

Thursday March 13 2008 **Observer**

**WHEN** you are in a wind-lashed tent at -50°C in the middle of the Arctic Circle, the idea of teaching a load of school children about environmental issues and the benefits of good nutrition might not be the first thing that springs to mind.

But from their icy 'classroom' in Greenland explorers Alan Chambers and Peter Herbert will be helping thousands of youngsters across the UK with their school work, teaching them about everything from waste management to how to gather scientific data.

Alan, who lives in Whitchurch, and Peter, from Somerset, will set out on their educational trek at the end of April - a 400-mile, 40-day crossing of the world's largest island - and bring their experiences back to classrooms in schools around the country.

Children will be able to follow the pair across the ice on the explorers' website, through blogs, where they will answer questions throughout their journey, and via live video links and competitions.

They will learn about climate change and its impact on wildlife, the principles of sustainability, especially heat and waste management, the use of technology and the benefits of good leadership and training.

The explorers will also send scientific data to the Met Office for study, and are taking ice samples to track historic summer snowfall across Greenland for the University of Bristol.

# ALAN'S GOING GREEN

A polar explorer is preparing for an educational trek across Greenland. DOMINIC HARRIS spoke to Alan Chambers as he prepared for the trip

The pair are taking their inspiration from the German explorer Alfred Wegener, who made several expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s to Greenland to study polar air circulation. Ridiculed by the scientific community in his day, Wegener has since been recognised as the founding father of plate tectonics, which now features on the National Curriculum.

Alan and Peter are setting out from Uummannaq on Greenland's west coast, and will head across a latitude of 71°N for Wegener's mid

ice station - a journey that rises from sea level up to an altitude of about 12,000ft (3,800m).

Alan, who is 40 this year, said: "We want to get children involved with this trip as much as possible, on a practical educational level and an inspirational level."

"I was at Cleve House - my son's school - last year to talk about hot and cold places, and the other week I went to schools in Monmouth to show them what we are doing."

"There is also a school in Wootton Bassett designing a

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Green for go: Bristol adventurer Alan Chambers was awarded the MBE for his work in the Arctic

wind turbine that we will take with us to power our iPods for the trip. Working with our expedition gives their technology project a real purpose.

"The thought of reaching and inspiring young people and helping them to become better informed about the key issues facing the world today, such as climate change and environmental issues, is a real motivator."

During their expedition the pair will be self-sufficient, skiing and walking across Greenland's ice cap while dragging

sledges that weigh more than 200lbs (91kg).

But the explorers are well-experienced in such journeys.

Alan, a former Royal Marine, was awarded the MBE after leading the first British team to walk unsupported to the Geographic North Pole from Canada in 2000.

And among Peter's polar achievements is the founding of Expedition Technical Support, a design and development facility dedicated to supporting Arctic and Antarctic

exploration. But this is their first major expedition that has an educational aim at its heart.

The expedition has been arranged by Feet of Green, an organisation based in Westbury-on-Trym that links the business world with education.

The expedition is also being run in partnership with the Go4It Schools Initiative and the HTI, which campaigns for schools to encourage children to be more adventurous and take risks.

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