

UK to Myanmar 2021 And Back Again 16,065 miles

Our Virtual Expedition

23rd January 2021

Headline Figures

Number of Teams Walking, Running, Cycling and Riding: 53

Distance Travelled: 1897 miles

Cumulative Distance Travelled: 4906 miles

Distance Still To Travel: 11,159 miles

Money Raised for the Ahtutu Charity so far £1369.34

*JellyDellyLegs
Bettserella
HopalongBexyBoots
CautherWanderers
MumblesHashTheChinerys Meg'sMates
AbsolutelyNarpelous
mnm&co TheMollyMixtures VivaDivas
AreYouSureIt'sThisWay
MoJae TheD'Silvas TheBushyTails
AreWeThereYet JAWSPAWS
NotAnotherBloodyWalk TheBeretBunch
TheHickeyHoneys TheRedneckRambler TheOddCouple
OneLadyAndHerDog TeamYogi TheWhirlingDervishes
TheHikingHowes TheHarpers TheRoslinRamblers
TheConnorClan
MuppetsToMyanmar
RunWalkTiddleCrawl
TheDanFrickleFanClub*

Phan Khar Gone Nursery Feeding Programme

Each time I take a team to volunteer in Myanmar, I tell them what the highlight of our trip is going to be and each time I'm correct. It's the visit to 'our' floodplain village, Phan Khar Gone.

Part of the excitement is taking a boat from a jetty on one of the tributaries of the River Patheingyi. The air thrums with shallow outboard motors as people arrive and leave from the market on the long, slim, low, local boats. At school time, scores of secondary pupils arrive in pristine school uniforms and stream towards the high school, grinning and shouting Mingalaba! as they pass. Some even try out their English and are thrilled when we respond. Then we ourselves clamber aboard a local boat which Albert, former student and esteemed grandfather of Phan Khar Gone, his ancestral village, has hired for us. We are always laden with gifts for the local school - new and as new books and stationery - and the nursery school - wooden toys, books and pens, pencils and paper.



Our translator and guide is Albert's beautiful daughter, Anne, whom I'm proud to call a friend. We arrive and are treated like royalty - the first time we were met by a band! Anne's aunt, Mary Joseph, organises our visit and manages our nursery feeding programme.



The village houses are built close to the river among the trees. There are some concrete paths raised on higher ground but many paths are lines of sandbags. Houses are built on stilts. The open space below is used as a kitchen in the dry season and the chickens, ducks, pigs and dogs roam around. In the wet season everything moves up one level. People access their houses by boat and a mezzanine level is temporarily created in the upper storey of the house.

We are taken to the school, usually closed on the weekend but a wonderful place for weekday visits, and then treated to dancing and singing at the nursery school, a highlight. Then we share a sumptuous lunch and gather with all the local people to chat. They always want to know about farming in England and what our lifestyle is like. On our first visit, I asked them what the best thing was about Phan Khar Gone. The peace they said ... and they are so right!

Mary Joseph works closely with the nursery school and for two years we have ensured that the children in the nursery get a protein-enriched meal each week and vitamin supplements. Already we have anecdotal evidence that there are fewer absences through illness and that the children's health is better in general.



Anne, Mary Joseph and I go through the records to ensure that the money we have given is being spent appropriately. It's wonderful to feel we have this ongoing relationship with these children as they grow.

I have just sent out another \$100 to sustain the children for another year.

(NOTE: Those in UK to Myanmar 2021, I have beautiful drawings done by the children of the primary school. I lost my link with the school in Ely. Would any of your schools like a link with Myanmar? Very happy to come in and talk to the children and set this up.)

Where In The World Am I?

On our quest we pass some wonderful places.
Can you recognise these?

First prize, half a day topless cleaning by Keith
Second prize, two half days topless cleaning by Keith

(Keith is pretty darn confident that no one will get ALL the answers. He's in trouble if you do).



1) What is the name of this mosque and where is it?



2) Ever been here? What's it called and where is it?



3) Looks like Keith is keeping his top on, or do you know where this is?



4) I'm being daring with this one.
Keith living dangerously.



5) I'll take my socks off as well if you get this one.



6) So, have you got all six?



Sarah Paul and Gigha

Hello my name is Gigha Apparently I am named after a Scottish Island just off the west coast of Scotland. However I didn't come from there. I was born just outside the Village of Luss beside Loch lomond better known as Glendaroch in Take the high road. Anyway I am 3 year old Border Collie bitch. My favourite hobbies are eating everything in sight (hence my upset tummy earlier this week) , Nice long walks especially on the beach and making friends with small people. I don't like walking in heavy rain and hate wearing Dog coat.



