



And she will walk 2484 miles

Not many people know how many kilometres a pair of shoes will last before they wear out. Paula Constant does: about 700 kilometres for a cheap pair, many more if they're any good.

Brunswick-based Constant, 33, is a school-teacher-turned-extreme-trekker who is halfway to becoming the first woman to cross the Sahara Desert on foot.

When she is finished, she will have walked 4000 kilometres from Mauritania, in western Africa, to Egypt. Over the past nine months she has tramped as far as Niger, where the 50-degree summer heat and militia activity have forced her to take a break until October.

With no support vehicle and only local guides and three camels (one named "Bolshie Sod") for company, it can be a lonely and dangerous journey. En route, Constant has survived serious illness, water scarcity, and one of her animals fleeing with her passport and money.

What drives her to do it? Her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, and the trek will raise money for breast cancer research. But Constant says her real motivation was to have a raw experience at the edge of her limits.

For more information, visit www.constanttrek.com.

— Simon Kidd

**Paula chose one of the world's most challenging paths,
and she chose to wear Birkenstock**