

Kilpatrick's Bob Graham Round, 29th-30th June 2007

Chapter 1 Friday 6.30 –10.02 pm

In which we lose people but gain time and eat chorizo & marmalade sandwiches.

Cast - Julian Brown, Barry Blyth, John Bunyan, Angela Leonard & Warren's mate Richard.

'Hang on a minute Julian ...isn't that the top behind you?' I said pointing past Julian's shoulder as he ran towards me and Barry on the wrong top of Blencathra. 'Oh 'eck yer right' he replied.

Tucker had made me promise at the start that the first bit wouldn't be a 'shambles as usual', and besides this slight mistake it wasn't, unless losing two supporters before we started ... and then losing two supporters during the leg ... and then losing the one-man search party who'd gone to look for the other two and then racing off down Hall's Fell Ridge and realising that I'd left Barry behind with my waterproofs and head torch and having to go back up again ... counts as a shambles.

Nevertheless, the soft ground made easy running and the clear, sunny evening made route finding straight forward, even the river crossing, despite the wettest June in history, proved only ankle-deep. We ran down into Threlkeld nearly ten minutes up on schedule, having an easy fortnight beforehand had clearly paid off, I felt fine and was keen to get on with it.

Chapter 2- Friday,10.05 pm – Saturday, 2-31 am

In which Clough Head & Fairfield are annoying and I eat banana & peanut butter sandwiches.

Cast – Mike Nelson, Phil Barnes, Paul Flynn, Jack Leech & Ewan Douglas

'We'll be at the top before it gets dark', Mike said cheerily as we set off, but I could feel my legs stiffening up and it was simply a question of trundling along. It was a relief and a surprise to reach Helvellyn still on schedule and without the forecast heavy rain. The full moon occasionally popped out from behind the clouds as we got to the top of Dollywaggon [twice] and dropped down to Grisedale.

Phil Barnes has told me that I was already moaning about Fairfield; up and back down the worst path in the Lakes, 'why couldn't we have counted Calfhow Pike instead?'. Thankfully, it wasn't long before we were falling through the bracken hidden boulders off Seat Sandal.

Chapter 3 Saturday, 2-38 – 8.55 am

In which I get grumpy, then scared and eat rice pudding.

Cast – Phil Cheek, Mike Nelson, Digby Harris, Ross Litherland, Andy Skelhorn, Dave Parry & Larry Day

I was pleased to be at Dunmail, 17 minutes up. Steel Fell isn't so steep in the dark and Phil's navigation to Sergeant Man was absolutely spot on. I was half

asleep but sunrise on High Raise put an extra spring in my step. After Clough Head and Fairfield, Bowfell wasn't nearly as bad as I'd feared and we were quickly jogging over to Scafell Pike.

The ropes on Broad Stand didn't make it any easier. It was frighteningly greasy and I didn't point out the loose wire as Mike bravely hauled himself up, it was all or nothing, any thought of the long drop would have been it. It didn't get any less nerve wracking as we gingerly slithered our way up to the top, to be met by a grinning Ross [does he ever stop smiling?]. We had gained no time, but it was dead exciting and had to be done !
The scree carried us down into Wasdale for breakfast.

Chapter 4 Saturday, 9-03am – 1-35 pm

In which it starts to rain at last, I get a bit overwhelmed and hungry and Digby eats the curry pasty.

Cast – Pete Coppack, Chris Cripps, Digby Harris, Brian MacFadyen, Trevor Longman, Dave Tucker, Bill Hitchener, Steve Swallow & Chris's mate, Kirsty.

Tucker towed me briskly up Yewbarrow,. [Following his legs reminded me that I had to buy a couple of bottles of milk]. It was drizzling steadily by the time we were on Steeple but the grassy line was a relief for my sore and stumbling feet. After the rusty scramble up Kirk Fell there were only 8 to go, the torrential rain over Gable had come too late and I felt it was in the bag. As we emerged, down through the cloud into Honister, I was overwhelmed by the number of people there to welcome us. It is not surprising that so many Harriers get round when the support is this encouraging.

Chapter 5 Saturday, 1.44 – 4.45 pm

In which I don't eat the pork pie, Phil Barnes makes a 'controlled' fall off Robinson and we all finish up smiling on the steps of the Moot Hall.

Cast – Annette, Greg & Kath Turner, Chris Cripps, Julian Brown, Angela Leonard, Julie Fletcher, Brian Macfadyen, Nancy Bunyan, Phil Barnes, Andy Skelhorn, Paul Flynn, Kirsty & Richard [I think, sorry if I've missed you out]

By now it was absolutely chucking it down so I was amazed when I set off with a biblical multitude. I'd not practised the last leg at all, properly, and remembered the ups and downs only from the Anniversary Waltz. We charged along, the steep, grassy descent right and left off Robinson avoided the crags and to be honest it all felt downhill, we had bags of time, loads of confidence, my legs weren't aching and I just wanted to finish in one piece. As we turned into Keswick High Street I managed to dash to the Moot Hall with my little boy, Jake. I stopped with a huge sigh of relief, I think I might have even smiled. 22 hours and 15 minutes, I couldn't believe it.

What a day, near ideal weather, fantastic navigation and brilliant support particularly by Phil Janaway for whose meticulous organisation and thoughtfulness I cannot thank him enough. Thank you to everyone who helped me get round both during the months of practice and on the day itself. Especial thanks to Kate whose been expecting for most of the year and has to put up with me vanishing for days on end with the 'reassurance' that I was a phone call and miles away in the fells should there be an emergency. Luckily, Finn arrived on schedule too.