

Keep a look out for...

An expedition emulates the adventures of Basque whalers

The aim of an expedition formed by 4 Basque rowers and 2 Indians from the Miq'maq tribe and sponsored by Xabier Agote, which departed at the beginning of June from the Canadian city of Quebec, is to emulate the adventures of 16th century Basque whalers who travelled to the far distant waters of Newfoundland to hunt whales and to fish for cod. The members of the expedition will use a txalupa,



lupa, which has been given the name of Beothuk, an exact replica of those used five hundred years ago by Basque seamen. It is a mixed craft made entirely from oak, with six oars and two sails, with a length of eight metres and two-metre beam.

During the six weeks that the journey will take from Quebec to the village of Red Bay, these adventurers will live, eat, dress and sleep in the same way and under the same conditions as their forebears. Before them lies an

odyssey of 1000 nautical miles (almost 2000 km) and a route that will allow them to revisit some of the whaling settlements founded by the Basques. During the voyage, they will come into contact with the native populations that lived together with the seamen. Many of the native Indians spoke perfect Basque, as a number of studies have revealed and this fact is further demonstrated by the large number of Basque place names that can be found in this region.

The "txalupa" used by members of the expedition was built at the Ontziola de Pasai Donibane shipyard, using the same techniques and materials employed 500 years ago.