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Photos: P Bolton, C Rhodes, R Walcott

Satmap helps CDP Engineer Adventure Plymouth to Banjul Run 2008

When Cambridge Design Partnership (CDP) engineer Ruth Walcott took time off for a car rally adventure, she was able to call on Satmap Systems Ltd for expert help.

Ruth entered the 2008 Plymouth-Banjul Run, a 3700 mile charity rally from the UK to The Gambia comparable to the famous Paris-Dakar challenge but driven in cars costing less than £100. The cars and equipment are auctioned in aid of charitable causes at the finish line. What the Plymouth-Banjul lacks in resources it makes up in bravery, covering a similar route across the Sahara that was deemed too dangerous by the subsequently cancelled 2008 Paris-Dakar. Together with friend Sally Wren, Ruth drove a 1988 BMW 3 series saloon affectionately named 'Edward' for the event making up the only all-female team.

Satmap provided Ruth an Active 10 Digital Mapping GPS that proved invaluable when crossing the featureless off-road desert terrain that made up a large portion of the route. The Active 10, created with product development experts CDP, is the first outdoor mapping device that displays its location on the highest quality raster maps or even aerial photography. It is a rugged unit that can be used in almost any weather, day or night. The Active 10 shows users where they are, where they've been, and can be loaded with a route showing where to go.

"It was very reassuring to have confidence in knowing our map location from the GPS when there is nothing but sand in all directions. The built-in compass and log data were really useful."

During the journey, the teams negotiated temperatures from -10 to +40°C, snow and sandstorms as well as entrepreneurial customs officials and difficult water crossings. The Active 10 performed perfectly throughout which was more than could be said for the car that suffered a damaged sump less than 10 miles from the final destination. However, with some dedicated local help, Ruth, Sally and Edward all made it over the finish line.



"It was a gruelling trip but I enjoyed every minute of it. The experience was unique with a great spirit among all who took part. It was great to have Satmap involved!"