

BE INSPIRED : Never too Old

IS YOUR NEXT RUN A 247 MILER?

No neither is mine but you will read about **HAZEL WINDER'S** article on doing just that following on below.

Hazel has always been active playing squash, tennis and table tennis along with cycling, mountain walking and swimming. She was a member of the Buxton Mountain rescue Team for many years and an Area Ranger with Peak National Park for over 20 years.

Hazel started running at the age of 55 having never run before. She was inspired on a holiday in the Cairngorms by a lady who did avalanche predictions and as a climber summited Broad Peak in the Karakorum Himalayas for which Fell running in the Yorkshire Dales played a part in her training. That sounded like fun to Hazel so started short runs from home in Tideswell. "I Used to creep out of the house hoping no-one in the village saw me".

About 6 months later after moving to Buxton a friend introduced her to Macc Harriers. She went on a Wednesday night run from Wincle led by Craig Harwood and was hooked.

Hazel tends to runs 3 or 4 times a week and mixes this up with sporadic visits to the gym, lots of gardening and looking after her grandchildren and their dog "they keep me fit". She much prefers longer events and has completed the Joss Naylor Challenge (48mls/17000ft in the Lake District; the Bullock Smithy (56mls/8100ft in the Peak District) 3 times – first lady 2013 and the Long Mynd Hike (50mls/8000ft) along with many others. Favourite running areas are the Goyt valley, Long Mynd and the Lake District.

Hazel has made a lot of friends amongst the Harriers and loves the banter and all the different characters, but also enjoys running on her own. She plans to continue to tackle longer events and hopes it will be many before she hangs up her fell shoes.

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Pennine Journey - A challenging circular walk from Settle to Hadrian's Wall first walked by Wainwright in 1938. 247 miles long with approximately 34,000' ascent, parts of it very remote.

I came across this walk last year when I sent away for a LDWA book and tucked inside was a leaflet advertising it. Hmm I thought, I like the sound of that, and the more I researched it the keener I became. I sent away for the guide book, looked at their web site and over the winter months worked out how long I wanted to take, where I wanted to stay and booked B & Bs (roughing it didn't even visit my consciousness!) As I wanted to run as much as I could I planned it over 11 days and decided on the luxury of using a company to courier my bag to each B & B. This worked out really well and to be perfectly honest if I hadn't, with the weight of what I needed to carry I would have had to walk it over several more days.

I drove up to Kirkby Malham on Saturday 9th May and after parking my car was taken into Settle. The "official" start of the walk is Settle Railway station, but as I've never been a fan of Wainwright and it was pouring with rain I asked to be dropped off outside The Naked Man café! After a couple of coffees and breakfast at about 10.30 am I decided I had better make a move as I had 20 miles and over 4,000' of ascent that day, but as I left the rain had stopped and I started off in dry but very windy weather.

My first night was to be spent in the very pretty little village of Buckden in Littondale. The route first headed towards Horton in Ribblesdale passing through two pretty villages on the way with views of Penygent. The impressive chasm of Hull Pot was passed and up and over the moors and down into Littondale. A further climb took me out of Littondale down into Wharfedale where I followed a lovely riverside path.

My second day took me again through dales and villages and then up the boggy moors to Tan Hill Inn which has recently been sold for £1.1 million and at times reminded me of Faulty Towers! Very enjoyable visit though.

Leaving Tan Hill Inn I ran down Sleightholme Moor. I tell a lie - I tried to, but it is so boggy in places that even following the white marker posts you end up paddling and trying to jump from one non-existent dry place to the next! Further on I had a look round the ruins of Bowes Castle and was very disappointed there were no tea shops in sight before further moors, reservoirs, villages and river banks to Middleton in Teesdale.

From Middleton I ran along the banks of the River Tees passing Low and High Force waterfalls, really magnificent as they were in spate due to the amount of rain that had recently fallen. The weather then really caught me with squally showers, and a very strong head wind which really slowed progress. After leaving the river navigation became a bit of an issue and I spent a bit of time working out where the paths went as there were so many and I was working off a 1:50,000 map. I eventually came to my B & B at Westgate in Weardale and it turned out to be the best B & B I have ever stayed in.

I was well on my way by then to Hadrians Wall and the next day I headed for Acomb just north of Hexham. On the way I passed through Blanchland, a fascinating village of 150 people with its Abbey ruins, that dates back to the 13th century. From Blanchland I went up and over "the largest dry heathland in the country" and when I left the moor and went into a small forest area I saw a red squirrel. Oh joy!

From Acomb I went across to Hadrians Wall which I went along for approx. 21 miles. This was an absolutely fascinating day with all the remains of the wall, ditch, vallum milecastles and turrets, and of course Housteads. For those of you who don't know the Wall, in places it is built on the Win Sill, which are outcrops of rocks with about 200' drops to the north. The climbs up and down are extremely steep, in fact there was little of the wall line that I went along that was particularly "flat". It was a very tiring day!

