



↑ Lesley at the finishing post at John o'Groats

Lesley's Walk:

Land's end to John o'Groats

Our non-executive director Lesley Beecher took on the daunting challenge of walking from Land's End to John o'Groats to raise money for Cancer Research, this is her story.

One of my aims in leaving full time work behind was to give me the opportunity to do things I've always wanted to do, and some things I wasn't sure I wanted to do but challenged me in new ways. I've always loved hiking and for me this was the ultimate hike. It's been a vague goal for as long as I can remember, and two years ago I started to think seriously whether it was something I could do.

In preparation for the task, I did a two week walk - the Trans Pennine Trail - in August 2022 as a test to see how my body held up. Once that worked out well, I started planning in earnest. There is no set route, so I had to work out one of my own and plan where to stay each night. I booked 57 beds in October/November 2023 and the journey was set. In December, I started building up my walking and the weight I was carrying in my pack.

Before I knew it, it was March 25th and I was getting the train to Penzance ready for the biggest physical challenge of my life. After a good night's sleep, I made my way to Land's End to get my photo taken next to the sign and started my walk towards John o'Groats.

A typical day along my journey would be to get up between 7am and 7:30am - dress, pack, eat breakfast, buy food for the day, walk for 7-10 hours (depending on the length/difficulty of that day's walk), shower, wash the day's clothes and put out to dry. Then eat, recover and sleep.

My most difficult moment was when I jarred my shin at the end of the first week. The next walking day, it was hurting so much that I didn't think I could go any further. Paracetamol hadn't helped so I sat down, took some Ibuprofen and rubbed the whole area with Voltarol. When nothing had changed after half an hour, I was walking and crying, thinking I just had to find a way to make it to my accommodation and then go home. After about an hour, the painkillers kicked in and walking became easier. The rest of that week, I dosed up on Ibuprofen and Voltarol and kept my swollen foot elevated when I wasn't walking. Thankfully, it started to get better, and the swelling went down the following week. On the flip side, there were so many memorable moments during my journey; crossing the border to Scotland was probably the best as it was a big psychological milestone for me.

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9 weeks and 5 days since I started my journey, not daring to believe that I would actually make it, I finally got to John o'Groats with the most incredible feeling of accomplishment. 58 days of walking at an average of 17 miles per day doesn't begin to describe the variety of paths, roads and terrains that I walked on, the weather I walked in, and the views I was privileged enough to see.

There were so many people who supported and encouraged me - their words of support kept me going when I thought I couldn't and contributed to the fantastic total raised for Cancer Research UK. This was one of the biggest challenges of my life and I'm so happy that I completed it.

[Sponsor Lesley here](#)



The Route

1000 miles

68 days

58 of them walking at an average of 17 miles per day

