



● On the way to an epic charity trek in a clapped-out truck - Nigel Statham and Australian girlfriend Jordana Battis are set to cross 12 countries, two deserts, five mountain ranges and some of the world's worst roads in a month-long charity rally.

Picture:
STEVE
ARGENT
(49364-2)

Pair go on wacky race to Mongolia

A PAIR of plucky explorers are setting off an a wacky race that would put Penelope Pit-Stop to shame.

Nigel Statham and Australian girlfriend Jordana Battis hope to drive 8,000 miles from London to Mongolia in a clapped-out truck they picked up for just £500 and nicknamed the Mongol Shoebox.

The daring duo will cross 12 countries, two deserts, five mountain ranges and some of the world's worst roads in a month-long charity rally.

"You have to do it in a car with an engine under one litre," said Nigel, 33, of Lexden.

"The idea is to drive from London to Mongolia and once you get there you donate the car to charity.

"I'm not sure how we're going to get back.

"You can go by train cattle-class or fly over China, but we can't book anything because we don't know when - or even if - we are going to get there."

There are no support vehicles to help the 200 teams.

Some aren't even expected to make it out of London before breaking down.

There isn't even an official route apart from three checkpoints along the way.

"It's just ourselves and a very unstable vehicle.

"If it breaks down you start walk-

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ing or buy a camel," said hotel manager Nigel.

"We expect it will take about four weeks.

"If we don't make it, it will be really disappointing."

Only a quarter of last year's competitors made it to the finish line.

"I'm not sure the odds are stacked in our favour," said former Colchester Sixth Form College student Nigel.

"We've got an incredibly small Suzuki SJ410 which are renowned for falling over at the first sign of a hill."

APPEAL

The intrepid adventurers made a split-second decision to join the Mongol Rally.

They are raising cash for the Essex air ambulance and a Mongolian disaster appeal.

"I said what about it and 24 hours later we were doing it," said Nigel. "It's going to be a real adventure - something to tell your grandchildren about.

"And if we do break down, apparently Jordana is worth about eight camels!"

● The team are looking for sponsorship. For details contact 07739 807563.