

Ffyona Campbell's Australian Walkabout

From her early teens Ffyona Campbell longed to escape from city life. She was looking forward to finding some wide open spaces and simply walking as far as her legs could take her. She couldn't do that when she was at school, but now she can. Soon after leaving school Ffyona became the youngest person to walk the length of Britain from John O'Groats in the north to Land's End in the south. By completing this first marathon walk she raised over £25000 for cancer research.

Ffyona's next venture was even more ambitious. In 1986 she set out to raise money for African Famine Relief by walking from New York, across the United States to Los Angeles. She not only completed the journey, but she also set a women's long distance walking speed record by clocking up twenty-five miles a day for 151 days.

Instead of hanging up her walking shoes and calling it a day (1), Ffyona set about planning her most arduous trip to date. She intended to leave her comfortable home in London and fly to Australia where she would walk from Sydney to Perth, crossing the arid Nullabor Plain.

The walk from Sydney to Canberra and then on to Melbourne and Adelaide wasn't especially difficult. Ffyona was used to that kind of long-distance walking. Her problems started when she entered the Nullabor desert, west of Adelaide. Temperatures there were extreme, and during the day the road surface heated up to a sizzling 136°F. It was far too hot for Ffyona to walk during the day. Instead, she had to walk at night and attempt to sleep in the daytime. She couldn't stay in hotels because there weren't any. She just had to make do² with the hot, dusty camper-van brought along by her fitness instructor, David Richards.

Despite the searing heat, Ffyona averaged between forty and forty-five miles a day and covered an astounding total of 3,517 miles in ninety-five days. She kept her strength by eating a high-carbohydrate diet of muesli, pasta, fruit and toast.

It didn't matter to Ffyona that her throat was dry, her muscles ached and her feet were blistered. The beauty of the scenery around her, the evening sunsets and the dawn sun, made up for³ all the discomfort she suffered. As she made her way across the desert she looked forward to spotting the dingos and kangaroos that lived there and the eagles that flew overhead. "How could anyone really understand what it is like without experiencing it first hand?", said Ffyona. "This is what life really is all about."

Ffyona's walked across Britain, the United States and Australia and she's still only twenty-two years old. It won't be long before she puts on her walking shoes again. She is already planning her next great walk... across Africa!

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1. **call it a day** — прекратить какое-либо дело
 2. **make up for** — восполнять, возмещать
 3. **make do** — обходиться тем, что имеется

Notes:

Land's End - the point of the English coast thought of as being the furthest southern part of the mainland of Britain.

John O'Groats - a place in the NE Scotland, thought of as being the most northern part of the mainland

The phrase From Land's End to John O'Groats means from the extreme south to the extreme north of Britain.

Work in pairs.

a) *Imagine one of you is a reporter who is going to interview Ffyona Campbell. Make a list of questions you would ask her about her travelling experiences.*

b) *Act out an interview. Use the following expressions to keep the conversation going:*

Showing interest : Really? Did you...? That's interesting!