

Press Release: Ivanhoe Way Challenge 2014

Date: 21st June 2014

The 6th annual Ivanhoe Way Challenge, a 37 mile walk around the Ivanhoe Way Footpath, took place on Saturday 21st June. Starting at 4am from Ashby, 48 walkers were in good spirits, even though they had 37 gruelling miles in front of them. It was a warm start and it soon became apparent that the temperatures later in the day were going to test some of the walkers to their limits. On approaching the first checkpoint the walkers were well into their stride and making the most of the cooler morning hours.

The route passes through Staunton Harold Reservoir, heads to the rocky outcrops of Charnwood Forest, before going out towards Bagworth and Odstone. The second half of the route continues over to Shackerstone, along the route of the Ashby Canal, then towards the Moria Furnace. On reaching the infamous checkpoint 4 where tea, coffee and homemade cakes are on offer, the midday sun was really challenging some of the walkers. Whilst some walkers took time out for a cuppa, Sports Physio Gemma Chatwin and Leicestershire Search and Rescue were doing a great job attending to aching muscles and blistered feet which helped to prepare walkers for the final 12 miles.

As walkers approached each checkpoint they were welcomed by encouraging support from the marshals, with many stories being shared about people's goals and motivations for taking part in the challenge, many very emotional and inspiring. One common theme we heard from many people was the good cause for which the event supported, Wishes 4 Kids. Completing his 5th Ivanhoe Way Challenge, Phil Owen was once again a great motivation and inspiration to all involved and his words sum the day up nicely, "Our pains and blisters will heal, many of the children's pains won't".

The amount raised for this year's challenge is over £5,000 which is amazing, and this keeps on rising. This brings the total raised over the 6 years of this event in excess of £35,000, with over 300 people completing the challenge. The true winners of this challenge were all the participants and the children who will benefit from all the money they have raised. Despite having blisters, aches and pains, walkers enjoyed a warm welcome and a well-earned rest at the Ivanhoe Social Club 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.

Special thanks must go to all the volunteers who helped out on the day, Gemma Charwin who provided Sports Physio and Leicester Search and Rescue who provided the first aid cover. 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.

Richard and Angela Bebbington, the founders of this event, continue to support Wishes 4 Kids. In August last year they completed their own challenge, cycling from Ashby to Rome ('Home 2 Rome'), raising further funds 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.

Further information can be obtained at www.ivanhoechallenge.co.uk or by phoning Richard on 07751 259 489.

Walkers take a well-earned rest at Odstone, checkpoint 4

