available for media interviews by arrangement

Media requests for interviews in the run up to the challenge, on the 4th/5th/6th of September are currently being formulated.

A photo call and limited interviews at 7.30am will take place at the Mark Addy Bridge, Pomona Island next to the Manchester Ship Canal - The Challenge starting point on the September 5th.

