

The 26, Lake, Meres and Waters (Winter)

Attempted by: Tim Wiggins

Date: 12 Jan 2024

Crew chief responsibilities was covered by wife (Lee Wiggins) who's been helping me on these type of things for years now and brings a level of organisation I haven't been able to muster when helping friends on their FKTs/rounds in the past. She was joined by our labrador nala who didn't really bring much to the party other than enthusiasm and company during the hours between....if there were any to be had.

Graham, a long time pal of mine since we completed our Bob Graham together on same round in 2017 joined us for this first block of time. As always with these things we met at a car park in the pitch black and began our adventure for the day.

Section 1 to Wasdale was in line with weather forecast and started in dark for approximately 1 hour but as we began climb up Red Pike we were rewarded with one of the best cloud inversions and clear views of all the Lakeland tops I've ever had. The cold conditions on the terrain were easily fended off using adjacent grassy/gravel lines and avoiding slabs/stones which were wicked with verglas. It was a steady decent into Ennerdale and I decided to protect my feet (keep em dry) for the long day and use the Ennerdale forest trail up to Black Sail pass and hit Wastwater at the northern end. This added extra miles as opposed to the Haycock saddle line up and over but felt like we were moving well with less height gain and enjoyed the run through the Forest track.

Section 1	Names of navigator and support (Lee Wiggins Crew vehicle and logistics whole attempt)	Actual time at Location
1. Loweswater	Graham Thomas	06:58:30
2. Crummock Water	Graham Thomas	07:30:32
3. Buttermere	Graham Thomas	07:54:31
4. Ennerdale Water	Graham Thomas	09:14:20
Arr. Wasdale Head National trust car park	Graham Thomas	11:10:00



Figure 1- Buttermere



Figure 2 - Red Pike Cloud Inversionmagic

Section 2	Names of navigator and support	Actual time at location
Dept. Wasdale head National trust car park	Graham Thomas	11:15:00
5. Wast Water	Graham Thomas	11:17:00
6. Devoke Water	Graham Thomas	13:15:00
Arr. Hall Dunnerdale	Graham Thomas	14:31:20

It was lovely running around the eastern side of Burnmoor Tarn in icy conditions so bogs were frozen in most cases. We dropped down into Eskdale then headed over to Devoke Water by way of Stanley Force waterfall. I had not recce'd this section and the ghyll, woods and the waterfall were a real surprise, so we took a moment to take it in on viewing platform.

We then hit Devoke water and followed a line that I'd recently seen taken through the farm to the north east, as opposed to the out and back and it worked well. We also traversed through the old slate mining area rather than sticking to the road on route to Hall Dunnerdale which was a nice change of terrain after a lot of road miles (more were to come though 😊)

Section 3	Names of navigator and support	Actual time at location
Dept. Hall Dunnerdale		
7. Goat's Water	Daniel Henderson	15:47:47
8. Low Water	Daniel Henderson	16:27:37
9. Levers Water	Daniel Henderson	16:43:33
10. Coniston Water	Daniel Henderson	17:27:26
11. Esthwaite Water	Daniel Henderson	18:15:18
Hawkshead central car park		18:20:00

After a monster 30+ mile leg Graham handed over support role to Daniel (Dicky) Henderson. He was in the Royal Navy with me and has recently got into trail running. In that past life we were Marine engineers on HMS Sutherland. This was going to be 20+ miles and Dicky's longest run, as well as first time running the 'proper' mountains so I was keen to show him what the fell/mountain running scene was like and pass on the bug that stuck with me.

Section 4	Names of navigator and support	Actual time at location
Dept. Hawkshead Car Park		
12. Elterwater	Daniel Henderson	19:39:05
13. Grasmere	Daniel Henderson	20:06:58
14. Rydal Water	Daniel Henderson	20:26:56
Arr. Rydal Water car park		20:30:00



Figure 3- Climbing Coniston Old Man and another cloud inversion as the sun was setting

Dicky managed like a champ on these legs. Up onto the Old man of Coniston in a direct line from Goats water and then down through the copper mines area. I'd been advised on a line from my pal Jack after Low to Levers water which worked out a treat as the sun was going down contouring through the grassy/scree slope. Verglas was again a problem anywhere above 500m and we spent a lot of time on our rear ends during the descents, which slowed us down a touch.