Mary Durkacz and Meg

Meg (of Meg's Mates fame) is a red Cairn Terrier who is almost 8 years old. This is her favourite pose when she is most comfy, upside down in her basket with her paws in the air. She is quite the friendliest dog I have ever had: she loves every person and every other dog. She is the chipper little dog who dances up to the scary, big, slavering, growling beast. "Play with me," she begs as it lunges at her.

The other day while walking I noticed she had something in her mouth. Without missing a beat she had somehow found and picked up a pheasant claw and was proudly bringing it back to play with. She has adopted Keith as her own, refusing to go to bed until he does and crawling under the bed at his side in the morning

Keith's Note - I don't do dogs, but at least this one is quiet which will do me. Mary's Note - Oi!

The Connor Crew and Duke

Duke is a dashing working cocker who lives with his owner Beth Connor in North Devon.

They are a well matched pair. They are out exploring new routes and footpaths every day but especially weekends.



Ruth Lo with Paddington and Bilbo

Here are my 2 walking buddies Paddington and Bilbo. Pads loves cheese, star-gazing, moonwalking, talking, drinking out of human cups and digging for moles...Bilbo loves tennis balls, cuddles, stealing things, chasing pheasants and sleeping. They are my best mates and lockdown heroes.



Maggie Brackenridge and Hamish

I think you know Hamish...who doesn't amongst my friends! He is a border collie, nearly 7 years old and to us is the best dog in the world. Hamish loves to be outside, no matter the weather; always needs to be carrying at least one stick, preferably more; loves water, the colder the better, and often breaks the ice to go in the river in winter; he has a French passport, although originally from working stock in the Scottish borders; and he's the biggest, softest, cuddliest, wouldn't say boo to a sheep, allegedly intelligent dog on the planet. And he asked me to tell you that he'd have done the whole trek from Ely to Pathein by now if he f didn't have to wait for us!

Vicki Jellyman with Jake and Lola

"This is Jake the Labrador who is 5 and a soppy fool . He is a super swimmer and very obedient .

Old lady friend Lola is a springer spaniel aged 10 and she is a grumpy princess .

I tend to walk with Lola as she walks at old lady pace with me “.



Kirsten Martin, with Bert and Ernie

Meet Bert and Ernie-the very best lockdown friends who keep me sane by helping me to escape from video calls! They are not however the best walking companions as we have to go at Ernie's speed (he is 14) and Bertie insists on shouting at every dog we come across, so I have to go on furry and non-furry walks to get the miles up!



Liz Harcombe with Tinka and Freya

The travels are made all the more pleasant with these lovely two. Tinka is a nearly 6 year old 'bred in the purple' black labrador we've had from a pup and we met mum, dad, aunties and grannie when we went to choose her. All very civilised and a well documented girl. As well as an elegant, calm companion, Tinka is one of the most beautiful things on four legs and content with wherever we go. Always the same and rarely excited. Freya, on the other hand, is a cocker spaniel of doubtful age...after a career having puppies, we rehomed her. Another beautiful girl but constantly running on rocket fuel and something else which makes her faintly maniacal! Always excited, happy on legs and runs twice the distance of her larger foster sister! She adores life but 100% simply isn't enough. So for every mile walked to Myanmar, Freya has travelled two! To celebrate a year with us, we had 2 matching soft red leather collars made for them for Christmas....They couldn't care less of course!! We are so very lucky to live in the middle of Thetford Forest and complete most of our miles in beautiful surroundings....I like to think that Tinka and Freya think so too. Team Yogi.

Jayne `Gardner and Reg

Reg is a border terrier who is 11 and a half years old. He loves running, walking, mountain climbing but most of allsleeping and eating. He has completed a few long distance paths including the south west path, Offa's dyke, Pembrokeshire coast path and the Anglesey path. His favourite moments....getting to the top of the mountain and having some Scooby snacks. He hates doorbells and buzzers so watching university challenge sends him into meltdown (and he's not too good at answering the questions)



Lucy Short and Douglas

Here is my intrepid walking companion Douglas having a snooze after our blustery chilly walk today. Hes getting on a bit now and only has teeny tiny legs but he still loves a good walk.

He's in here somewhere

Sarah Shorney with Rosie and Piper

Piper the black lab and Rosie the blind Jack Russell. Rosie had both eyes removed in April but has adjusted amazingly and still joins me on my walks, she has her own guide dog in Piper

