

charity issue

omniNEWS

Welcome to the second and final instalment of the OmniNEWS Charity Special, following the adventures of Jeremy Howat and Michael Meilton when they travelled from Land's End to John O'Groats (via Ipswich) by local bus services. Their aim was to raise £20,000 for Make-A-Wish and the Cariad Rose Foundation.

Final Sums

Jeremy and Michael deliberately set themselves a very ambitious target for their Land's End to John O'Groats bus trip. They wanted to be able to give Cariad both her wishes – a trip to Disneyland and a very generous donation to Make-A-Wish.

Now, less than two months after reaching their geographical target, they are tantalisingly close to reaching their financial one too.

As of the beginning of December, they had raised over £15,000 which, once the qualifying Gift Aid donations are taken into account, will mean that they have raised well over £16,000.

Donations are still coming in, so for an up-to-date total please visit

[www.justgiving.com/
Blossom-Appeal-Cariad-Rose-Trust](http://www.justgiving.com/Blossom-Appeal-Cariad-Rose-Trust)

What Cariad did next

Planning for Cariad's trip to Disneyland has started. Cariad's family have already paid a visit to Virgin Atlantic to 'test out the seating' and a trip to British Airways is also planned. This is important because Cariad has to sit up during take off and landing and to rest flat for the remainder of the journey, using her buggy to support her.



▲ Cariad tries out the Virgin Atlantic seats

A fully disabled adapted bungalow has been sourced very close to the parks, and FSMA (Families of SMA) are helping to provide USA adapted equipment, including a suitable ventilator. Her family is working in tandem with Make-A-Wish to help bring the cost of the trip down (insurance alone costs £3,000).

The timing of the trip is also an important consideration. While everyone involved wants it to be as soon as possible, they need to avoid the hurricane season and the height of summer (the heat and humidity would be far too challenging for Cariad's respiratory system). So the optimum time is around Spring and they are hoping to have everything ready to go next year.

Finally, once all this has been sorted, the family can let Make-A-Wish know how much money will be donated to them. As an extra bonus, it is hoped that a Cariad approved celebrity will be persuaded to be there for the handover of the cheque.

www.cariadrose.co.uk

Thanking some very important people

As well as all the very generous people who donated through the Just Giving page, we owe a special debt of gratitude to a number of organisations and individuals who helped us to reach our target in a variety of ways.

LEJOG ROLL OF HONOUR

Omnibus (and the staff) – for the busman's holiday, the donations and being official photographers

Stagecoach – for the donation, the travel cards and the trip home for Jeremy

First Group – for the donation and travel cards

Go Ahead Group – for the travel cards

Ipswich Buses – for the donation and assistance in our hour of need

Sir Peter Hendy – for meeting up with us, the travel card and the personal donation

Ticketeer – for the donation and cards for handing out

London United schedules team – for the donation

Kuwait Citybus – for the donation

Fatboys Charity – for the donation

Bath Bus Company – for the donation

Leaders Estate Agents – for the donation

146 Cider Company – for the donation

The Barista in Leicester – who donated the change in his pocket

Trent Barton Buses – for meeting up with us and for Mr Mango

Reading Transport – for meeting up with us

BBC Radio Cambridgeshire – for the publicity and a now legendary interview

Cambridge News – for the publicity

Margaret the Stagecoach Inspector – for enabling our media coverage in Cambridge and being so helpful

Cotton Traders – for the sweatshirts

Pasifik Design Limited – for designing and printing them

Dynamic Creative – for designing our OmniNEWS specials

Nimbus – for their donation

The Broughton Family – for hospitality, accommodation pre LEJOG and donation

Carters Coaches of Capel St. Mary – for going beyond the call of duty!

Zaika Indian Restaurant in Ipswich – for a great evening, discounted food and a donation

Alison McCalpin PR – for the publicity

Route One Magazine and Passenger Transport Magazine – for media coverage

Anyone else we have forgotten – for whatever it was they did!

A funny thing happened on the way to John O'Groats

Inevitably, even with the best scheduler in the business on the case, things didn't always go exactly according to plan. There were too many incidents to cover here, for the full story please visit the Blog www.lejogbus.blogspot.co.uk. In the meantime, here are some of their best bits, in Jeremy's words...



