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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' guests unite in £10,000 RNLI fundraising challenge in support of husband and wife's 20-marathon feat

A husband and wife have completed the equivalent of 20 marathons as Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' ship *Borealis* travels 'Around the World in 80 Days' – in a bid to raise £10,000 for the RNLI.

Following as closely as possible in the footsteps of fictional explorer Phileas Fogg, smaller ship *Borealis* set sail on the 'Around the World in 80 Days' cruise at the end of February, with Stephen and Claire Ward, from Wellington in Somerset, among the guests due to join.

However, when Stephen was unable to join at the last minute, the couple decided to continue with the feat to complete the equivalent of 10 marathons each - with Claire tallying up her miles on board, and husband Stephen completing his ashore, including by running the Brighton Marathon earlier this month. The pair have already completed 22 marathons between them, and plan to continue to see how many they can accomplish in total.

Speaking during the cruise, Claire said:

“I am really enjoying the cruise. It's not quite the same without Stephen being here, but I've made some great friends and it's not as daunting as I thought it would be. Egypt and India have lived up to my expectations if not exceeded them, the shore tours and guides have been fantastic!

“I decided to continue with the 10-marathon challenge in Stephen's absence. The cause is equally important to both of us, having lost a good friend of ours 15 months ago who supported RNLI and had cause to call on their help in the past.

“I felt it was good to try and complete the challenge on my own as it then set a personal challenge to me to keep fit and healthy. There is so much lovely food available on board that it's good to have a reason to get a few laps in of the promenade deck!

“Meeting new people, seeing new sights, eating lovely food and giving something back to a worthwhile charity is a perfect combination for a fabulous holiday.”

To help the couple towards their fundraising, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines challenged other guests and crew aboard *Borealis* to see if they could travel the 30,828 miles of their cruise by walking, running, cycling, swimming or any other means before the end of the cruise in May.

Guests have been competing sponsored laps of the deck and are able to log any miles walked ashore as they explore, while crew have been completing sponsored relay races in the pool, and have so far travelled 15,659 miles.

As a united team effort, Stephen, Claire, guests and crew have raised £5,055

for the RNLI – with over three weeks still to go before *Borealis* arrives back in Southampton on 13th May 2023.

Sammie Firbanks, Entertainment Manager aboard *Borealis*, who has been orchestrating the challenge on board, said:

"The atmosphere has been fantastic. Guests and crew have thrown themselves into the challenge to see if we can beat *Borealis*around the world, and we have had great fun along the way.

"It has been a great way for us to support Claire and Stephen with the personal challenge, while raising funds and awareness for the RNLI, whom we have a relationship spanning more than 50 years."

Jayne George, Fundraising Director at the RNLI, said of the challenge:

"The commitment of RNLI supporters never ceases to amaze me, and Stephen, Claire and the other guests on board the *Borealis*have taken it to a new level.

"Stephen and Claire's challenge to complete the equivalent of 10 marathons each, and the guests' target of 30,000 miles, are truly astonishing feats. Fundraisers like these are the lifeblood of the RNLI – the money they raise powers our rescues on beaches and from lifeboat stations."

So far, *Borealis* has taken guests to Europe, Egypt, India, Singapore, Japan and Hawaii as guests complete miles towards the challenge, with destinations including Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia and the Caribbean still to follow.

Stephen was able to fly to India in March to join Claire for five nights, with plans afoot to join *Borealis* again later in April to allow them to continue their challenge together.

For further information on Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, visit fredolsencruises.com**, or to make a donation, visit** justgiving.com/page/fred-olsen-borealis-around-the-world-challenge

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines are proud to sail their own course with their three-strong fleet of smaller ships, *Bolette*, *Borealis* and *Balmoral*, each carrying less than 1,400 guests.

With fewer guests on board, the atmosphere is warm and civilised, and the service is more personal.

This passion for cruising has led to Fred. Olsen having more returning guests than any other cruise line.

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