

FEATURES

BOB GRAHAM 1990 THE WEEKEND BEFORE THE CLUB ATTEMPT

Having just completed Bamford Carnival Fell honestly say that I felt more knackered finishing that than when Bob Marsden and myself finished the Bob Graham Round last month. I thought it was about time, therefore, to put pen to paper to encourage all you potential contenders to have a go. Bob and I had decided on a clockwise attempt starting midnight Friday/Saturday. Supporters and contenders arrived at Threlkeld campsite throughout Friday afternoon and evening. All, that is, except the mysterious 'Big Dave' who, although he never arrived in body, certainly attended the weekend in spirit!

11

Hasty plans were drawn up, then discarded and redrawn as was supporting us on each section. An advance party was then dispatched to Keswick for a visit to the 'New Keswickian' Chippy followed by a quick recce of the route through Fitz Park as no-one was sure of the way. Others opted for a glass or two of the amber nectar in the Horse and Farrier which left us, the contenders, drinking tea and pondering on the day ahead while being eaten by some rather hungry Lakeland midges.

Eventually the witching hour arrived and we were off into darkness, what a relief! It wasn't until half way up Skiddaw that I realised that Colin Henson was attempting the round with us. Unfortunately he had to drop out not long after Threlkeld (it was great to come back the following weekend and see him get round). The beauty of doing the round clockwise was that by the time we were at the top of Halls Fell it was already light and we had the whole day to look forward to. The weather was perfect, unlike last year and we made it back to the Moot Hall with time to although we did miss last orders! we spare,

Thanks to all those club members who came along and supported particularly the 'Road Crew' of Tracy and Howard who both did a wonderful job driving round and making sure the road crossings went smoothly. Thanks also to Bob for accompanying me on what I think we both agree was the best day either of us has spent in the Lakeland hills. Finally one other person deserves a mention; Graham for making it all possible. Bob

Paul Sanderson

	<u>E.T.A.</u>	<u>Actual</u>		<u>E.T.A.</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Moot Hall	0:00	0:00	Pike O Stickle	10:49	10:54
Skiddaw	1:22	1:19	Rossett Crag	11:34	11:37
Great Calva	2:12	2:10	Bowfell	12:09	12:14
Blencathra	3:22	3:20	Esk Pike	12:34	12:32
Threlkeld - In	3:52	3:57	Great End	12:59	12:54
Out	4:02	4:08	Ill Crag	13:14	13:10
Clough Head	5:01	5:00	Broad Crag	13:24	13:20
Great Dodd	5:31	5:31	Scafell Pike	13:36	13:31
Watson Dodd	5:40	5:39	Scafell	14:08	14:07
Stybarrow Dodd	5:49	5:50	Wasdale - In	14:43	14:42
Raise	6:07	6:06	Out	15:03	14:58
Whiteside	6:15	6:18	Yewbarrow	15:53	15:46
Helvellyn L.M.	6:28	6:31	Red Pike	16:43	16:29
Helvellyn	6:38	6:38	Steeple	17:08	16:54
Nethermost Pike	6:51	6:50	Pillar	17:42	17:30
Dollywagon Pike	7:00	6:58	Kirk Fell	18:32	18:25
Fairfield	7:38	7:39	Great Gable	19:15	19:08
Seat Sandal	8:13	8:02	Green Gable	19:28	19:28
Dunmail - In	8:28	8:21	Brandreth	19:46	19:48
Out	8:43	8:37	Grey Knotts	19:54	19:54
Steel Fell	9:08	9:01	Honister - In	20:07	20:10
Calf Crag	9:28	9:21	Out	20:21	20:21
Sergeant Man	10:03	10:03	Dale Head	20:54	20:58
High Raise	10:12	10:11	Hindscarth	21:15	21:14
Thunacar Knott	10:27	10:24	Robinson	21:41	21:41
Harrison Stickle	10:37	10:34	Moot Hall	23:21	23:14

57 YEAR OLD GRANDFATHER JOINS THE CLUB (JUST)

Bob Graham Round (Anti-clockwise) : 23-24 June 90

We left the Moot Hall and jogged steadily across the fields to Portinscale and along the leafy lanes of the Newlands Valley...

