

## The Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge 2016



**The Adventure starts** when you get out of the door, and on this occasion the excitement was building despite the humid warm persisting rain as we drove from Adventure Based Learning towards Horton in Ribblesdale.

As some of you may already know, Horton is the start and finish point for the Yorkshire 3 Peaks challenge. For those that don't know, The Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge takes on three of Yorkshire's biggest lumps, the mountain peaks of Pen-y-ghent (694 metres), Whernside (736 metres) and Ingleborough (723 metres), usually in this order, and in under 12 hours. These peaks form part of the Pennine range, and encircle the head of the valley of the River Ribble, in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The route is 24-miles long, and includes 5,200ft (1,585m) of ascent. It is known as the *original* 3 peaks, first recorded completion was by J.R. Wynne-Edwards and D.R. Smith in July 1887 in a time of 10 hours

It was still raining when we got to the camp site in Ribblesdale and sat in the steamy car debating whether to wait for a break in the rain to put the tents up or resign ourselves to the fact that we were going to have a wet weekend anyway and waiting was just prolonging the inevitable. Glances out of the car showed no sign of any hills or mountains, just a thick blanket of mist and low cloud, visibility down to about 200 yards. Maybe we were destined to spend the following day with our heads in the clouds unable to bask in the glorious splendour of the Ribble Valley. 6 o'clock came, the winds picked up, the rain stopped and the cloud started to lift.

Many charities and good causes use both the National 3 Peaks and the Yorkshire 3 peaks as fundraising challenge events and a huge amount of co-ordination goes into ensuring that teams do not all descend upon the quaint villages and hamlets all in one day and that groups are safe and supported with drink and refreshments. This time was no exception with groups from The Red Cross and Alzheimer's Association amongst others taking part

along with our group from Dr Kershaw's Hospice. There is of course those that wanted to simply do it for the challenge of completing the walk.

The sight of so many excited fundraisers snaking up the hillside was awesome and inspiring. Many with t-shirts emblazoned with good causes, some with flags and banners, all with smiles, moving with purpose and determination. Luckily for the paths and mountains, start times were staggered so that gates and styles did not become bottle necks and paths did not get overrun. Some started as early as 6am, our group from Dr Kershaw's Hospice started at 8am, hopefully to finish by 8pm the same evening.

The first mountain we took slowly, to warm us up and there was a wide gravel track downhill towards the Ribbleshead viaduct that allowed us to pick up the pace. The gravel gave way to a tarmacked road which lead us to a quick lunch and drink at the first checkpoint. Walking the bottom of the magnificent viaduct to the long path alongside the Settle – Carlisle railway line, we followed the railway till we met the curious miniature Victorian aqueduct over the line. The watercourse lead us to the sweeping path up to Whernside ridge. Despite the sun shine and clearing skies, the wind was as gusty as ever and we tucked in behind the wall to have a quick energy bar and hot drink. It was a very quick and steep descent from Whernside through the village of Chapel Le Dale which consists of a house, a farm, and a pub. There was just the steep ascent up the north face of Ingleborough left before a quick rush to the summit and double back to the final gruelling 4mile downhill stretch back to Horton-in-Ribblesdale. The last section can be the hardest part, the rest of the day had passed so quickly and yet this last section seems never ending. People frantically glancing at watches and trying to keep their pace up, many with an hour or less left to finish. Our crew determined as ever managed to hobble past the train station and through the village to the start / finish point with minutes to spare.

Back on the camp site, there was a marvellous community atmosphere, most if not all having just completed the challenge. Many nursing aching joints, hips and feet but all wearing a proud smile in the safe satisfaction of completing one of England's most subscribed and picturesque challenges.

For people who want to try the Yorkshire 3 peaks challenge we suggest getting involved with an organised event that give participants the direction and support needed. It is strongly advised that participants have a reasonable level of fitness and it is recommended that participants should undergo plenty of training beforehand by doing a few walks 10 – 15 miles beforehand, spacing your training out to allow time to recover between walks.

Dr Kershaw's will be holding another Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge hosted by Adventure Based Learning in 2017 if you would like to get involved and raise funds for a local Hospice get in touch with Arron Cheshire at Dr Kershaw's Hospice on 0161 785 5606 or email:[Arron.Cheshire@drkershawshospice.org.uk](mailto:Arron.Cheshire@drkershawshospice.org.uk)