Day 1 – Monday 14th October 2013 – Land's End to Bridport

Before I even get to Land's End, I pull the handle clean off my suitcase. LEJOG has already been rescheduled to take in a local Argos for a replacement, and the adventures of the suitcase handle begin.



Day 2 – Tuesday 15th October 2013 – Bridport to Bracknell

At Southampton we were due to be met by Cariad and some bus-themed cupcakes. Sadly due to a slight misunderstanding, the timing of Cariad arriving in Southampton was out by a week. Another quirk of our journey, Michael realised that after two days of our journey north to John O'Groats we were now travelling South.



Day 3 – Wednesday 16th October 2013 – Bracknell to Ipswich

They day starts well enough, with a mention on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show on Radio 2. Also, waiting for us at Victoria was Sir Peter Hendy (CBE), Transport Commissioner for London. Then traffic and bad weather conspired to leave us short of our destination (Ipswich). So we took the Carter's bus to its scheduled final destination of Capel St Mary and driver Steve very kindly continued to Ipswich where we had arranged our overnight accommodation and to meet with the chaps from Ipswich Buses – the whole reason our trip went that way!

Day 4 – Thursday 17th October 2013 – Ipswich to Derby

Ipswich Buses came to our rescue and sent a driver to take us back to Capel St Mary so we could resume our journey uninterrupted. Back in Ipswich (where we weren't scheduled to ride on an Ipswich Buses bus) but to put that right we took a scheduled ride on their free town bus and for the third time 'arrived' in Ipswich. Later, we encountered the might of the Cambridge media for a photocall and a now legendary radio interview. Almost in Derby our bus overheats, but to Kinch Bus' credit, not 10 minutes passed before the replacement turned up.

POST SCRIPT – We made it from Land's End to John O'Groats (via Ipswich) more or less on schedule and survived. And although my suitcase didn't – the handle did.

Day 5 – Friday 18th October 2013 – Derby to Lancaster

We met Mr Mango! In truth he is a driver with a higher calling called Ash. However, he wasn't in a suit or uniform (well, he was... as such). Mr MANGO is Trent Barton Buses' mascot. A man dressed as a Mango with a big MANGO card ("It's like an Oyster card but it doesn't smell of fish" – that was a MANGO-ism). Of course, Mr Mango posed for the now obligatory photo with the suitcase handle. We then arrived at Head Office in Oldham, followed by the Omnibus Routemaster as a 'guard of honour'.



Day 6 – Saturday 19th October 2013 – Lancaster to Dundee

The 555 route from Lancaster up to Keswick has the potential to be very enjoyable. It was a double decker – we had the front seats and it goes via Kendal, Windermere, Ambleside and Grasmere, or at least I think that is what emerged from the murk. The weather was wet, and misty. Some say there are hills around – to us it was either lashing rain against the windows or white mist. After encountering a car in the road on its roof, further drama ensued when a Policeman boarded and escorted a passenger off in handcuffs. We decided against asking them both to pose for a photo with the case handle.

Day 7 – Sunday 20th October 2013 – Dundee to Inverness

I was just explaining to Michael the exceptionally interesting and useful process of evaporating whisky that leaches through the wooden storage barrels that we were passing (the Angels' Share) when we stopped. The police had cordoned off the road for an accident which led to an hour delay, meaning our driver couldn't continue without his scheduled break. However, full credit to the Stagecoach Supervisor at Elgin who planned ahead and switched everyone to another service and drove us to Inverness himself, clocking off four hours late.

Day 8 – Monday 21st October 2013 – Inverness to John O'Groats

Omnibus Directors Peter and Carol Crichton had made a surprise appearance in Inverness to join us for the final leg. The X99 route has to go down as one of the most stunning bus journeys in the UK – what a view. With running commentary of a local I failed to see seals and was told all about the Cromarty Bridge as we crossed it. 'Wended' is a word that I have used a few times, but surely it was meant for this journey.



Contact

Omnibus
Hollinwood Business Centre
Albert Street, Hollinwood
Oldham, OL8 3QL