So began the Dark Peak's annual Bob Graham weekend. This year there were only two contenders Frank Galbraith, aged 55 years, and Colin Henson aged 57 years; it was the day of the 'Super-Vets'. The weather was to our liking; a cool North-West wind and complete cloud cover perfect! -

(2h The first section to Honister was completed on schedule 10m) without incident. Cups of tea and fruit cake supplied by an enthusiastic team went down well; an easy walk up Grey Knotts and we were off to Wasdale. found this section very demanding but, this time, talking to a large party of support runners seemed to make it pass quite easily. In the past I have always

We contoured from Dore Head to Wasdale and started the descent into Wasdale. At that moment we were hit by heavy hailstorm but it did not hinder our progress. Luckily we found every sheep track through the bracken to arrive 5 minutes down on schedule. We ate very well and, afterwards, put on our 'lifa' tights and an extra top; the weather was getting worse. We climbed Scafell and, at 2500', disappeared into the mist. For the next two hours we negotiated a very wet Broad Stand and found Ill Crag and Great End on by compass bearings. We then became detached from one of a and were our pacers; as he was carrying

the schedule it made things little difficult. By the time we reached the Langdales, reunited with our pacer, we were one hour down. After drinks and food we made big efforts to reduce the deficit but at Dunmail were still 50 minutes down. we

Now for the night section we set off with words of encouragement from our support team and also Fred Rogerson, Secretary of the B.G. Club. We made the climbs of seat Sandall, Fairfield and Dollywagon quite well but the mist descended again and we lost time to Helvellyn. On the descent to Sticks Pass the mist cleared; a flying run off Clough Head left only 4 hours 35 minutes in which to finish it was going to be a close run thing. -

Blencathra took 70 minutes. After the summit Frank and I separated by the time I reached the bottom of Great Calva I was 7 minutes in front. We climbed by the fence, at the summit. 2 hours

13

10 minutes remained. Had I enough time left? I thought I had! The ascent of Skiddaw went well and the final top was reached at 07:01 am 59 minutes left. A steady jog to Jenkin Hill then a race to the Moot Hall. The Dark Peak Supporters' Club cheered me through Fitz Park a sprint across the car park and I was home at the end of a great day with fantastic support very many thanks.

Colin Henson



Even a Bob Graham member has got to begin somewhere - the archives had to be dredged to uncover this 'blast from the past'.

Section

Assisted by

Keswick - Threlkeld
 Threlkeld - Dunmail
 Dunmail - Wasdale
 Wasdale - Honister

 Honister - Keswick

Jeff Harrison, Graham Bell
 Dave Lockwood
 John Armistead, Pete Dyke
 Roger Beaumeister, Jeff Harrison,
 Graham Bell
 Dave Lockwood, Jeff Harrison

> >

BOB GRAHAM 2 FRANK GALBRAITH

By now, most people in Dark Peak must know about my attempt to complete the Bob Graham Round and the results. So here are two pieces of prose largely in praise of the supporters and the Dark Peak Spirit. Please understand that the first piece was written

immediately after the first attempt when I felt humble, exhilarated and disappointed all at the same time. Then, I felt philosophical about the failure but now I feel quite vexed (good old fashioned word) at my inability to conquer those few precious minutes and here I am looking forward to all that (blasted) training again next year.

I am proud to be a member of a Club that can turn out almost 30 supporters (in June) to help 2 "old warts", with a combined age of 112, achieve their supreme ambition.

Round 1

A points win for B.G.

What can one say about the Bob Graham Round that hasn't been said already? We all know it consists of a traverse of the Lake District touching 42 cairns on the tops of hills seemingly chosen at random.

Normal accounts dwell on the weather, the time that each one, or major points, were reached. The emphasis is usually how arduous and tiring it all was together with a comment on the excellence of the support. If Dark Peak decide to keep a record perhaps a table or report sheet should be drawn up my own would read like this:

Peaks reached: 42

Distance:

Very long

Weather:

Nobbut middling except for sunrise on Sunday

Effort:

1258

Success:

988

Support:

Excellent

What would really be interesting would be a taped commentary on one's thoughts at various stages. Different runners must have different approaches; my own was to 'lock off' into a world of my own, only just conscious of one's companions and surroundings. During that time the main thought was "I must complete this but that doesn't occupy my mind for 24 hours. So what does? run"

Most of the thoughts were inconsequential and trivial, like noticing a large black shiny slug feeding off sheep excrement and thinking that's a good idea otherwise we'd be ankle deep in s**t before long! This led to thoughts about waste disposal throughout the world and what are we going to do with all the cans and bottles that accumulate on streets, hills and open spaces. Two questions kept running through my mind concerning plants; what's the name of that very tiny white flowered specimen and the name of that parsley like growth that seems to grow in the stoniest of places. Why I wanted to know I'll never understand. Towards the end of the run the impetus to finish becomes more important, the anxiety to complete within 24 hours becomes a great pressure and inconsequential thoughts are banned.

15

All in all it would be interesting to know what one did think about. for 20 hours, assuming that 4 hours of actual thought was addressed to the question of the run, the pain, the food, the terrain and the support.