I stayed the night at Greenhead and then started back south heading to Garrigill, below Cross Fell. For some reason navigation went from bad to worse and at one point I actually went round in a circle, albeit a small one!!! It was a frustrating but enjoyable day, and I stopped off in Alston for coffee and cakes before getting to Garrigill. There were several days where there was no-where to get anything to eat and drink so any days there was were a bonus! The B & B was great and the lady who ran it even offered to do my washing. Unfortunately I was really ill that night, but at least the room was comfortable and I had clean clothes the next day!!! Next morning after a very light breakfast I started up Cross Fell. There was the option of taking a detour to the top, but it was extremely cold and windy, with pockets of snow high up. Luckily the weather held as the route takes you pretty high round the side and it is extremely exposed. The rest of the route was across fields and rough pasture and eventually I came to Appleby in Westmorland.

Leaving Appleby I went up the main street which has a cross each end linking the church with the castle and a row of 12 almshouses. I seemed to pretty well follow the River Eden to Kirkby Stephen and then across fields and across old trackways to 12 the Moorcock Inn at Garsdale Head which appeared to be in the middle of nowhere.

It rained all night and I woke up to heavy rain. Full waterproofs were called for as I was going up and over large expanses of exposed moorland. These turned out to be mainly sphagnum moorland and it was a very wet and windy start to the day, but exhilarating to see all the waterfalls as water poured off the moors. Once off the moors after a slight accident where I slipped and fell making a small hole in my waterproof coat, I headed downhill towards a white waymark which turned out to be the white rump of a deer! I then fell in a very fast flowing ford and could feel water coming up the

inside of my waterproofs to my elbows. Unfortunately I had no other dry gloves as I had already changed them. There was another stream to cross, but this had become a raging torrent, far wider, deeper and faster than before. I tried two fords but eventually had to admit defeat and knocked on a farm door to ask whether there was any possibility of crossing anywhere. He told me I would have to go back down his track (which was very long) to the road and at the Cross Keys there was a bridge. After that all the becks were fordable or had bridges. To my disappointment the Cross Keys was closed. I really wanted to look inside as it dates from the fifteenth century and is still a temperance inn. I got to Sedbergh and by then the sun had come out so I was able to dry out a bit in a café, buy some tape for my coat and got a new waterproof bag for my map. It was then pretty well following the Dales Way along the river to Dent which was a very pretty path.

The last day dawned - pouring with rain! The route took you over Wharfedale and Ingleborough with bad weather options. It was so wet full waterproofs again. I was determined to do Wharfedale which is never a navigation problem, but the higher I got the worse the weather got, driving rain, massive winds and extremely low cloud. Fortunately I decided against it having been up there at least 3 times before, and ascended to the Settle Carlisle railway and then down the valley. Without warning my knee began to hurt and within minutes had become extremely painful, especially going downhill. I hobbled down the Beezley Waterfalls which were absolutely magnificent as they were in spate, but unfortunately just couldn't enjoy them as I was in so much pain. I began to wonder whether I could get a taxi from Ingleton which was 14 miles from the finish as I really didn't think I would be able to continue! I got to Ingleton and into a café (who had no ice) and after about half an hour still absolutely soaked decided to get going. The next 3 or so miles was along a minor road (Ingleborough was totally out of the question, and anyway the weather up there looked quite awful – Ingleborough was black!!!!) and I tried fast walking. I had been using my running poles from Hadrian's Wall onwards and any downhill had to lean very heavily on them. To cut a long story short, I persevered kneeling in a stream for some time which eased it a bit (ladder stiles were interesting as I could barely bend my knee by then) and the weather improved. As I came in sight of Settle the heavens opened to give me one last soaking and then I was walking along the extremely busy, noisy road to the Lazy Man café from where I'd started.

I won't tell you about the B & B I stayed in except to say it was the worst I've ever stayed in and sadly was rather an anticlimax, but I did it, clocking up 254 miles rather than 247 and not a blister in sight! I had the most fantastic 11 days. I stopped "and stared" so many times as the scenery was absolutely stunning, and the sounds of birds especially in the woodlands and moorlands was wonderful. We struggle to see lapwings in the Peak District, but up there they were everywhere. Curlew, golden plover, oyster catchers, sky lark, willow warblers, chiff chaff, dippers to name but a few. Bluebell woods, primroses, red campion, cuckoo flower and so many more. Not forgetting deer and a red squirrel! In and out of so many dales, Ribblesdale, Litton Dale, Wharfedale, Swaledale, Wensleydale, I'm sure there's more. Beautiful well kept hidden villages, barns especially along river sides, old dilapidated ruins of farms which made you wonder so many times, "why build there?", "why so high up?" Stunning scenery, moorland, rough pastures, farmland, river banks, forest, woodlands, old railways, waterfalls, rivers, becks. Sphagnum bog, rare in the Peak District.

Being on my own at times I found the navigation exhausting but enjoyable. Most days I hardly saw anyone all day, unless on the rare occasions I went into a town. I think it was on Hadrian's Wall I saw the most people in one day.

Hazel Winder

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