# Man and donkey unite on 700-mile journey to rediscover kindness and connection



# Reconnecting with Nature and Humanity: A Journey with Martin the Donkey

In an age where digital connections often overshadow genuine human interaction, many individuals seek solace and adventure in the embrace of nature. Such is the case for Adam Lee, whose compelling journey saw him traverse the length of the UK accompanied by a donkey named Martin. This narrative of resilience and companionship sheds light on the significant emotional and social benefits of slow travel, serving as an inspiring testament to the bonds formed between man and animal.

Lee's odyssey began with a desire to escape the confines of urban life and rediscover the joys of exploration. Reflecting on his childhood adventures roaming the streets of Hackney, he stated that after a significant breakup, he felt compelled to reconnect with the world and himself. This call to adventure led him to undertake a near 700-mile route from Cape Wrath in the rugged Highlands of Scotland to the southern shores of Dorset. While his previous travels across the Americas and Central Asia provided profound insights into human kindness, the challenge of walking in familiar yet often isolating landscapes prompted him to devise a unique strategy: he would travel with a donkey to attract connections along his route.

Choosing Martin from Alwood Donkeys, Lee discovered that their journey was as much about forging an emotional bond as it was about the miles covered. After seven months of preparation, they set out together, but the early stages were fraught with challenge. The harsh terrain of the West Highlands tested their resolve, leading to moments of frustration for Lee as he grappled with the realities of walking a donkey through bogs and hills. Despite these initial struggles, their travels soon turned into heartwarming encounters, with strangers often drawn to Martin’s presence. As Lee noted, “Everywhere we went, we put smiles on people’s faces.” This sentiment echoes the experiences of others who have ventured on similar paths, reaffirming the joy that companionship—both human and animal—can bring.

However, beyond the smiles and aid from passersby, the journey became a profound lesson in trust and understanding. Lee learned that the relationship between a human and a donkey is built on mutual respect and empathy. As he began to prioritise Martin’s needs over his own, their shared experiences transformed from mere survival to a joyful companionship, culminating in affectionate moments at the end of long days. This connection mirrors findings from various studies which highlight how close relationships with animals can significantly enhance emotional well-being and decrease stress levels. The shared hardships along the way fostered a deeper bond, eloquently captured when Lee remarked on Martin curling up for cuddles at night, a simple pleasure that reiterated the value of companionship in the wild.

The journey also rekindled Lee’s faith in the inherent kindness of humanity. With Martin by his side, he found that people were more inclined to approach him—offering campsites, food, and encouragement. This phenomenon resonates with broader insights into how engaging with animals can serve as a social catalyst, making it easier for people to connect in ways they might not normally feel comfortable. As Lee’s girlfriend jokingly noted, it’s like “playing the donkey card,” a light-hearted nod to how the presence of an animal can ease social interactions.

In the grand scheme of things, Lee’s experience reaffirms a valuable lesson: the journey is as essential as the destination. Having returned home, he purchased Martin, further solidifying their unique bond. Their adventures will continue, with plans for more explorations in Scotland, but the true essence of their time together lies in the emotional connections and insights gained along the way. As Lee’s reflection encapsulates, this journey was not solely about walking the length of the UK but about rediscovering the importance of kindness, trust, and the unspoken language shared between humans and their animal companions.

In a world that often prioritises speed and efficiency, Lee’s embrace of slow travel challenges us to reconsider our relationships with both the environment and each other. By forging strong connections with nature and its inhabitants, we can find solace and a renewed sense of purpose in the simple act of walking through our landscapes with an open heart.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[3]](https://www.explorersconnect.com/inspire-stories/2014/1/6/1000-miles-around-wales-with-chico-the-donkey)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/may/09/experience-i-walked-the-length-of-the-uk-with-a-donkey> - In this personal account, Adam Lee narrates his journey of walking the length of the UK with a donkey named Martin. After a breakup, Lee sought solace in exploration, leading him to traverse nearly 700 miles from Cape Wrath in Scotland to Dorset in England. The companionship of Martin not only restored his faith in human kindness but also provided profound insights into trust and resilience. Their adventure highlights the transformative power of slow travel and the deep bond between humans and animals.
3. <https://www.explorersconnect.com/inspire-stories/2014/1/6/1000-miles-around-wales-with-chico-the-donkey> - This article details an individual's 1,000-mile journey around Wales with a donkey named Chico. Spanning 5.5 months, the adventure emphasizes slow travel, cultural immersion, and personal growth. The author reflects on the unique experiences and challenges faced while traversing the Welsh landscape, highlighting the deep connection formed with the donkey and the profound impact of such an unconventional journey on one's perspective of home and self.
4. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30141407-one-man-and-a-mule> - In 'One Man and a Mule: Across England with a Pack Mule,' author Hugh Thomson chronicles his journey across England with his mule, Jethro. Inspired by historical traditions, Thomson revives the practice of using mules for transportation, traversing old drovers’ roads from the Lake District to the Yorkshire Moors. The narrative combines wit, historical insights, and encounters with locals, offering a unique perspective on England's landscapes and heritage.
5. <https://brockenhurstdonkeywalks.com/> - Brockenhurst Donkey Walks offers visitors the opportunity to experience the New Forest in Hampshire, England, alongside gentle donkeys. Located just a mile from Brockenhurst Village, the farm provides guided walks through gravel tracks, heathland, and ancient woodlands. The initiative aims to share a passion for donkeys, offering a therapeutic and immersive experience in the natural surroundings, allowing participants to connect with both the animals and the environment.
6. <https://www.pukkapacas.com/donkey-walks> - Charnwood Forest Alpacas provides a 45-minute donkey walking experience on their picturesque 110-acre farm. Participants are paired with a donkey after a brief introductory session covering health and safety. The walk offers insights into animal welfare and the chance to interact with other farm animals. Emphasizing appropriate attire for uneven and potentially muddy terrain, the experience is tailored for individuals aged 12 and over, ensuring a safe and enjoyable outing.
7. <https://www.kinedaledonkeys.co.uk/service-page/donkey-trek> - Kinedale Donkeys offers a 60-90 minute wellness journey through the countryside, led by owner Robert. Participants bond with gentle donkeys before embarking on a leisurely walk through rolling landscapes. The experience combines animal therapy with breathtaking scenery, providing an escape from daily stresses and fostering a deep appreciation for animals and nature. Sessions are priced at £24 per person for the trekker with a donkey and £9 for accompanying individuals.