

Newsletter – Autumn 2015
Issue 4

Welcome to our practice newsletter. Our newsletters are aimed at giving you additional information about the practice and also general dental information. This is a newsletter for our patients so if there is any information you would like to see added then please let us know.

Staff News

We would like to say a big thank you and wish Diana, who was Mr Lawrence's nurse for many years, the best of luck with her change of career. Diana is now working in a children's nursery.

We would also like to welcome Sacha to the Practice. Sacha is a very experienced dental nurse who has been working in dentistry for many years.

The Three Peaks Challenge 2015

Firstly we would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who sponsored Claire & Tracy who were taking part in the National Three Peaks Challenge and raising money for CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Association) over the weekend of 8th & 9th August. They raised a brilliant £1201.00 for this great charity.

This is what Claire and Tracy had to say about the challenge:

The weekend did not go without a few hitches! Firstly on our journey up to Glasgow we made it to Reading Station only to be told that all trains were to remain there until further notice because of signaling problems at Slough! We were then told that only one train would be leaving at any one time, so after a frantic phone call to a very helpful Duty Station Manager (Claire's sister!) we managed to catch the next one out but it only left us a limited amount of time to make it across London! We made it to Euston with 5 minutes to spare and still had to find the platform and get onto the train. After looking on the board we couldn't see any trains running to Glasgow so went and asked someone only to be told that the train had been cancelled and we would have to catch another train to Preston and change there!!! What a start!

The day of the Challenge!

We were all up bright and early and tried to eat as much porridge as our nervous stomachs would allow (which wasn't very much!) before getting all our stuff together for the walk to meet the rest of our group and the guides. The weather in Glasgow was beautiful and warm and we were feeling fairly optimistic that we may have some clear and dry weather on our climbs, how wrong we were!!



The drive from Glasgow to Fort William started off well and we were making good time for our start at 2pm. Once we got out of Glasgow the drive was beautiful along the shore of Loch Lomond.



Unfortunately it wasn't long until a long line of stationary traffic loomed in front of us and we were advised that the road was closed and we would have to turn around and take a long diversion to Fort William! Luckily, or so we thought, one of the drivers noticed a shorter route on the map!

Although this route was busy we were moving steadily through the beautiful Scottish countryside but it wasn't long until we joined a narrower road where, because of traffic coming from the opposite direction due to the road closure at the other end, we were yet again sat in stationary traffic!



What should have been a two hour journey ended up taking five hours (mainly due to a 52 seater coach being diverted down the road that could barely fit two cars down!!)

We eventually made it to Fort William and made a quick stop at the local supermarket to stock up on food and drink for the next 24hrs. This mainly consisted of sandwiches, pot noodles, flapjacks, cashew nuts, chocolate bars (for the energy!), crisps and water. We then made the short drive to the foot of Ben Nevis to start the walk.

The weather had become cloudier and a little wet the further north we travelled and although it was dry when we arrived we decided that it would probably be a good idea that we put our waterproof bottoms on just in case! This proved to be a very good decision!



Our walk up Ben Nevis was via the Mountain Track which started by the Ben Nevis Inn. It is quite a steep start with lots of climbing up over large stones and for the vertically challenged like both of us, this sometimes meant using both hands to get us over (although the photo's do not show this!)



As we moved further up the mountain the wind picked up, the clouds started rolling in and the rain started. If any of you have climbed Ben Nevis you will know that not far after the half way point there is a zig zag path that takes you up near the summit, from this point we were in the clouds and could not see further than about 20 feet in front. It was also lashing with rain and was very windy. That being said, we were all still in good spirits and looking forward to reaching the summit. As we neared the summit it looked as if the cloud was getting thicker but as we approached it turned out to be snow! It was supposed to be the beginning of August!



After what seemed like an eternity we made it to the summit where the wind was gusting about 50mph and it was freezing! Thank goodness for our waterproofs as the rain was so heavy!



After a very brief stop to take a few photos we started the journey back down which ended up being more treacherous than the journey up as the stones and rocks were now wet and slippery from the continuing rain and the wind speed had increased. The wind blew Claire over twice and the slippery stones caused Tracy to fall a few times (no photos of our amusing falls!).

After 5hrs and every season, we made it back down to the minibus just as it was getting dark for a well-earned cup of tea, a Pot Noodle and a change of clothes!

Now was the start of the 5hr journey to Scafell Pike!

The journey was uneventful and the only noises that could be heard was the great musical playlist from one of the guides and the occasional snore from one of our fellow walkers! We both managed to doze on the way down but probably for no more than an hour so when we arrive in the Lake District at about 4am we weren't feeling our best!

We parked at Wasdale carpark and quickly got all our stuff together, tried to eat some breakfast (a banana and a piece of flapjack) put on our head torches and got out of the minibus only to be greeted by more rain! There were also lots of other walkers all of whom were taking part in the challenge (why else would you want to climb a mountain at 4am!).

