



Adams Hoofing Hut Three Peaks Challenge June 6-8<sup>th</sup> 2014

So, on July 13<sup>th</sup> 2013, we had completed the Hoofing Trek down the Avon Valley Path, some 36 miles, on one of the hottest days of the year. During the 14 hour walk, Angela & Claire were chatting it over and thought perhaps they ought to set themselves a target for 2014!

They talked about the Three Peaks Challenges that the Fire Station had taken part in and Claire suggested they had a go. A team was assembled; Angela Moulard, Claire Willcocks, Georgie Price, Tim Willcocks, Dale Moulard, Julia Moulard and John Moulard. Langley Civil Engineering and Tubeline Scaffolding were kind enough to pay for the hire of a minibus for a long weekend travelling the UK. One of John's colleagues paid for the fuel, Georgie organised a very reasonable rate for the accommodation for the final night with Travelodge and Claire's father, Colin Coley, paid for the refreshment to keep us going. This meant that every penny collected via sponsorship went straight to the 'Hut'.

At 4.00am on Friday June 6<sup>th</sup> 2014 we set off after picking everyone up, with Georgie being the furthest 'North' at Down Farm, Rockbourne. Two things about that last sentence resonated. I, John, lived the first 21 years of my life at No.2 Down Farm Cottages and of course that date is the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 'D' Day Landings on the Normandy Beaches. Listening to the stories of the Veterans on Radio 2 as we travelled made us all the more resolute and inspired to raise money for our heroes!

Tim took over the driving on the M6 and did not really let go of the steering wheel until our return home on Sunday evening, such a vital role in the challenge. The rest of the team chatted and cat napped, with the occasional stop for facilities, over the next 11 hours until we reached Fort William. Travelling the length of the country on a warm sunny day reminds one how privileged we are to live in such a beautiful and diverse country.

We carried on through Fort William to Spean Bridge to pay our respects at The Royal Marine Commando Memorial, leaving another of Adam's wrist bands on his photo that rests in the Garden of Remembrance; a poignant climax to the journey.

We prepared and at 5.05pm we started our climb of Ben Nevis. Julia & I have completed the challenge before; in talking to other walkers we were not alone in thinking that the lower path was a lot more uneven than before. This made it a very difficult start. And on what was a very hot evening. Unfortunately, just before what is termed the Plateau (which actually means not quite as steep!) Claire was struggling with the cold she had picked up earlier that week and felt she would not make it and reluctantly decided to turn back. This was a shame but a very sensible decision. Knowing your capabilities is key in these situations. The rest of us trudged on, but about two thirds up Georgie made a similar decision as she had painful legs. Again very sensible.

Dale, being the fit one, had decided to take a large rucksack, about 30kgs, and use it as a training session. We did advise against this but he had made his mind up! When we were about an hour from the top we put it behind a large rock in the forlorn hope that somebody might take it back down for us! I have seen snow at the top of Ben Nevis before but never on the path. We had to traverse three snow fields before finally making the Summit. We got to the top and I immediately got severe cramp in both legs - calves and inner thighs. Horrendous! Anyway photos taken, we headed back down, with Dale & our new friend Dave, whom we had helped get to the summit as he had ended up on his own, helping me back down over the snow fields. I must also say thank you to a young lady who gave me a packet of salt and vinegar crisps. Definitely helped! Dale was disappointed, but not surprised, to discover no one had picked up the ruck sack. Dave stayed with us until we could see the car park in the far distance. We finished at dusk, about 11.30pm. A cup of tea and some cold chips later and we were on our way to Scafell Pike.

We had a bit of trouble navigating Glasgow. Sat Nav had ceased to function! Anyhow we got to Wasdale Head about 6.30am on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2014. It's safe to say we had learned a few lessons from Ben Nevis... Angela loaded up with extra water as we had run out and had to use the waterfalls on Ben Nevis; I took more Gels to help with the body salts; Claire & Georgie decided to take it steady and get as far as they could and Dale only took a small rucksack for this one! Julia & I found the start of Scafell better than we remembered and the stream was relatively easy to cross. The views, as they had been up Ben Nevis, were spectacular. You do not always get good views on all three mountains. We did bump into Dave coming back down the mountain having already summited! A car instead of a 62 mile an hour limited minibus has its advantages.

There are three or four false tops as you get near the summit and Julia was suffering with her back. This was obviously very painful for her. Dale and Angela were doing well and we turned to see Claire and Georgie not far behind, slow and steady seemed to suit them! With glorious vistas over middle England we all made the summit of Scafell together. We did not stay long as the wind was very strong and a storm was coming off the coast. Long enough for some photos and Dale's, by now obligatory, 'selfie'! The trip down was wet and cold but we all made it - jogging into the car park, well almost! Tim was there, gas ring fired up. After

a quick change out of wet clothes and some refreshments we decided to press on as it was now midday and we were getting hugely behind schedule.

With the slower minibus, and by now horrendous weather, the trip took us nearly six hours so looking at the potential time up and down the mountain we decided to take advantage of the facilities in Carnarvon and climb in the morning. A wise move. Refreshed from a full night's sleep, we regrouped, had some of Claire's porridge and were off at 6.30am. We took Llanberis Path, advertised as the 'Leisure walker's path'. Obviously a different connotation in Wales as even the tarmac bit before you got to the path was steep! We trudged on through the beautiful countryside. Again, we had glorious views in every direction, until we went into the cloud just after the second bridge under the railway. We hit a particularly steep embankment and could hardly see our hands in front of our faces when we suddenly heard a noise and 6 mountain bikers shot by us on a relatively narrow path, just missing Julia & I! We shouted back to the girls to warn them! We came out unscathed and made the summit by 10.00am. We went into Hafod-Eryri, The Snowdon Summit Visitor Centre, and had some nice relaxing liquid refreshment. The Challenge finishes at the top so as the Train had room we decided to take advantage and rode back to the bottom. There, Claire & I had a pasty and Dale had a local 'Oggie' which is basically the same just bigger. We changed into something dryer, Tim got back behind the wheel and we started our 6 hour trip home. There is some interesting footage and photos as we negotiate the services on foot, we were all feeling a bit tender and stiff! Except for Dale who jogged down the hill when we got back just to get to the George quicker! That boy likes his pint, and more than deserved it on this occasion!

I think it was a great achievement and we have raised over £1000.00 for Adam's Hoofing Hut. Thank you to everyone who sponsored us. What's the next one....?

