

Dee Caffari

She's a British sailor and the only woman to have sailed solo non-stop around the world. In both directions. Three times

HOW WAS THE IDEA TO CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE GLOBE WESTWARD (THE WRONG WAY) BORN – YOU, NON-STOP, BATTLING AGAINST WIND AND CURRENTS FOR 178 DAYS? Sir Chay Blyth [legendary Scots yachtsman] made the suggestion to me in Cape Town at the stopover of the Global Challenge Race in May 2005. He suggested that I follow in his footsteps and become the first female to achieve what he did as the first man in 1971, which I did.

AND THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF SAILING AGAINST THE WIND? Sailing against the prevailing winds and currents is a constant battle. If you were to stop, you would, in fact, travel backwards and increase your distance to the finish line. In the conventional route – from west to east – a yacht will move forwards regardless, as the winds and the currents of the oceans are all travelling in the right direction. My route from east to west, meant I spent 70 percent of the time sailing upwind. I had to tack my way along, which increased the distance by at least three times.

YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE 2012 SAUDI ARABIA – THE TOUR (SATT) THROUGH THE OMAN SAIL WOMAN'S PROGRAMME... I absolutely loved my experience with Oman Sail last year. It is a bold and very progressive initiative. While offshore sailing is a unique sport that allows girls to compete on a level playing field with the boys, the attitude to women can be quite varied throughout the Arab states. Success is judged in seeing the Omani girls going on to teach the next generation of female sailors. These girls have become a true inspiration. ■

Dee is leading an all-female crew from the Oman Sail Women's Programme in this year's SATT, which traverses the Arabian peninsula and starts on Feb 10. Follow the adventure on Twitter @decaffari.