Someone famous once said, "Everyone gets the chance to be famous for 15 minutes" (it was Andy Warhol actually) and Saturday, 23rd June 1990 was my chance. The supporters, every one of them, made me feel famous. To all you pacers, route finders, tea makers, carriers, drivers and everyone else who gave me enormous encouragement I say a very sincere "Thank You". masseurs, such

I am sorry I failed the attempt (for the record by 8 minutes) for your sakes as well as for my own disappointment. I enjoyed the attempt, particularly the last four miles when the heat was really and the adrenalin was flowing. I didn't realise I had so many friends. on

Whilst I was trivialising, Colin Henson was running strongly and obviously with more determination since he finished in good time with 3 minutes to spare. Well done Colin!

Round 2 A win for B.G. by a K.O.

impossible, "Why not? Then Having written off a further attempt in 1990 as that little green man on my shoulder kept whispering, You've done the training, you may not be as fit next year". Dave Moseley weighed in with a carefully researched and phrased bit of medical advice, "Well you're not getting any younger" (it's a six year course to learn that!). That proved to be the real clincher.

to say "Mirabile dictu" as the Latin geezers used miraculous to say support flooded in with a dozen folks happily volunteering with at least another dozen sending their regrets since they were on holiday, it is August after all. Whilst thanking everyone who turned out there are a couple of examples I must mention; Kay Whittle and Keith Tonkin who travelled all the way up from Guildford and Tony Keddie and Ann Watmore who delayed the start of their holiday in order to help.

The big day dawned, as they say in the books about this sort of thing, and we set off to climb a peak and guess what "we felt tired when we reached the top". By special arrangement I

will give anyone who is interested a peak by peak account with times and weather conditions (a la Mike Cudahy see his latest book) useful for those who suffer from insomnia.

to The basic details are that everything went very well Honister (on time), Wasdale (20 minutes down) and Dunmail (30 minutes down on a 23 hour schedule) The weather stayed somewhat overcast, keeping the temperature just right. On the Scafells, Broad Stand was avoided by a brilliant bit of route finding by Mike Hayes who led the way down Deep Ghyll, West Wall Traverse and Lord's Rake. A heavy shower didn't help at this point but all went well to Dunmail.

16

a At Dunmail the cloud on the tops looked a little thicker and little lower. Tim Mackey takes up the story;

"I we but was down for the night section with Colin Henson so, dressed in my best policeman's cagoule (squeals of brakes from speeding motorists) we set off 20 minutes late. After hitting clag on top of Seat Sandal (now 25 minutes down) went wrong and having descended to Gavel Crag, traversed North to Grisedale Hause. The trudge up Fairfield seemed endless; Frank was ascending strongly but we were now 45 minutes down. On the descent on came the headtorches that didn't save me from a 'Bleaklowing' (head to foot in mud) at Grisedale Tarn. Then up to Dollywagon Pike and it was now completely dark. The weather was deteriorating the higher we climbed and, worst of all, our headtorches had the effect of driving full beam through fog. I remained on the path, as Frank and Colin went off to Dollywagon, and did my impression of a homing beacon. I admit to a certain degree of unease if not anxiety at the time I spent there alone, it would have helped if I hadn't seen 'An Americam Werewolf in London recently. Anyway, they returned only 35 minutes late, things were looking up and with Nethermost in the bag it was off to Helvellyn."

we went "No sooner had Colin said, "Whatever happens don't lose the path" than we promptly did so. Keeping on a North bearing through the mist loomed a dark shade of black, it was an edge. "What the hell is that doing here?", I thought and with cries of 'buggerme' and 'sheeeiiiitttt' back. After half an hour and three or four attempts later we were snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Colin was concerned and Frank was even more concerned, I just wanted to get away from that awful edge (since discovered to be Striding Edge) so after a quick summit meeting, during which we couldn't stop shaking with the cold and wet, decided that this was a life threatening situation and time to get the hell out of there. So we headed west and promptly fell onto the main path, oops! At a crawl we followed it to the summit of Helvellyn, peered ominously at the memorial stone to the faithful dog and had a midnight snack in the shelter (if you can call two adjoining walls a shelter). Frank was one hour and 15 minutes behind schedule." it was

"After deciding that in these conditions we couldn't make up the time, the attempt was sadly abandoned. The only thing to decide was how to get off. After initially heading for Sticks Pass our choices were removed when we couldn't negotiate Lower Man, so down to Thirlmere we went, taking one and a half hours to do so and seven fun filled miles back to Threlkeld. Lucky for us Terry came along in the car and saved us the last few hundred yards."

T.M.

Great disappointment all round. F.G. retires battered and bruised but determined to make a comeback next year.

Bob Graham's Round ? mine's a pint!

Frank Galbraith

17