

Pete Coppack's (Macclesfield Harriers) Naylor Challenge –26th May 2007

Saturday morning 4.00 a.m and there was a welcome improvement in the weather of recent days, after a bowl of muesli and a cup of tea Phil drove Jon and myself from the campsite down into Pooley Bridge. A quick visit to the Public loo then we walked to the Bridge ready for a 5.00 a.m. start, I was surprised but pleased to see Andy Sinclair had also travelled up to support the first leg.

Climbing up on to Barton Fell it was good to see the sun breaking through intermittent cloud and the Skylarks began their hovering chorus. The summit of Arthurs Pike came in 43 minutes, I had scheduled 40! The ascent of Loadpot and Wether Hill seemed harder work than they should have but I started to relax a bit after Raven Howe when back on schedule. The run over High Street and Stoney Cove Pike went effortlessly and we arrived at the Kirkstone Pass in glorious sunshine.

A quick refreshment stop then off up Red Screens with Digby and Dave. I remember calling to Digby to question his line between Scandale Pass and Hart Crag but was firmly put in my place with a "Am I navigating this leg or not" riposte (I soon learned to keep my mouth shut, Digby's route was spot on). Fairfield came quickly and I was really pleased to see Monica had climbed more than half way up Seat Sandal to greet me.

A welcome drink and some rice pudding at Dunmail then off again, now with Craig, Mandy, Warren and Simon for support, Digby and Dave had also decided to continue through to the finish as training for their impending BG's. Steel Fell and the long haul up onto High Raise seemed hard work but my supporters kept my spirits up with good banter and I distinctly remember Mandy's frequent offers of Jelly Babies, Bananas and the like, we had a pleasant run down to cross Stake Pass and up onto Rossett Pike. I began to feel the pace as we climbed Bowfell but was amazed at the summit to see we had taken a few minutes from the schedule. The route over Esk Pike and Great End was accomplished without incident and I remember thinking I must stick close to Craig on the steep rocky descent over the nose of Great End to gain valuable minutes on the alternative. Looking down on to Sprinkling Tarn you would not think it possible to descend this way. Craig led me via the optimum route and we were soon down to the Stretcher Box at Styhead.

Annette, Chris, Martin and Dave had hiked up to take over the support on the final leg and I was honoured and privileged to have the additional support from Joss. By now I was well up on the schedule but I also knew that there were some big climbs ahead. Excellent lines by Chris and Joss soon brought us to Pillar and Steeple, the ascent of Haycock and Seatallen felt quite tough but the run down to Middle Fell seemed to rejuvenate the legs, great local knowledge from Chris and Annette brought us swiftly down to Greendale Bridge to finish.

A really good day out on the fells in mainly glorious sunshine with fantastic support, something I shall never forget, thank you everyone who supported me.

Support (in order of appearance!)

Phil Cheek, Jon Tatham, Andy Sinclair, Digby Harris, Dave Kilpatrick, Craig Harwood, Mandy Calvert Warren Mason, Simon ? (Warren's friend), Joss Naylor, Annette Morris, Chris Cripps, Martin Rands,

Dave Tucker