

JT and Guy's Lakes Meres and Waters

3rd July 2021

A joint attempt by old mates John Thompson and Guy Illingworth, which was originally planned for Summer 2020 until a global pandemic put paid to that idea. The extra year allowed for more fun packed training days which saw t shirt weather in November and snow in May until eventually early July came around and it all became a reality.

Blessed with perfect overcast weather conditions for two middle aged men who wilt in the sun, we were dropped off at Loweswater along with our dedicated support runners Paul Swindles, Andy Ford and Jim Maxfield. Waved off by road support crew and a surprise visitor, Dave Makin we trotted off for a long day out with our mates. Very enjoyable run along the shore of Crummock with the inevitable restraining of Paul Swindles. All was going well until the climb up Red Pike when Guy started to feel 'not great' and less so on the decent to Ennerdale. During the climb out of Ennerdale it was looking like it might be a ride home from Wasdale and a solo attempt for John. Fortunately the decision to 'go light' due to weather forecast proved inspired when it started to chuck it down and Guy had a Lazarus recovery, trotting into Greendale full of the joys, or as full of the joys as he can be.

Expert support crew at Greendale of Rosie Jones and Paul Booth had the brews ready and had warmed JT's veggie sausage and beans to perfection. Minor change of crew for the next leg with Andy Ford and Jim being replaced by Paul Booth and Bridget Glaister. Paul Swindles carried on, probably because he was promised a pint at the Newfield Inn. We had planned this as it's a long leg with no support until Coniston so a pit stop at the Newfield Inn would be a morale booster. Bridget kept everyone smiling and chatting, Paul B smiled and found time to help some passing motorists change a tyre. A brief coke stop at the Newfield Inn was not so brief thanks to table service only and the overly complicated round of 5 pints of coke and 3 bags of crisps. All was going well until it was John's turn to feel 'not great' on the climb from Goat Water to Brim Fell, but a mandarin fruit pot did the trick and fully revived we were back at it. Bang on nav down from Brim fell and then a fast (ish) run down to Coniston.

Andy Dalton and Jane Woodburn were support crew at Coniston and perhaps as importantly were taking the two Paul's back to Braithwaite to watch the England game. Change of support runners with Dave Ralphs, Allan McKeown, Kathy Sutton, and Andy Harrop taking over duties and expertly taking us to Ambleside. we were mistaken for some triathletes by a passer-by who commented 'it finished hours ago' and had the inevitable 'run faster' as we passed the White Horse. The atmosphere in Ambleside was a flat at a pint of London Pride which led us to think Ukraine had dumped England out of the Euro's, which we felt was confirmed by the heavens opening with a deluge of rain.

Guy's wife Steph was next on support crew and had everything set out with military precision. Our only concern was that the 4-man run support for the net leg appeared to have turned into 1. Dave Riding was looking nervous thinking he would have to carry our kit, food, and water as well as his own, which is generally generous! Thankfully the 3 amigo's from Newburgh, Mike Hitchmough, Chris Usher and Peter McNamee appeared through the cloud burst, having gone to wrong place (not a good omen for the

forthcoming leg!). Suitably fuelled we set off into the night and wishing we had packed a snorkel. The weather improved and we had a great night, who wouldn't want to go to Skeggles Water on a Saturday night? A potential disaster was averted on the climb up Gatesgarth Pass as Peter managed to drop his car key while rummaging in his pack, but luckily realised immediately and found it, 'morning Darling, I have lost the car key, err it's somewhere between Ambleside and Mardale Head'. The long dry spell meant that Hawswater shore wasn't where it normally is which added midge infested extra few hundred meters. The climb up to High Street was complemented by a 20 strong herd of deer and a perfect sunrise....and a rice pudding pot to add extra romance. The descent to Hayeswater had always (and should have) been on the path around the Knott, but fortune favours the brave and we said stuff it, lets go straight down. Wrong decision but not as bad as Guy's to bum slide down. Rocks averted but he hadn't legislated for the abrasion of boxers around his crown jewels. With tears in his eyes it was a long run down to Hartsop. Thankfully Peter McNamee saved the day with a giant pot of Sudocrem that was nestling in his boot, thank god he found the car key.

Steph was back on hand to provide brews, porridge, rice pudding along with the next crew of Tash Fellows, Chris Lloyd, and Bill Beckett. A surprise visit from Jim Davis who had cycled over with some cool strawberry's further lifted spirits. When you have had a long night, are tired and still have a chunk to go you need people who lift your mood and Tash, Chris and Bill will always do that. Jim D cycled through to Glenridding tempting us with cool strawberries and a further surprise when a couple of mates, Ollie and Steve made an impromptu appearance with some cold melon and apple which also went down a treat.

Jane, Andy, and Rosie were next up for road crew at Thirlmere, with Andy drawing the short straw of changing John's shoes and socks. True friendship as he gave John a pair of socks he bought on Saturday as John had forgotten to pack a spare pair. A swift brew, more rice pudding and we were off with Jane and Rosie providing support through to Keswick. A further surprise at Derwentwater when 4 of Guy's swimming companions turned out to cheers us on. Jane was swapped with Andrew Seller for the last legs to Bass and Overwater. The A591 isn't ideal for running along on a warm Sunday afternoon but it had to be done. After arriving at Bass both John and Guy's legs decided that even if someone dropped £1m quid 100 yards ahead they wouldn't be doing anymore running, so it was a power work from there to the finish. Credit must go to Rosie and Andrew for putting up with the moaning and trying to keep spirits high.

Finally, Overwater came into view and a welcoming committee of Steph, Tash, Chris, Bill, Andy, Jane Paul B and Sarian witnessed two old mates moving like they had just had their hips replaced but smiling from ear to ear. I think they had heard there was free beer. We set out with two objectives, to finish and to have a great time with good friends and that is exactly what we achieved

Big thanks to all our friends that helped us over the weekend. Its was great to see you all and we couldn't have done it without you.