

# Another test for action man Noel

A DROMARA man whose name has become synonymous with the performance of feats of endurance across the world will set out on yet another gruelling test of his stamina on Monday.

Noel Hanna will travel to the remote jungles of Borneo as the leader of a group of Irish athletes to compete against 80 international teams in 'Eco Challenge 2000'.

Included in the Irish contingent will be Saintfield fitness instructor Alison Morris; Timmy Flavin from Co. Kerry and Ian Cummings from Co. Louth.

The four athletes have been training at every opportunity over the last few months in some of Ireland's most remote locations.

Indeed on Monday afternoon Noel and

Alison were practicing their water skiing techniques on the chilly waters of Lough Begney. It's now three years since Dromara's very own man of action first began to take part in

events which really tested his stamina and endurance.

"The first thing I did was the race through the Himalayas and then last year I took part in the Sahara Desert Race," he recalled.

"This time we'll be away for 30 days and we were hoping once again to get some company sponsorship.

"But the situation with that is very bad in Northern Ireland just at present.

"Taking part in the race is going to cost us about £15,000 and to date we have about £2,000 in sponsorship.

"We will have to meet the rest of the cost ourselves."

### Testing

The team will certainly face a testing time in the jungles of Borneo.

The challenge will involve taking part in a number of disciplines including jungle trekking, caving, mountain biking, fixed ropes,

padding in Murut canoes, sailing in Perahu outrigger canoes and scuba diving.

For example competitors will have to swim through insect infested waters carrying a 20 kilo rucksack on their backs.

They will also have to cycle over rough terrain, possibly with wild animals crossing their path.

All entrants have to take with them the necessary equipment for the activities and this alone costs quite a bit of money.

They also have to supply their own camping equipment and first aid kits.

The Eco Challenge is regarded as the world's premier expedition race attracting the best adventure athletes from around the world.

It is held each year in a very remote area and is based on the philosophy that interaction with the environment requires both a knowledge of and respect for the terrain through which the race travels.

Each event is designed to have minimum impact on the land and encourages a 'leave no trace' philosophy.

### Offer

This year's event in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, will offer those

taking part the chance to explore one of the last truly wild places on earth.

With over 2,000 species of animal on the island, the theme of the 2000 race will be Malaysia's wildlife.

Under Noel and Alison's guidance a number of people have been checking whether they would be fit to take part in the Eco-Challenge.

They put the volunteers through their paces at a Clarins Challenge Clinic in the fitness suite of a Templepatrick hotel.

Each person taking part, including Secretary of State Peter Mandelson, was set a target to see just how tough you have to be to participate in the Eco Challenge.

However, few of those taking part could meet the exacting standards of fitness and stamina.



Noel Hanna and Alison Morris who are taking part in the ECO Challenge. us 31/145g



Noel Hanna from Dromore and Clarins General Manager Lynne Stark put the Secretary of State through his paces at the Clarins Challenge Clinic. S31/404