

Wednesday, 22nd June 2016, with Paul and Penny Kurowski
"East Devon Way 24 Hour Challenge:"

At 5am on a rather wet morning, eight brave walkers (Chris had rushed home - he had forgotten his boots!!) gathered by the sign at the start of the East Devon Way for a photo shoot with Ervine Kewley, our valiant support driver, and Chris Woodruff from the AONB.



We set off 10 minutes later for a walk through growing daylight up the estuary, through the backroads of Lympstone, through woods and over the commons (we think, it was hard to tell due to the mist) to Woodbury Castle.



Chris joined us three miles into the walk - he had started 11 minutes after us so must have run!

At Woodbury Castle, as with all the other checkpoints, we were met by Ervine and the minibus, complete with chairs set-out, hot and cold water for drinks, and a variety of snacks, as well as individual walkers' spare supplies. We were also joined by Jacqui Ruhlig and Jacqui Baldwin.



Their company was very welcome as we made our way to Aylesbeare Common for another pitstop followed by a long stretch to Sidbury. Thank goodness that by now the rain had converted to a light mist.

We were sad (and somewhat envious) to leave Jacqui Baldwin at Harpford, but pressed on to Sidbury for the welcome public toilets, a lunch stop in the car park, and for Jacqui R to catch the bus home. Chris Woodruff joined us there for more photos as surprised as us that we were an hour ahead of our predicted time. After Penny had finally rounded us up, we walked up the high street, pulled Neill out of the pub, and walked on.



The hill out of Sidbury proved challenging, the taste of more to come on this eastern half of the route. It was a long trek to Money Acre Cross where the welcome sight of scones and jam lifted the spirits.



Jon Roseway had joined in as back up support; first job – spread scones with jam and hand them round!

The sun was beginning to show its face by now and we finally saw some of the views which are such a feature of this walk in good weather.



Onwards we went, and then gradually down to the river at Colyton. Colyton car park saw a weary and footsore band; there was much application of zinc plaster and blister patches. Penny wondered if she could go on – cramp in the calves made walking a few steps agony, and Steve was hobbling too. However, we all agreed to keep together and aim to complete the walk as a group.

It was hard to get moving again after a sit down and food, but move we did, a shortish stretch to Musbury, where we agreed that Jon could stand down, as we were determined in our resolve to finish together. We gathered head torches (we had really slowed down by this point and knew we would finish in the dark) and started up Musbury Hill, back into the mist. This felt like the

steepest climb yet, and the way down was steep too. We wended our way past farms and cottages, climbed and descended steep hills and finally reached the outskirts of Uplyme. Steve and Paul had been a little way off the back of the "pack" and we suddenly realised that they were missing! Had there been a disaster? No, we had missed the turning, they had taken it, and were already at the minibus! We were soon with them, and enjoying a quick cup of hot chocolate before tackling the final 1.5 miles to Lyme Regis.

Somehow we found new energy and completed this section in 40 minutes to reach the finish at the seafront at 10.55pm. Would there be a pub still open? Yes ... thank you to Pearl in the Pilot Boat who welcomed us, served us, and stayed open while we enjoyed our celebrations.



Then it was a final photo by the anchor on the seafront before the weary crew climbed aboard the minibus, found space amongst the bags of spare boots and clothes, and slept while Ervine

drove us through more fog back to Exmouth.

What a day! What a sense of achievement! When we dreamed up this idea, we had no idea of what we had let ourselves in for. Thanks to everyone involved, especially Ervine and Jon, our support drivers, and all the walkers, the team spirit was brilliant.

The walkers for the complete route: Chris Buckland, Sue Newman, Jane Harris, Nigel Pinhorn, Richard Critchley, Steve Hagger, Neill Curtin, Paul Kurowski, Penny Kurowski

Walk stats: Distance: approximately 40 miles
 Total time taken: 17 hrs 45 mins
 Total walking time: 15hrs 40 mins

Penny and Paul Kurowski
30 June 2016