

Local action man heads off for adventure 'down under'

LISBURN borough's very own action man has headed off 'down under' for yet another adventure.

Noel Hanna from Dromara is one of four members of the team 'Bridgedale Sprayway' which is representing Ireland in Eco Challenge 2001.

This is the world's premier expedition race attracting the best adventure athletes from around the globe and is held in a different remote region of the world every year.

Noel and his team mates - Timmy Flavin from Co. Kerry, Lynne Stark from Belfast and Gary Robertson from Belfast - will certainly have their work cut out for them.

They will be required to run a mile cross country in under eight minutes.

They will also take part in mountain biking over the roughest terrain at extreme temperatures while carrying rucksacks of 20 kilos on their back.

Hopefully, none of them are scared of heights as they will also have to abseil down awesome cliff faces before taking to icy cold waters in two man kayaks.



Noel Hanna (left) in training for Eco Challenge 2001.

'Eco Challenge' 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.

The 2001 Challenge on New Zealand's South Island will take place in one of the

most spectacular wildernesses left in the world.

Each of the 75 teams will traverse 400 kilometres of breathtaking terrain in the course of their exertions.

Noel and his team mates have been training at every opportunity over the last few months in the remotest areas of Ireland.

The team headed off to New Zealand last Friday to acclimatise

before the race officially starts on Sunday.

Noel is certainly no stranger to competing in this type of contest.

He has raced in many endurance events and was the first UK/Irish person to win the Himalayan 100 mile stage race in November 1997.

He has also competed in the last two Eco-Challenges which took place in Argentina in 1999 and Borneo in 2000.

