

Three Peaks Challenge

By Alex Farquharson (WD 15)

Like a great tulip, I accepted the Three Peaks challenge. Organised by **William Vail (Hf 12)**, who had just cycled across America, as you do, and thought he could raise some crucial funds for Dementia UK. Myself (WD 15) and **George Sowerby (SH 12)** coerced, decided we'd better have a crack too.

We got to the frozen north the night before to set up camp in Fort William (I shan't be doing that again) before heading up to Ben Nevis (1,345m) at the crack of dawn. After a sleepless night, we got up at 5.00am, set off our stopwatches, wolfed down our pain au chocolats and began to climb. Vail and Sowerby, being pretty much mountain goats, ran it. I, on the other hand, puffing and panting at the back, in need of some serious encouragement (and more pain au chocolats) made it up and down in three hours.

Our next challenge was Scafell Pike (978m). We knew the drill, razz everyone on the straights to get back in the car asap. After finishing this walk at 8.00pm and post some dynamic stretches, we hopped back in the car and headed to our final destination, God forbid, Wales.

After listening to some James Blunt and popping some Pro Plus, we arrived at Snowdon at 1.00am in the morning. But of course, being the disorganised bunch of reprobates we were, hadn't booked a car park space. We were then ushered down to the free parking, which was conveniently situated a further 2km downhill... not very groovy, I assure you.

Finally, we managed to reach the top of Snowdon (1,085m) in the middle of a storm, without any headlights (they ran out of battery) at 4.30am. The race was on to make it back by 6.00am and complete the challenge.

How I wished this debacle had been on the Amalfi coast as we trudged down this mountain, slightly lost, without any light and in the pouring rain. All we needed to do was get down in one piece. Of course, this would have been the sensible option, but after having already walked near a marathon distance, driven ourselves nearly 12 hours, and done so in terrible conditions, sensible was out of the window. We didn't want to let our charity down, and so we began to run the last 4km downhill. "Nutters", someone kindly remarked as we flew past.

But thankfully, we made it! Adrenaline flowing, we had finished in 23 hours and 22 minutes.

