

## Lakes, Mere's & Waters (1st/ 2nd April 2023) (James Gibson)

I had been looking at having an attempt at the Lakes, Mere's & Waters (LMW) route for some time. A very good friend of mine Matt Le Voi had a successful attempt last year and helping him out between Rydal and Haweswater really inspired me. I was really drawn to how different it is to other big rounds that I often attempt along with the fact that I managed to get the distance down to exactly 100 miles. I had a time in my head that I believed that I could possibly achieve, but I knew it was going to be very hard to achieve, but with an amazing support team around me, I knew that if everything went right, I'd get it done. This was to try and achieve it under 24 hours, using a mixture of both Jack Scott's and Andy Ford's Schedule, creating a 23 hour 50 minute schedule, thinking how on earth did Joss Naylor manage to do it some 4 hours 30 mins quicker!

Before I announced that I would be having an attempt, I wanted to make sure that I was fully recovered for doing all 'Big 3' rounds, solo/ unsupported in winter, finishing the final round (Ramsay's Round) on 25th February, just over a month before. After a small amount of rest early March, I began to recce all the sections of the route and over the next 3 weeks I managed to get about 70% of the route done, which I was very happy with.

It was around 2 weeks before the attempt before I began to ask friends if they were around to help at all, the reason being was that firstly I wanted to make sure I was recovered, but secondly I wanted a good weather window and it was sounding like there was a bit of high pressure due end of March/ start of April. I'm always amazed by the amount of support that's around in the Fell running community, it's such a special sport. Everyone that I had asked were more than happy to help out and even to the point where they would ask their friends (who I'd never met prior) if they'd be willing to fill the gaps that I had, I was blown away!

I also wanted to try and use a different style of support, whereby it didn't involve someone driving around the Lake District being at each check point. So I came up with the idea of asking people that were helping on different parts of the route if they could bring just an extra bit of food and fluids and in return I gave them a £5 note. It was great as I didn't know what I was getting throughout the day and I had some real treats, including the best flapjack in the world, a beef burger, sausage, chips and coke and many other amazing treats throughout the day.

So it's the 1st April and once again I'm starting another epic challenge with my best friends Matt Handley and Matt Le Voi, who have been endlessly there on previous challenges. It's just before 8am and we're stood by Loweswater getting pretty cold just in shorts and a T-shirt, but the sun was beginning to rise, knowing it would get much warmer when we began to move. The clock hit 8am and we were off, trying to keep it steady, but equally trying to be efficient with moving, I kept a good pace down towards Buttermere and managed to reach both Crummock and Buttermere in the time that I allowed on the schedule, making up 8 minutes at Buttermere already. I then left the Matt's and the dogs a began the steep climb up and over Red Pike, feeling great so far. I was moving really well up and over and reached Ennerdale to meet Adam Frankham (who I'd never before) at the agreed point before getting to Ennerdale Water, making up 14 minutes on my schedule. We had some awesome conversations as we made the long climb towards the col of Haycock and Scott fell and descending really well into Nether Beck towards Wasdale. Things were going really well and I was fueling and drinking well too. The weather was brilliant too, nice and cool, but dry for the entire attempt too. We reached West Waters south western end in 40 minutes above my schedule. Happy days.

From West Water we made our way over Miterdale Forest towards Eskdale, where we met Ryan Crellin, who was the person who had helped out on my two previous Wainwright attempts last year and also managed to get Adam to help too, it was great to catch up and he kindly had some snacks and fluid at his car that was parked in Eskdale Green, which again was a real treat. After a short break we were on the move on the road towards Devoke Water. With a good surface underfoot it was great to move at some speed to cover some of the distance, even if it did mean climbing up to the top of the pass of Birker Fell. On the way up, another friend of mine Geoff Williams unexpectedly stated to drive next to me, which was a real surprise, he met us on the turning off the road towards Devoke, where he offered some Lucozade and sweets. We all arrived at Devoke Water still 40 minutes up. I said my thanks and goodbyes and began to run down to Duddon with my Bum bag, that was being carried until I had to do some sections alone. This

