



Backed by Ocean Signal and WesCom Signal and Rescue, Kate Culverwell and Anna Blackwell are kayaking across Europe from London to the Black Sea to raise money for Pancreatic Cancer Action

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Ocean Signal / WesCom Signal and Rescue: Kayakers' 4,000km Continent-Crossing Expedition Supported by Specialist Marine Safety Manufacturers

Two young women have set out on an epic adventure to become the first to tandem kayak across Europe from London to the Black Sea. Kate Culverwell (19) and Anna Blackwell (24) are aided on their 4,000km expedition by safety equipment from marine specialists Ocean Signal and WesCom Signal and

Rescue as they take on the challenge to fundraise for a cancer charity.

Departing London on Saturday 21st April, each are wearing compact Ocean Signal rescueME PLB1 personal locator beacons, which are 30% smaller than comparable models. These 406 MHz beacons can be quickly activated in an emergency, even with only one hand, to contact rescue services and provide accurate positioning for at least 24 hours.

They are also carrying a comprehensive set of Pains Wessex flares from WesCom Signal and Rescue. These will include two multi-packs of personal miniflares, as well as four red parachute rockets and eight red and white handheld flares – able to withstand immersion and still ignite with reliability.

Speaking before their departure, Kate said: “We take great comfort in knowing we will have PLBs and flares to trigger if we are in any danger. There is always a risk around coastal areas and on big rivers like the Danube. However, if the worst situation does happen, we will have the equipment in place to alert others and get immediate assistance.”

She continued: “The rescueME PLB1 is perfect for our expedition. It’s small and light, which means it’s easy to have while we are kayaking and fits well in our lifejackets, giving quick access in an emergency. If we did send out an SOS, the fact it will show our location for at least 24 hours is great as we can be very remote on rivers as well as on the coast. It really is the ideal piece of equipment to have on board and reassures us we are never too far away from help.

“The sight of a pyrotechnic flare illuminating the sky is the most universally recognised signal indicating distress offshore. It has been saving lives at sea for more than a century, so we are very grateful for WesCom Signal and Rescue’s support. We hope we don’t have to use these safety signals, but if we do, we know we have the best possible products on board.”

The girls are taking on the challenge to raise money for Pancreatic Cancer Action in memory of Kate’s father, David Culverwell, who died of the disease in 2015. Kate and Anna hope their expedition will increase awareness of the disease, which has a survival rate of below 5%, and fund research into early diagnosis.

Throughout the trip they are also collecting and testing water samples for FreshWater Watch. This project is investigating the health of freshwater ecosystems around the world and aims to find solutions to tackle pollution.

James Hewitt, Sales and Marketing Manager at Ocean Signal, said: “We’re delighted to be helping Anna and Kate on their cross-Europe kayaking challenge, raising money for Pancreatic Cancer Action. The rescueME PLB1s are the ideal piece of kit to bring peace of mind throughout their adventure.

“Whether crossing the choppy waters of the Channel, carrying their kayak around hundreds of canal locks or navigating remote waterways, the compact rescueME PLB1s will be the perfect safety aids for every occasion, providing instant access to emergency services from even the most remote locations.”

Chris Feibusch, Director of Global Marketing and Communications for WesCom Signal and Rescue, added: “The selection of Pains Wessex flares they are taking will enable them to signal for help or alert others to their position in any situation. We wish the girls the best of luck with their expedition and with raising money and awareness for Pancreatic Cancer Action.”

After leaving London, Anna and Kate’s route will see them paddle round the Kent coast before heading across the Channel to the Canal de Calais. They will then travel inland using a network of rivers and waterways to make their way through France, Belgium and into Germany, spending most nights under canvas.

Joining the Danube for the remaining 2,400km, the girls will pass a further nine countries bordering this river – Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine – before finally reaching the Black Sea after three and a half to four months.

For more information visit: www.kayakingthecontinent.com. For further information about Ocean Signal’s products, visit www.oceansignal.com and for Pains Wessex, please go to www.painswessex.com.

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About Ocean Signal

Communication and safety at sea specialist Ocean Signal™ is dedicated to providing the technology and quality of product that will set industry standards.

Ocean Signal's product portfolio consists of the rescueME range of products, including the rescueME PLB1, the rescueME MOB1, the rescueME EPIRB1 and the rescueME EDF1 electronic distress flare, plus the AIS Alarm Box, and the SafeSea range of GMDSS products, including the E100 and E100G EPIRB, S100 SART and V100 handheld VHF radio, as well as the M100 and M100X professional MSLD and E101V float-free EPIRB with integrated voyage data record memory capsule. They provide both recreational and commercial mariners with simple to use, compact and affordable life-saving solutions. All products are engineered by a highly experienced team of marine electronics professionals.

Ocean Signal products are trusted by high-profile sailors, rowers, surfers and powerboat racing teams. Providing some of the world's best competitors and adventurers with vital safety and communication devices, the company's rescueME MOB1 has been selected to enhance safety standards for crew taking part in the Clipper 2017-18 Round the World Yacht Race. Ocean Signal has also sponsored the crew of Simply Fun with rescueME MOB1s, rescueME PLBs and a rescueME EPIRB1 in the 2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, the 16-man crew of Triton with rescueME MOB1s in the 2015 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, record-breaking sailor Andrea Mura in the single-handed OSTAR race, Mini Transat 2015 solo sailor Lizzy Foreman, Atlantic rowing duo Ocean Valour, Venture Cup offshore powerboat race team Cinzano, kite racer Gina Hewson and canoeist Adam Weymouth.

Safety and communication products from Ocean Signal offer exceptional value, meeting or exceeding international technical and safety standards. Careful design and innovation provides commercial shipping, fishing and recreational users the confidence that their Ocean Signal equipment will work to, and beyond, their expectations when it is needed most.

WesCom Signal and Rescue Notes to Editors:

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About WesCom Signal and Rescue:

WesCom Signal and Rescue, formally known as Drew Marine Signal and Safety, manufactures the world leading marine distress signals brands Comet, Pains Wessex and Aurora. The name change, new company logo and rebranding, which took effect on Monday 16 October 2017, came about as the result of an agreement with Willhelmsen Group to acquire the technical solutions business of Drew Marine, subject to regulatory approval. It sells to worldwide commercial and leisure marine markets. Its products have been helping to save lives for more than 100 years and are specified by the world's navies, merchant fleets, fishing vessels, rescue services, airlines and leisure craft. WesCom Signal and Rescue is at the forefront of campaigning for improved global marine safety regulations to ensure the safety of mariners throughout the world.