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Adventurer pedals home after 13-year odyssey

BRITISH adventurer Jason Lewis ended a 13-year, human-powered global circumnavigation yesterday, as he pedalled over the Greenwich Meridian finish line.

The 40-year-old became the first person to make the trip without motors or sails, as he steered his eight-metre pedal boat Moshka up the Thames to the point where he set off on his incredible journey aged 26.

Lewis completed the journey in 16 legs, staying at various points around the world in between, and only returned to Britain once in 13 years.

He travelled by pedal boat, kayak, mountain bike, inline skates, by foot - and even swam a river.

With no major sponsor for much of the expedition, Lewis faced a constant battle to raise cash to keep the journey going over the years - even working as a cattle drover in the US and in a funeral parlour in Australia.

Yesterday, he was given a royal welcome by the Duke of Gloucester, the patron of his Expedition 360. In 1993, the duke named the craft that would traverse five continents and three oceans.

Lewis, from Askerswell, Dorset, was cheered on by hundreds as he crossed the line from east to west at London's Royal Observatory at 12.43pm.

He said he thought it was 'never going to happen', but was 'overwhelmed' to have returned in one piece. He said: 'It feels fantastic. I came over the line and I was choked. I blubbed like a baby. 'Everything I've been doing for the past 13 years has been in some way connected with this trip and tomorrow that will be no more.' He said low points had included breaking both legs in the US and being arrested by Egyptian authorities who thought he was a spy.

But the highs, he said, more than compensated. 'There have been many high moments. To be honest, it's always good to reach the other side of an ocean. But if it was just about the physical challenge, I would have got bored. 'The 'why' question changed over the years. I started circumnavigating the world... but it became more about using the expedition as an educational tool to enhance children's learning experience in the classroom.' Lewis said he planned to rest today before starting a career organising 'mini expeditions' for young people and giving talks about climate change.

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