One of our guides had described the walk up Scafell Pike like climbing a giant piece of rock and that is exactly what it is like! It starts off steady enough up a nice gently path but it isn't long before you get to a stream (which was more like a river due to the heavy rain the Lakes had been having) which we needed to cross. This is all well and good in the daylight but it was pitch black and we only had head torches to guide us across! All we can say is thank goodness for waterproof walking boots!

Once over the 'stream' it is then a long, steep climb up small rocks that make it seem like climbing very uneven steps. At the end of this you arrive at a boulder field where you have to climb and maneuver over some very large rocks and this is pretty much what it is like all the way to the summit.

I think the four of us all hated this mountain at one time or another, and it also seemed like the other walkers that we met going up or down felt the same (but the ones going down were slightly more cheerful!!) When we climbed Ben Nevis, even though the weather was so wet, the people you passed would give you quite a cheery good afternoon and you may have a brief passing chat. On Scafell you either had a morning, (as there was nothing good about it) or just a grunt of acknowledgement! One man passed us grunted morning and then just kept saying 'roast dinner, roast dinner, roast dinner' for the rest of the time we could hear him! It's amazing the things you think of to get you through!

We only took a couple of pictures at the summit, one because there was nothing to look at except rocks and the occasional sheep and two because it was so wet!



The walk down the mountain was definitely worse than going up. All of us at one time or another slipped over and some more than others! Tracy came off worse with a large bruise and graze on her arm even though she had a couple of layers over it. Tracy also had a little incident where we nearly lost her over a waterfall! We had arrived back at the 'stream' that now seemed to have more water flowing down than it had a few hours before (probably because it was now daylight and we could see exactly what we were crossing!) and, with the help of our guide, we were trying to decide the best way across. We decided there were two ways, one where the water was slightly shallower but had smaller rocks and the other slightly deeper but larger rocks. Tracy was the first to cross while the rest of us watched. The route she decided on was the shallower one which also had a waterfall with a 10ft drop to one side. She made it about half way across and then stood on a loose, slippery rock and slipped, and at that point we thought she was going over the waterfall. Luckily she managed to regain her footing and make it across, needless to say the rest of us decided on the other route!

We made it back down to the minibus after 4hrs with Claire adamant that she never wanted to see Scafell Pike again! After a quick change into drier clothes and a hot cup of tea we were on our way to Snowdon, our final mountain, where hopefully we would have a drier and less windy climb!

The drive from Scafell Pike to Snowdon was going to take approximately 5hrs, so after a brief stop at a service station for a Gregg's sausage roll and coffee, we were on our way. We all managed to doze for some of the journey and as we headed into Wales the clouds started to clear and the sun came out. This was short lived!

As we neared Snowdon the clouds became thicker and darker and it began to rain heavily! Once again we got ready, putting on our waterproofs and boots (the later still a little damp from the previous two very wet mountains) and began our walk up Snowdon.

As we started the clouds lifted slightly and the rain stopped so we were able to enjoy the views and the novelty of not getting lashed by the rain! The walk up Snowdon, to begin with, is relatively flat on a manmade path which made a lovely difference from the previous two mountains. The scenery is beautiful and on the way up you pass lakes, waterfalls and disused miners buildings.



The further up the mountain we went the worse the weather became, the wind increased and the rain started again! Just over two thirds of the way up we went round a bend at the side of the mountain and the wind was so strong it nearly blew us over again.

We walked further around to where the path gets quite steep and rocky and our guides were stood at the bottom in deep conversation. They said that they didn't want to go up that way because of the direction the wind was funneling and the strength it was likely to blow us over nearer the top. We went back about 100 yards to what looked like a sheer cliff face with a few large rocks and boulders sticking out! Our guides were thinking this may be an alternative route up but would take at least an hour to climb and we would also have to come down this way. Not great to someone with a fear of heights!!!

After a fairly long conversation between them they called us over and said they had decided that because of the increasing wind strength and the low lying cloud it would be incredibly dangerous to carry on up to the summit. They said that it would only take one strong gust, which was already happening at the height we were, and we would be blown off. So after two full mountains and over two thirds of another, the weather beat us!

We felt a mixture of relief, because when you are that far up a mountain and the wind is as strong as it was, you can see the dangers. We also felt disappointed that after completing two mountains in atrocious weather conditions the weather on the third had won!

So we began the walk back to the minibus and were actually able to enjoy the scenery properly. As we got further down the mountain we left the clouds and it became drier.



The whole experience was amazing and took us on a rollercoaster of emotions. If you'd asked us during the experience if we would do it again the answer would have been a definite no, if you ask us now, we would do it all again tomorrow (hopefully with better weather conditions!).



As well as CLAPA, individually we were also raising money for Breast Cancer Awareness (Tracy and her husband) and Vasculitis UK (Claire and her husband) and have, in total, raised an amazing £2780.00.

We would like to say a huge thank you for your generous support for CLAPA.

Claire & Tracy