



# Hilltop News

An HCA (Canterbury) Community Service publication

Registered Charity No 1096781

## GREAT GLEN SPONSORED WALK SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

### *The Three Amigos*



**The Team Terry—Mick—Andy**

It was on a cold dark night early in December 2011 that the three friends were sitting together sharing the odd glass or two of ale when the idea was born.

All three of us individually had been keeping fit

walking and therefore thoughts somehow turned to shall we try a long distance walk over a weekend perhaps?

Another round was purchased and suddenly that weekend had now stretched to a few more days or even a week as

by

we thought that if we were going to do it anyway it might as well be a proper walk.

How many ideas like this are borne in the pub?

So, the next questions:- Where to go?, How long for? Camping? Hostelling?, B&B? or Hotel? - Sleeping in a tent didn't really appeal (even after a few more pints)

We each went away promising to open up Google and do some research to try and find a suitable walk that we could reasonably undertake given our level of experience.

There were a few options, but the one that tempted was a walk along the Caledonian Canal in Scotland.

### *Planning*

We decided that as it was an 80 mile walk that it would probably best be tackled over 5 days thus giving us approximately 15 miles of walking to be completed every day.

How hard could it be— It is walking along a canal for goodness sake, so that must be nice and flat right?

We are lucky that we have an experienced walker in our Community (Richard Armishaw) and when approached he very kindly offered to research and plan the

route, supply us with some maps and obtain details of possible lodgings we may be able to use en-route.

When we got these back and looked through them, it was then that we learned that canals aren't flat (or at least walks along them aren't).

The walk along the Great Glen Way actually takes you away from the canal in places and up into the hills—Still we were up for a challenge weren't we? And this was certainly going to be a

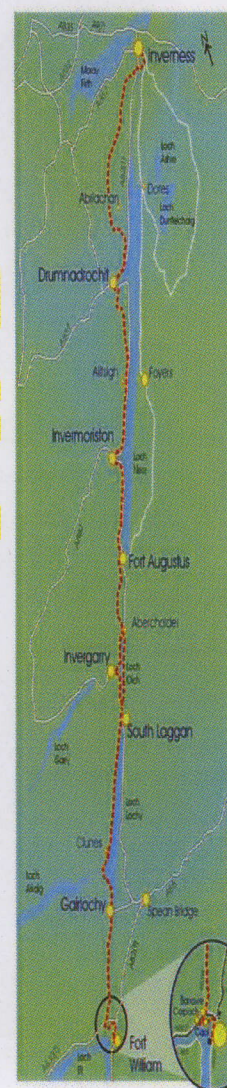
toughie.

It was clear that we should walk on 5 full days and once we allowed for the travelling up and back we would therefore require 7 clear days for completion of the challenge..

After we looked at available holiday dates etc we could use we finally planned to travel up on Wednesday 21st March. Walking from Thursday 22nd to Monday 26th inclusive and travel back home again on the Tuesday 27th March

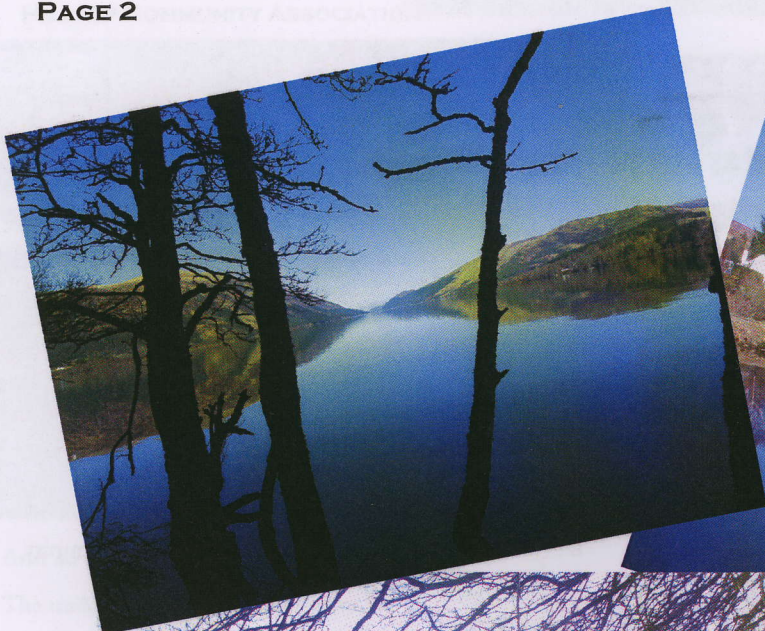
### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ The Team
- ◆ The Idea is Born
- ◆ Sponsorship in Aid of Hilltop Community Association
- ◆ Logistics
- ◆ Practice Walks
- ◆ The Walk
- ◆ The Result

