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Adventurer completes circumnavigation

LONDON --He was hit by a car in Colorado, attacked by a crocodile in Australia, detained as a suspected spy in Egypt and survived illness and periods of despair.

On Saturday, British adventurer Jason Lewis finally came home, completing a 13-year, 46,000-mile human-powered circumnavigation of the globe.

The 40-year-old carried his 26-foot yellow pedal craft the last few miles up the River Thames, pushing it across the Meridian Line at Greenwich, where his expedition began in 1994. 'I'm overwhelmed,' Lewis told Sky News television after arriving. He struggled for words as he described his feelings at the close of an odyssey that took him around the globe, powered only by his arms and legs -- on a bicycle, a pedal boat, a kayak and inline skates. 'It's been my life, for 13 years, I've put everything into this,' he said. 'To be honest I didn't know it was going to happen. There were many times in the trip where it should have failed.' Lewis was recruited by fellow adventurer Steve Smith, who first dreamed up the idea of going around the world using only human power in 1991. The pair had little experience at sea, but Lewis thought the prospect of hiking and biking across the world was 'wildly romantic.' 'The three and a half years the expedition was projected to take sounded like an acceptable amount of time to rejuvenate from the wearisome London scene without totally going AWOL,' Lewis wrote on the expedition's Web site.

Trouble began early. After two years of planning and fundraising, the pair set out in July 1994 only to get 'horribly lost' on their way to the English coastal town of Rye, where their pedal boat was waiting.

After crossing the English Channel to France and then cycling to Portugal, the pair pedaled their boat in shifts across the Atlantic Ocean, reaching Miami in February 1995. Along the way, they survived close encounters with a shrimping trawler, a whale and a giant wave that swept Smith overboard.

By the time they reached America, the two adventurers had been cooped up in a broom closet-sized space for 111 days with little in the way of food, and their relationship had begun to deteriorate. They crossed the U.S. separately, with Lewis strapping on his inline skates for the 3,500-mile trip to San Francisco. It was on this leg of the journey that he was hit by a car in Pueblo, Colo., breaking both legs. He spent nine months recuperating.

Smith and Lewis reunited in San Francisco and eventually pedaled from the Golden Gate Bridge to Hawaii, where the two split for good. Smith went on to write a book, 'Pedaling to Hawaii,' while Lewis continued on to Australia.

He biked across the Australian outback, dodged supertankers in the Singapore straits and hiked the Himalayas. From Mumbai, India, he pedaled his boat across the Indian Ocean to Djibouti and made his way north by bicycle through Sudan and Egypt.

Accidents and sickness dogged the trip. The collision in Colorado nearly cost Lewis his leg. The trip across the Pacific left him sore, inflamed and depressed. While kayaking across the Barrier Reef off Australia, he was attacked by a crocodile, which bit off a piece of his paddle.

Local authorities were a problem, as well. Lewis logged 'interesting experiences' with Alabama police and gun-wielding locals in the United States. He had to cycle through Tibet at night to avoid detection by Chinese roadblocks. And when he crossed into Egypt from Sudan, he was thrown in jail by the military on suspicion of



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being a spy.

After his release from prison, he biked through the Sinai desert and across Jordan, Syria and Turkey. He then powered through Europe over the summer, arriving in Greenwich, in southeast London, to cheers from family, supporters and the Duke of Gloucester, the expedition's British patron.

Lewis broke the trip up into 16 legs and took breaks ranging from several weeks to several months in various parts of the world. He also picked up corporate sponsors for each leg of the trip, including sports clothing, gear and supplement companies; satellite phone and global positioning system firms; and M & M's, which provided chocolate for the trip across the Pacific.

Lewis said he hoped to use the expedition to raise funds for humanitarian causes and draw attention to environmental issues. He has already raised \$66,000 for causes ranging from an orphanage in East Timor to kindergartens in Bangkok. 'Instead of running away from England (as I think I was at the beginning) it is now more a question of riding forward on the back of ideas that I feel passionately about,' he wrote on his Web site in April.

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Expedition 360: <http://www.expedition360.com>

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