

# An update from Sevenoaks world traveller Ross Edmondson



**Back in May 2019, CommunityAd interviewed Sevenoaks' Ross Edmondson who set off from Pittsburgh, USA to not only achieve a childhood dream of flying across the world but also to raise £5000 for Kenyan primary schools' charity African Promise.**

Taking off in his single-engine aircraft, Ross' original plans were to travel the globe in 12 months, covering the Atlantic, Eurasia, South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Unfortunately, though, due to the global COVID pandemic, Ross has been in Australia for the last 15 months so CommunityAd thought they would catch up with Ross to find out how he has been getting on and how much further he has left on his global journey.

Nearing the two-year mark of when Ross first embarked on his flying adventure, he told us about the COVID restrictions that have seen his originally planned 12-month mission ever so slightly extended! Ross explains:

"The pandemic has been a bit of a wildcard! It has very much changed things from how I was planning the trip to go. It's stopped things in its tracks. I was in New Zealand when the pandemic really started to bite and since then, I have not been able to get outside of Australia and New Zealand.

"Up until then, everything basically went completely according to schedule.

"The original plan was to fly across the Pacific and finish the trip in May of 2020 but the Pacific Islands have all closed their borders which is understandable so right now it's pretty much a waiting and guessing game.

"Hopefully, now that the vaccine is starting to roll out it will mean an end is in sight but we will just have to wait and see what happens.

"When I first arrived in Australia back in September 2019, we did discover a problem with the engine on the aircraft. That took a few months as the engine had to be removed and sent away for repair. It was unexpected, but at least I came across these issues somewhere like Sydney where they had all the facilities and expertise to be able to sort it out, rather than somewhere more remote - or in flight!"

Ross has completed the majority of his global travel, despite these postponements and he told us his most memorable highlights so far:

"The journey itself really has been everything I hoped it would be and more.

"I crossed the Atlantic, out of the US through Greenland and Iceland. I spent a while seeing some of the UK and then headed out across Europe over towards Romania then down through Bulgaria to Turkey and then into Egypt and across Saudi to Bahrain and the Emirates. From there, I flew through India and Sri Lanka to Southeast Asia, and on to Australia.

"It's so difficult to narrow a particular highlight but in terms of natural beauty, Greenland and Saudi Arabia were two areas that really stood out. Saudi in particular, I had not expected, I thought it would just be a thousand piles of sand but it was so much more than that. Sri Lanka was also a fantastic stop in terms of the welcome that I got from people."

As well as fulfilling a childhood dream, Ross has still been able to raise money for African Promise through his journey and is hoping to hit the £5000 target, he told us:

"So far, I have raised about £2,500, not a huge amount but certainly better than nothing and I am still trying to hit the original target."

Growing up in our town, Ross has fond memories of Sevenoaks and hopes to be able to return sometime in the near future:

"It was a lovely place to grow up and I still try and get back as often as I can to see family and with my current work situation, there may be a chance to come back for a while which will be nice.

"There's certainly, I would say, a strong possibility to come back and base myself out of Sevenoaks for future days."

However, visions of a return back to the garden of England have to be on hold as the private pilot is holding out for the final hurdle of his adventure, relishing the challenge of flying over the Pacific Ocean:

"All that's left is to cross the Pacific Ocean which is only about 4 or 5 flights but they're very long flights. This includes what will be the longest flight of the entire adventure which is Hawaii to mainland USA and that will take about 16 or 17 hours.

"Flying over the Pacific will be a complete first for me, although I did do a test flight of that length over the US before I set out just to make sure that launching out of Hawaii wasn't the first time that I'd ever flown the aircraft with that much fuel (and therefore weight) onboard.

"The route is really driven by how far I can fly in one go and also where its possible to get fuel so this narrows my journey down to only one route that I can realistically follow."

To follow Ross' journey and donate to African Promise, visit [www.katamarino.co.uk](http://www.katamarino.co.uk) 100% of donated funds go directly to African Promise; none are used for the flight.

