

ATLANTIS SOCIETY,  
C/o Sailor's Bookshelf, Box 643, Hillside, N.J. 07205.

March 23rd 1987. ATLANTIS SOCIETY - AN EXTRAORDINARY PROJECT.

FIRST-EVER CROSSING OF THE ISTHMUS OF KRA by  
SEA-GOING VESSEL.

For centuries, one dream of voyagers and explorers has been, somehow, to navigate from the South China Sea to the Andaman sea branch of the Indian Ocean (or the reverse route) without going all the long way around the tip of Malaysia at Singapore. Over the ages it has been attempted several times, but has never, on record, successfully been accomplished. The rivers are fast and hazardous, the climate hot, damp and enervating, the swamps extensive, the jungle thick and the tribes, until recently, still wild.

In January Thomas Ettenhuber and I reconnoitered the terrain across part of the Kra, on foot, by jeep and by river canoe, and we believe we have discovered a route whereby small sea-going craft might well be navigated and portaged across the Isthmus.

In the coming tropical rainy season, between July and September, when the water-level in the rivers of Southern Thailand is highest, a most unusual sight will be seen - of two sea-fishing boats, crewed by Thai handicapped youngsters, guided and advised by a one-legged Welsh ocean-sailor, pushing through swamp, jungle and mountain valleys, upstream to the uttermost headwaters of the Nam Trang River, deep in the bowels of the Isthmus of Kra. Scenes along this route are like images of a Lost World, something remembered dimly in the mind of humankind.

From the highest point of navigation the two fishing craft, "longtails" as they are known, will be manhandled and winched, rolled and shoved overland thousands of feet above sea-level by the youngsters, many kilometers over rough track, until they can be launched in the headwaters of a stream running, again through primeval jungle, down to the South China Sea, and then cruise north to Bangkok.

So we hope to make the first ever crossing of the Kra Isthmus, by sea-going vessel.

It is inevitable that one day a canal will be cut across the Isthmus of Kra, to save the time and money spent by ships negotiating around Singapore on the route Far East to Europe and the Middle East. We in the Atlantis Society want it always to be remembered that the first seamen across were all crippled in one way or another, so that the world will recognise the potential capabilities of handicapped people.

Continued...

NOTE: There will be an article on Tristan  
in Sports Illustrated - April or May!

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a/c# 043-114440, Chemical Bank, 204, W. 4th St., New York, NY 10014.

The trimaran "Outward Leg" will be left under guard on the lower reaches of the river Nam Trang until Tristan Jones and Thomas Ettenhuber have completed helping the crossing of the longtail fishing-boats "Henry Wagner" and "Yanni" across the Kra. Then the matter of negotiating the Kra with "Outward Leg" will be attempted.

Since the first announcement of our intentions, there has been enthusiastic interest shown in accounts of our project by journals in Japan and the USA. In England a TV company is eager to film episodes of the crossing.

All the boats and gear for the expedition have been acquired by the Atlantis Society, and a campaign is underway right now to notify the Thai authorities of our intentions, in order to avoid any awkward or embarrassing incidents on our way across the Kra. Three handicapped Thai youngsters have been recruited and are under training for the expedition as I write, and we are searching for four more to join us..


While we are waiting for the rainy season in "Outward Leg" at anchor in Phuket, I am writing my fifteenth book, "East of Suez", and Thomas Ettenhuber is fitting out a large, Thai-style house with direct, easy access to the beach, for use at the Atlantis training base here in Phuket. The house has a huge patio under a banana leaf roof, and will be big enough to house several handicapped candidates in the future, for learning with and from us how to earn their living in, with and around sea-going craft.

Your tax-deductible donations to Atlantis Society have helped us greatly in acquiring the boats and gear we need, and further donation will greatly help to make the Kra endeavour a success, to bring inspiration and hope to hosts of handicapped, young and old, the world over.

But not only the handicapped need example and inspiration - please help us to defeat hopelessness and cynicism. If you help us, WE CAN DO IT!

THOMAS ETTENHUBER & I HAVE AND WILL PUT ALL WE HAVE INTO THIS ENDEAVOUR - INCLUDING IF NEED BE OUR LIVES - PLEASE HELP US WITH ANYTHING YOU CAN SPARE. WE COULD PROBABLY, AT THIS STAGE, GET BIG-BUSINESS TO SUPPORT US, BUT THE PRICE WE WOULD HAVE TO PAY - IN DELAYS FIRST - THEN LOSS OF FREEDOM OF INTENT AND ACTION WOULD BE HEAVY AND MIGHT EVEN PUT THE WHOLE ENDEAVOUR IN HAZARD THROUGH THE SETTING OF DEADLINES OR THE DEMAND FOR EXTRA PEOPLE TO ACCOMPANY US. YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE THAT APPROACH UNNECESSARY AND PRESERVE OUR INDEPENDENCE.

TO PAST DONORS - THANKYOU, on behalf of everyone we are helping and will help in the future...Tristan Jones



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