

Despite the dreadful weather the fourth annual Ivanhoe Way Challenge took place on Saturday 16th June 2012. Starting at 4am from the Royal Hotel, Ashby, 65 walkers were in good spirits expecting the worst during the forthcoming 37 miles. Starting at The Royal Hotel in Ashby De La Zouch, the route passes through Staunton Harold Reservoir, heads to the rocky outcrops of Charnwood Forest, before going out towards Bagworth. The second half of the route heads over to Shackerstone, along the route of the Ashby Canal, then towards the Moria Furnace.

The constant rain before the event had made the terrain hard going and very muddy underfoot, leaving walkers feeling like it was one step forward and two steps back. With a dry morning out of the way, midday brought sharp showers and strong winds, testing even the most motivated walker to keep going. As walkers approached checkpoint 4 at Odestone around midday, they were welcomed by encouraging support from the marshals, along with hot drinks and cakes which helped to prepare walkers for the final 12 miles.

This year's event proved to break many previous records, despite the tough conditions. Team 'Bellarose' were first back to the Royal Hotel at 2.15pm, completing the challenge in a staggering 9 hours 45 minutes. In addition a record 61 walkers completed the challenge, helping to raise over £5,000.

Despite having blisters, aches and pains, walkers enjoyed a well-earned rest at the Royal Hotel with homemade soup and refreshments once they had completed the walk. A great atmosphere of celebration, elation and relief welcomed each team back, and continued until the last team finished.

The Mayor of Ashby, Mr Geraint Jones was there to greet many of the walkers at the finish. Mr Jones said "to see this many people complete the challenge in these conditions is incredible, it's a credit to them all"

A special thanks must go to all the volunteers who helped out on the day. Co-founder of the challenge Angela Bebbington says "Without volunteers this event would not be able to take place, they all play such an important role in making the whole event a success". Many walkers commented on how great the support was at checkpoints with constant cheers of encouragement from marshals, really giving them a push and motivating them to keep going.

The event was founded by husband and wife team, Richard and Angela to raise money for Wishes 4 Kids. A Leicestershire charity that grants wishes for children and youngsters who are life limited, terminally ill, have experienced life-changing physical or emotional traumas, have suffered major abuse or are diagnosed as HIV Positive.

More information can be obtained by contacting Richard or Angela at enquiries@ivanhoechallenge.co.uk or by calling 07751 259489. Alternatively visit our website at www.ivanhoechallenge.co.uk