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Adventurer's 13-year global odyssey nears end

Barring a last-minute calamity, the British adventurer Jason Lewis will finish his 13-year, self-powered, round-the-world odyssey at breakfast time this morning. Completing the last three miles of the epic voyage from Greenwich Yacht Club past the Millennium Dome to the starting point of the Meridian Line, he will pedal his trusty 26ft wooden boat, Moksha, home on a rising tide. 'I feel sadness that this is coming to an end, but there is also a sense of relief that it is finally done. Sometimes I thought that it would never end,' he said yesterday. As well as the lure of lucrative book deals and the chance to catch up with family and friends he hasn't seen for years, he will be given a royal reception by the Duke of Gloucester, who launched the craft back in 1994.

With Mr Lewis for the final moments of the expedition will be others who took part at different stages of his journey.

Mr Lewis, 40, has used various human-powered forms of transport to wend his way across the globe, biking, hiking and rollerblading his way into the records books as the first man to achieve the feat.

But it has been far from plain sailing, even though Moksha, which first crossed the Channel in 1994, went on to conquer the Atlantic, the Pacific and part of the Indian Ocean.

During the journey, the former window cleaner and musician lost his partner, the expedition founder, after he gave up less than halfway round. Mr Lewis also spent months recuperating in the US with two broken legs after being hit by a car. Then there were the various civil wars, over-inquisitive whales and recalcitrant crocodiles. The biggest headaches, however, have been the boredom of the long-distance ocean voyages and the chronic shortage of funds.

To cap it all, the circumnavigation nearly came a cropper on the final leg when rough seas threatened to overturn Moksha when it was launched on the Belgian side of the English Channel at a safe distance from the French authorities who had threatened to arrest him if he tried to launch in their waters.

He said he was eventually helped into the sea by a French family and their tractor. After a final close encounter with a tanker in the Channel shipping lane it took eight hours to make it back to Kent. From then it had been plain sailing up the Thames, he said. 'The white cliffs of Dover were very symbolic. It was the first time I have seen them, and it has been lovely weather to come home to. Everything I have done has been connected with the expedition, and I wonder whether there will be this void when I finish.'

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