

Across Britain End To End

Walk For Charity, 900 Miles In 21 Days

On the train journey up to Scotland's far north easterly region, 'John O'Groats.' Farnborough's two toughest trekkers, observed the rugged snow covered terrain of some of Europe's most beautiful scenery.

The never ending train trip to Aberdeen, followed by hours on a bus to Inverness and John O'Groats, made John Taylor and Allan Curtis wonder why they'd chosen the bleakest, coldest time of the year to walk 900 miles from the most north easterly part of Scotland - John O'Groats to England's most south westerly location at appropriately named Land's End.

January 14th, 1980, was a bitterly cold day, however, Taylor and Curtis were on a mission, to raise much needed funds for the mentally handicapped children in Hampshire. A total of 28,000.00 pounds was required to build a hydrotherapy pool and physiotherapy room, of which the boys had raised 16,329.00 pounds from a 3000 mile walk round Europe in 1979.

Pledges of 12,000.00 pounds from businesses in Hampshire, was enough incentive to finish the job at hand.

Starting from the Last House, John O'Groats. Carrying 60 lbs of camp



John O'Groats, Scotland

stoves, clothing and tent, the first goal was to head south to Inverness, 128 miles of up and down meandering mountains. With ice on the ground it was impossible to pitch the tent, so the boys trekked for 40 of the first 48 hours, in snow blizzards, on treacherous roads, before reaching Inverness. A local doctor had passed the boys on four occasions, each time stopping and asking them to jump into the car. He was told " Doctor, we're walking for a cause and under no circumstances will we cheat." The doctor extended an invitation for dinner and a warm bed, which after 2 days of no sleep, the boys were most grateful for.

Next day, waking up in luxury, with a hearty Scottish breakfast inside them, the boys next goal, was 148 miles down the A9 in Perth. Passing skiers at Aviemore, would be the only human contact in the next three days of

extremely cold walking. With temperatures in the minuses, unable to pitch a tent again, due to solid ice on the ground, two bus

shelters en route, enabled 6 hours total sleep, in the harshest weather conditions either walker had ever experienced.

Perth was a welcome sight and meant in mathematical terms, nearly a third of the walk was complete after only 5 days.

Gretna Green, the marriage elopment capital of the world, 164 miles south west was the next stop, based on the Scotland/England border, the next 4 days walking was full of seeing light at the end of the tunnel, in relation to getting out of Scotland.

An army convoy en route to Yorkshire stopped and told the boys " we've seen you on the news, if you can walk to Harrogate, Yorkshire where we're based, we'll put you up for a couple of nights, with a Fund Raising Dinner and Games Night at the Sgts Mess."

Harrogate was 135 miles away, so tired as they were, a wager was struck

January 14th
to February
4th 1980



between the army and the boys, " if we see you in the next 4 days, we'll guarantee a thousand pounds for your charity." Another great incentive, which saw the boys arrive in Harrogate 72 hours later.

Harrogate was 12 days into the walk, where for the previous 3 days, it was too cold and wet to take their walking boots off. When the boots came off, both walkers feet were covered in blood and horrendous looking blisters. The army medical team came to the rescue, treating both the boys to a thorough medical look over, both suffering shin splints, damaged feet, but in high spirits.

The army accommodated and fed the boys, with a Fund Raising Dinner and Games Night generating 3,723.00 pounds for the cause. This rest and kindness, freshening the boys up, thus enabling them to continue on with the walk, which was close to being two thirds over.

14 days after starting, 575 miles had been completed. It was decided to try and complete the next 325 miles in 7 days, where 20 hours walking per day at 2.3 miles per hour would cover the required distance.

**2 Marathons a day, at
2.3 mph = FINISH LINE.**

GRUELLING HIKE ENDS IN 7 DAY DOWNPOUR

With food in the belly, body well rested, clothes laundered, 325 miles to go, the boys continued through Yorkshire, into the the Midlands, down to Bristol, across Bodmin Moor. For 7 days and nights through torrential downpours, soaked through to the skin, Allan and John reached Penzance, 9 miles from the finish line. Media were there to greet the boys, the media offered to drive the boys to the finish line, which was met with a Big NO Thank You, by the walkers.

The Media were invited to meet up at walks end, at Land's End, in three hours.

Three hours later, a sign, Land's End half a mile brought a much needed smile to the trekkers faces.



The last half mile, shin splints raging, fatigued, the finish line in sight, realization of completing the walk in only 3 weeks was becoming a reality.

At Land's End, the Media conducted their business, Allan and John sat back, relaxed, in the knowledge that 18,000.00 pounds had been raised for their efforts, adding to the 16,329.00 pounds from the 3,000 mile European Walk, enabling the Mentally Handicapped Children to build their Hydrotherapy Pool and Physiotherapy Room. A great sense of achievement.

Half a mile to GO, FINISHED, time to sit back and relax