section would be the biggest solo section. I tried to keep a good pace, but even though the bum bag was small, I could really notice the difference. I arrived at the base of Walna Scar road, where I met Will Barton, who had run over from Coniston to meet me, absolute legend! We climbed and had some great chats along the way, while he kindly fed me and filled my water up along the way. Arriving at the summit of Walna Scar, we made the sneaky traverse that I had done previously keeping the high ground above 'The Cove', traversing past Blind Tarn and the towards Goat's Water, keeping about 35 minutes ahead. Next was the steepest climb of the day, straight over The Old Man of Coniston, knowing the split was tight at 30 mins to get up and over to Low Water, thankfully I managed it in 25 minutes, I was very surprised. On the way down towards Low Water I was met by one of my bet friends Matt Handley once again with my dog Ralphie, I think that's part of the reason I did that section a little quicker. We then made our way across the other sneaky traverse that skirts above Boulder Valley, bringing us to Levers Water, gaining a bit more time again. We then made our way down the rocky track towards the Coppermines, where once again I was surprised by a very good friend of mine Tom Rothwell and his friend Martin Bailey (again I hadn't met before hand), they treated me to a warm double cheese burger and chips, followed by some eclairs, what a treat! We then ran as a squad towards the car park at the Northern end of Coniston, where once again I was surprised by both Rob and Diane Green from Achille Ratti Club, they kindly offered help at the checkpoint and even offered some Tea too, again some amazing folk that I hadn't met prior to the attempt.

A quick change of shoes, a bit of food and some hydration, I was back on the trail/ road with Will, Tom and Martin making our way over towards Esthwaite Water. I knew the majority of this section was mainly roads and good trails, so we could move at a quicker pace and hopefully make up a little more time. We reached Hawkshead and did the out and back to Esthwaite Water, making up 38 minutes on the schedule. We kept things moving as we made our way over to Elterwater, entering what is technically my local patch (living in Rydal). We did the short climb over to Grasmere, where once again I was shocked to see a good friend of mine Steve Hopwood and his running clients he had for the day waiting on the shore line. A quick touch and photo, we kept the pace moving as we passed Rydal Water and thinking how on earth Joss managed 21 minutes to Windermere, it took me 29 minutes and I felt like I was pushing. It was 18:51pm when we reached Waterhead, I was treated to a perfectly timed sausage, chips and curry sauce from the local chippy by more great friends Ian Penny and Layla Hirst. There was a good crowd of folk at Waterhead, which really lifted my spirits. A quick bite to eat and a lovely cold Coke to wash down the chippy and I was on the move once again. This time with Ian and Layla.

Making our way over to Troutbeck past Jenkin Crag, I could slowly start to feel my body slowing down, knowing I still had the night and early morning left. I stayed positive and having what was claimed the best flapjack in the world, it certainly tasted like it! Layla and Ian kept moving me along. Reaching Troutbeck, we made the ascent up towards Garburn Pass and popped our head torches on before meeting Ross Jenkin, where the next team transfer happened, I said my goodbyes and myself and Ross made our way down into Kentmere, thankful for Ross sacrificing his Saturday evening to come out to support me. We then did a short climb towards the boggy area of Skeggles Water, reaching it 43 minutes ahead. Kentmere Res was the next body of water, although not technically on the round, Joss did it, so it only seemed fair to follow his footsteps. Ross kindly came up and over Nan Bield Pass to help photograph me touching Small Water. Once again I said my goodbyes and this time ran down solo to meet the next group of legends kindly helping me on the overnight section towards Keswick. I reached Mardale Head, went straight to Haweswater, then sat down to have a bit of food, some fluids, change my footwear and just stop for a minute or two.

Jack Oliver, Matt Stapley and Micheal Walters ushered me along and we were on the way up to Blea Water before we knew it, followed shortly by another climb up and over High Street in the wind, cold and cloud before dropping down to Hayeswater, one hour and fifth teen minutes ahead of schedule. Feeling good we kept pushing on down the rocky path through Hartstop to Brothers Water, before a nice and steady run down the road to Ullswater with a good pace, we continued to make up time. From Ullswater we had the long climb into the cloud up to the top of Sticks Pass, but cutting as many corners as possible on the way up, to help keep the distance to a minimum. From Sticks Pass, we made the steady but steep descent towards Thirlmere, gaining one hour forty mins up on schedule. The lads kept pushing me on as we made our way towards Keswick and Derwent Water, I could begin to feel that keeping the pace was becoming even

harder and my head was trying to make lots of excuses to try and stop for a short while, but Jack, Matt and Micheal, continued to push me and heading down through the sleepy town of Keswick, we arrived at Derwent Water at 04:40am, still ahead of schedule.

