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First man to circle world on muscle power

When Jason Lewis set off on his record-breaking round-the-world expedition 13 years ago, the Millennium Dome was not even built.

Yesterday he pedalled past it in Moksha, his 26ft wooden boat, on the way to completing the first human-powered circumnavigation of the globe.

During his 46,000-mile journey, the 40-year-old from Dorset hit a reef in the Caribbean, was chased by a giant crocodile in Australia and arrested as a spy by the Egyptian military after kayaking into their waters from Sudan.

Travelling only under human power and without sails he pedalled across the Atlantic and the Pacific, Rollerbladed across the United States and cycled across Australia.

As he took his final steps into the history books, Lewis said: Its been my life for 13 years, Ive put everything into this. To be honest, I never thought it was going to happen . . . there were times when it shouldnt have happened. After 13 years away, apart from one visit when his father became ill, Lewis said of Britain in the third millennium: It doesnt seem too different. Ive had my first greasy spoon breakfast and the fried eggs taste the same . . . the weather hasnt changed and there are more speed cameras. Asked what he had missed most about Britain, Lewis said: Ive seen enough deserts. Ive missed green rolling hills and cosy pubs sitting by the fire drinking a pint of warm beer and I do miss British humour. Its nice to be with people who take the mickey out of each other. He added: Im torn, Im very happy to be finishing it. Its taken so much longer than originally expected, but at the same time Im sad that its coming to a close. Im very emotional. When the 26-year-old Lewis set off from Greenwich on July 12, 1994, John Major was prime minister and Wet Wet Wets Love Is All Around was at number one in the singles charts.

In achieving his feat, Lewis was robbed and beaten several times, run over by a drunk driver in Colorado who broke both his legs and suffered malaria, altitude sickness and a potentially fatal case of blood poisoning contracted 1,300 miles from land while pedalling in the Pacific.

Yesterday, the final leg of Lewiss journey began with a single miles paddle along the Thames from the Greenwich Yacht Club to the Trafalgar Rowing Centre, where the Moksha was hauled out of the water by a crane as a small crowd cheered.

From there he pushed Moksha accompanied by family, friends and supporters up the hill to the meridian line at the Royal Observatory, where he started his journey 13 years, two months and 24 days earlier.

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