



Oxford to Oxford

A couple are travelling across the world from Oxford to the small town of Oxford in New Zealand — in a 1954 Morris Oxford car. Former Oxford students Tim Nicholson and Joanne Bowlit have organised the Oxford2Oxford road-trip in aid of British Red Cross, writes Samantha Simpson.

Oxford's Lord Mayor Pat Stannard waved them off from the town hall, in St Aldate's, last Tuesday.

The trip coincides with national Red Cross Week and the 50th anniversary year of the Morris Oxford, which was manufactured at the former Morris Motors factory in Cowley.

Former Oxford Brookes University student Mr Nicholson, 36, and Oxford University graduate Miss Bowlit, 34, bought the black car especially. Mr Nicholson, a

... in a Morris Oxford!

senior executive at a London property firm, and Miss Bowlit, a public relations manager, have given up their jobs, let their London flats and put their possessions into storage.

They expect the return trip — via France, Spain, Morocco, North Africa, Egypt and Australia — to take between 15 and 18 months.

Miss Bowlit said: "I'm sure there'll be difficult moments and

probably some days when we will wish we had never started such a madcap adventure, but it's a great opportunity and we're determined to make the most of it, both for ourselves and the Red Cross."

The couple were busy fundraising at Oxford Retail Park, in Cowley, last week.

They were asking people to donate £2 to suggest a name for their car. The winner will be treated to a discounted meal at The Longwall pub, in Cowley.

Mr Nicholson said: "We're completely self-funding the trip so any money we raise will go straight to Red Cross. We decided we wanted to go travelling and thought about doing the conventional backpacking thing, but then I told Joanne there was an Oxford in New Zealand.

"We both love Oxford and she said we just had to go there. We got the Morris Oxford not only because of the Oxford connection, but because of its reliability and simplicity. If it breaks down it'll hopefully be easy to fix. Even if not, Hinustan Motors in India still make similar cars today, so they will be able to help. We might even be able to get it upgraded."

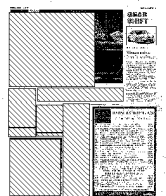
Entrepreneur and adventurer Richard Branson, who lives in Kidlington, backed the couple.

He said: "Oxford2Oxford is a great challenge and one that will require a great deal of determination from Jo and Tim to make it the success it deserves to be. I wish them the best of British luck."

● To donate, visit the website www.oxford2oxford.co.uk, or send a cheque to David Jones, Oxfordshire Red Cross, Red Cross House, Colwell Drive, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1AU.



■ Oxford-bound . . . intrepid former students Tim and Joanne





■ Tim and Joanne prepare for their trip to Oxford, New Zealand, in a Morris Oxford series 2