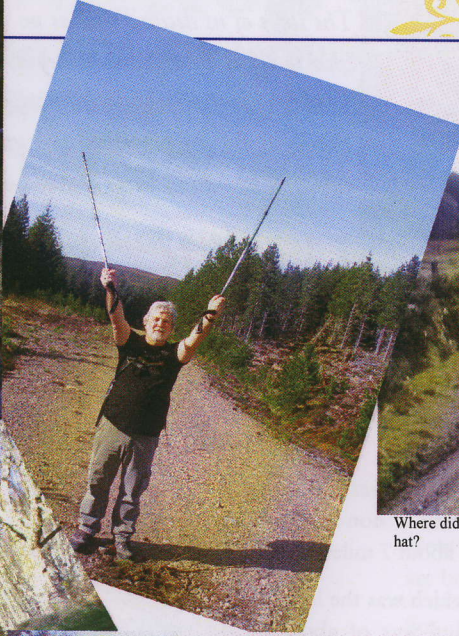


The Route: 80 miles: Fort William to Inverness in 5 days

# GREAT GLEN SPONSORED WALK



Exactly half way: 40 miles in



Where did he get that hat?



End Marker stone



Highest point



Yes—that hill really was that knacker!!!



THE END: Even the Hilltop Kettle joined



Day 5: 3 miles of this steep grade

## The Walk and The Challenge

*The three of us decided that as we were walking anyway it may be a good idea to try to raise some money by way of sponsorship in aid of Hilltop Community Association, a charity which we are all involved with. The charity is for the provision and upkeep of a local Community Association and its hall in New House Lane.*

*We are indebted to all those individuals who sponsored us and wish special mention for Malcolm (Andy's Dad) who acted as our support driver whilst we were walking. Ferrying our luggage between each overnight stop and shopping for our provisions required on the next days walk. We truly could not have managed without this back up help.*

### And so to the walk:

The middle two pages contain a small sample of the amazing pictures we took of the stunning scenery we encountered on our walk.

In preparation for the main event we had carried out several training walks, some of which being lucky enough to be joined by friends in their support.

Three days before we were to set off we had the unfortunate news that due to circumstances totally beyond his control our support driver and vehicle had to pull out due to pressures of work. This was very serious and we considered we may have to postpone the entire trip. Luckily Malcolm stepped in and took over, which was brilliant of him. With his help we could not have continued.

We were extremely lucky with the weather which was hot and sunny instead of the anticipated rain, wind and even threats of snow for this time of the year.

Days 1 and 2 although long were to generally follow the canal paths and shorelines of the lochs and therefore fairly flattish.

Day 3 took us away from the canal and into the forests.

Days 4 and 5 were the toughies; Day 4 started with a non-remitting steep uphill climb of about 7 miles.

Day 5 (which was the longest of the 5 days yomps and was of about 20 miles). The first 3 miles of this were even steeper than yesterdays and needed many stops for breath and plenty of water.

Once this had been completed we were then at the highest point of the Great Glen Way (about 1400ft). Only about 17 miles now of flat and gently downhill grades till we reached our goal—Inverness.

Our accommodation along the route was all excellent. We found some good ale-houses for food and liquid refreshment in the evenings. One hostel even holding a legendary interactive quiz night (which we won). The full story of the night and the parts we played are available for a small fee and will be delivered in a plain brown wrapper.

We stayed in a variety of accommodations ranging from basic hostels through bed and breakfasts in private homes to small hotels. We indulged ourselves on the last night by staying in a 4 star hotel with all the trimmings.

Along the route, we chatted, cursed the hills, laughed at each others jokes, found out when best just to keep quiet, and also when we could easily poke fun at each others misfortunes

We met some interesting characters along the way. Including one on day 1, who with a cheerful disposition told us we would not be so happy later on in our walk and wondered if we would ever complete it. (just the sort of fellow who looks like he's lost a



pound and found 50p)

We met one elderly chap outside a village shop in Invermoriston who when we asked directions to where we were staying that night warned us not to stay there as the landlady was awful. It was ok though as it transpired it was his house we were staying at. They had a small B&B and we took over all their rooms. They really couldn't do enough for us to make our time with them both enjoyable and relaxing.

Special mention goes to some local companies who have pledged support: Wincheap Wines, Kings Head, Red Lion at Herne (can you detect a theme here?)

A great big thanks to all of those of you who sponsored us: With all your help we think we may have raised in excess of £1000

We are so proud of ourselves in what we have achieved, and look forward to next year.

**THANK YOU ALL :**

**Terry, Mick and Andy**



Official starting point of Great Glen Way: 80 MILES TO GO