We had planned a car support at Coniston but my wife advised that logistically there was not enough time with drop off for Graham back to Lowes water start point, so we switched it to Hawkshead at short notice. This section post Coniston water went pretty quick with good running and low traffic on the roads arriving us into Rydal Water car park an hour behind schedule. I had been aggressive in planning so I wasn't worried however the next block with

Andy to Glenridding was what I considered the toughest and I felt I had plenty in the tank. That was a error in judgement 😊

Section 5	Names of navigator and support	Actual time at location
Dept. Rydal Water		
15. Windermere	Andrew Berry	20:58:50
16. Skeggles Water	Andrew Berry	23:19:54
17. Kentmere Reservoir	Andrew Berry	00:36:42
18. Haweswater	Andrew Berry	01:32:33
(Mardale Head)	Andrew Berry	
19. Small Water	Andrew Berry	01:32:33
20. Blea Water	Andrew Berry	02:44:21
21. Brothers Water	Andrew Berry	04:24:04
22. Ullswater	Andrew Berry	05:15:56
Arrive. Glenridding Car park		05:20:00

Andy joined me into the main body of the night and we've been pals since my introduction into the lake district rounds running in 2016 and Durham Fell Runners. I was happy to have his craic and strength on this long leg...albeit we were also joined for a short spell from Jack Oliver who was a welcome injection of energy out of Ambleside to Windermere and onto the fells before wishing us good luck.

Unfortunately Andy drew the short straw here as a few hours into this section my gut went south and I had to drop into a 'low power mode' and just push on slowly. The weather also changed with higher winds and the windchill coupled with verglas made it tricky on the higher ground sections. I recall also a lot of one way conversation from Andy who was pulling everything out the bag to keep me motivated including a mini can of sprite which was a welcome sight. The long pull up to high street was a big push and we had every item of clothing on to stay warm enough.

In contrast I was sweating buckets once we got down into the valley and began to take off layers before switching into some heavily cushioned trail shoes for

the remainder of the challenge at Brothers water car park for an additional quick stop



Figure 4- Bit of a struggle up to Mardale Head and then later High Street.

Section 7	Names of navigator and support	Actual time at location
Dept. Glenridding Car Park		
23. Thirlmere	Martin Wilson	07:55:26
24. Derwent Water	Martin Wilson	09:10:18
25. Bassenthwaite Lake	Martin Wilson	10:27:39
26. Over Water	Martin Wilson	11:53:23
Total	104.56 miles	28:54:53

Martin took over from Andy for this final leg and we started the steady climb up to sticks pass which was relatively sheltered compared to the previous high ground. I had supported the exact same leg some years earlier and I remember thinking if I had fresh legs I could capitalise on this section once at Thirlmere. I tried upping the gears but I was still having trouble eating so just accepted the situation and tried a few alternative food types to see if I could recover. I called my wife before getting to Keswick and requested an ice cream 😊. It was approximately 0730-0800hrs at this point so you can imagine the response she got from the Keswick newsagent she found open, securing a magnum (white chocolate, vanilla and mango) which resulted in some critical calories that I managed to get down once I arrived around 0900hrs. This ended up being enough to get me through to the end. Just after sticks Pass I also had the company of some pals from Durham Fell Runners (Chris Bird and Jon West) who came out for a few hours on the way to Keswick. It was nice to catch up and talk about old rounds and plans for new ones to come.

Martin did a sterling job of getting me to the end challenge which was relatively low key in support with long legs. We arrived in a total time of 28:54:53. A couple of hours longer than I had planned for but a grand day out non the less and I cannot recommend the route enough.



Figure 5- Taking in Overwater, job done!

Follow Tim on Strava to see this activity. Join for free.



[strava.app.link](#)