

Breaking record is sax in the city event

Richard Underhill needs 322 saxes

Local effort to set Guinness record

[JUDY STOFFMAN](#)

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

Ever since the McWhirter brothers founded the *Guinness Book Of World Records* 50 years ago to settle drunken arguments at the local pub, the book has spurred people to bizarre behaviour in their attempts to push the limits of the possible.

Ross McWhirter was assassinated by an IRA gunman in 1975, and his twin Norris died in England last month, but the craziness they let loose among those vying to set records of all kinds lives on.

More than 1,000 milestones are set every year by people around the world growing the biggest parsnip, or kissing for the longest time, or getting the most body piercings, knitting the longest scarf, pushing a car furthest, trying to hold the greatest number of tennis balls in one hand or clipping the most clothes pegs to one's face.

(Believe it or not, the latter record is 133.)

In this spirit of nutty and totally useless competition, saxophonist Richard Underhill, leader of the jazz band the Shuffle Demons, is trying to assemble at least 400 musicians (the term is used loosely) in Dundas Square on Sunday, May 30, to topple the record for the most saxophone players playing a song together.

"We have put out a call to schools, we've sent e-mails to music teachers to tell their students, and to the public. If you have an old sax in your closet and haven't played in a while, now is the time to get it out," Underhill says.

The record is 321 saxophonists, set in Holland.

"We will be playing the theme from *Hockey Night In Canada*. When people register on our Web site, we'll send them the score," says Underhill.

"It's against the rules to improvise; that's what I initially thought we'd do."

So far 160 people have signed up at shuffledemons.com to give Toronto sax appeal. And music retailer Long & McQuade has offered to rent instruments free to anyone taking part.

Will they make it into the record book? Maybe not.

Another attempt to topple the same record is being made in England this month, and it looks serious. The Blowout Sax music school is organizing saxophonists in the city of Bath, to come and blow in the Pavilion, next to the Sports Centre on May 21. Already 340 saxophonists have signed up.

Underhill set the Toronto project in motion three months ago when he contacted Guinness World Records Ltd. through its Web site and explained what he wanted to do.

"They approve your plan and give you the rules and a confirmation number," he says.

"When people arrive at Dundas Square they will sign in so we have proof of the numbers.

And two people well known in the city will have to sign off on it. We haven't picked them yet.

"What we want to say with this is `Hey, let's get that some of that old Toronto spirit back!'"