I was met by once again some amazing humans that I'd never met before and it was 04:40 in the morning, I know some people that would simply refuse to see that time of day, but here I met Sarah Perry and Luke Kennedy (again never met prior to this) and they were ready to take me on the last section towards Over Water. I touched Derwent Water and began to run through Keswick towards Bassenthwasite, shortly after saying my thanks and goodbyes to the lads who helped overnight. I felt like I was moving as well as I could on the road towards Bass, which was great because I said to myself if I can keep running all the way to the end, I had a good chance of making it under 24 hours. We made it to Bassenthwaite fifty six minutes ahead of schedule and I could see that possibly getting under 23 hours was possible, so with encouragement from Sarah and Luke, I kept pushing as well as I could. Shortly after Bass, we were met by a good friend of mine Geoff Williams, which really lifted my spirits, he came suitably equipped with fresh fruit, lucozade and other goodies for the mix. Running the final 4/5 km, my watch kept saying dead on 7am arrival and I had in my head getting slightly under this, so continued to push, we could see Over Water coming over the hill, we picked up the pace and were treated to a small crowd of Matt Le Voi, Rob and Dianne Green, with illuminous lights from Matt's Lakeland Festival of Light the night before, it was a really good feeling running those last few KM and seeing the end. I touched Over Water at 06:54 and could finally stop! What an amazing day running around different parts of the Lakes with many old friends and equally many new too. We took a few photos by the lake and began to make our way to the van where I sat down and could start to feel it all catch up, my head felt really dizzy, so I laid my head down in Matt's van for a while to allow it to pass, thankfully a few minutes later I felt much better. Once again Rob & Diane had some Tea, which was a real treat at the end too.

Once again, thank you so much to everyone that helped, honestly couldn't have done it without everyone involved, such a great day spend with friends. Huge respect to Joss's time back in 1983. I forgot to mention, but during the attempt around Chester's/ Elterwater Leo Pollard's (First completion) daughter came out to say hello, this was awesome and really lifted the spirits too.

	<b>Joss Naylor</b>	<b>My Planned ETA</b>	<b>Actual ETA</b>
<b>Loweswater</b>	08:00	08:00	08:00
<b>Crummock Water</b>	08:12	08:25	08:25
<b>Buttermere</b>	08:37	08:50	08:42
<b>Ennerdale</b>	09:31	10:05	09:46
<b>Wast Water</b>	10:58	12:00	11:21
<b>Devoke Water</b>	12:11	13:30	12:50
<b>Goat's Water</b>	13:45	15:30	14:57
<b>Low Water</b>	14:11	16:00	15:23
<b>Levers Water</b>	14:20	16:25	15:36
<b>Coniston Water</b>	14:43	16:55	16:08
<b>Esthwaite Water</b>	15:21	17:40	16:52
<b>Elterwater</b>	16:10	18:35	17:52
<b>Grasmere</b>	16:25	18:55	18:12
<b>Rydal Water</b>	16:36	19:10	18:22

<b>Windermere</b>	16:55	19:35	18:51
<b>Skegges Water</b>	19:03	21:50	21:07
<b>Kentmere Res</b>	19:53	22:55	22:11
<b>Small Water</b>	20:29	23:45	22:54
<b>Haweswater</b>			23:12
<b>Blea Tarn</b>			23:47
<b>Hayeswater</b>	22:06	01:55	00:39
<b>Brothers Water</b>	22:29	02:15	01:06
<b>Ullswater</b>	23:03	03:00	01:39
<b>Thirlmere</b>	00:35	05:05	03:35
<b>Derwent Water</b>	01:30	06:00	04:40
<b>Bassenthwaite Lake</b>	02:16	06:50	05:46
<b>Over Water</b>	03:14	07:50	06:54