

TWO DAYS IN THE LIFE OF ROGER BAUMEISTER

OR ROGER'S DOUBLE BOB GRAHAM RECORD

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Introduction

At 22.34 on Sunday the 1st July 1979, Roger Baumeister, a member of Dark Peak Fell Runners, jogged up Keswick's main street to the Moot Hall and became the first man to achieve a consecutive clockwise and anti-clockwise traverse of the Bob Graham route within 48 hours. He had been running since midnight on the previous Friday and had covered some 144 miles, 54,000 feet of ascent and descent and 84 summits in the incredible time of 46 hrs. 34 mins. It was the culmination of an action-packed weekend for Roger and the small group of Dark Peak members who had paced and supported him.

Brief Background

As the Bob Graham and its many variations became ever more popular, an attempt to complete a Double Round within 48 hours seemed to be a natural progression. In 1977 Boyd Millen made the first such attempt and completed the Double in 52 hours. It was an amazing achievement but Boyd was bitterly disappointed to have missed the 48 hour target. He was convinced that with adequate planning, good physical and mental preparation, and a certain amount of good fortune, the Double could be completed within two days.

The day after the Dartmoor Hundred (on which Roger and Keith Arnold had come joint first in 20 hrs. 33 mins.) Brian Harney and Roger approached me with their plans to combine a Double Bob Graham attempt with Dark Peak Fell Runners annual single round on the weekend of June 30th. Roger had completed a single round in 1977 and Brian in 1978. For Brian the weekend was to be a 'dress rehearsal' for his Pennine Way attempt which had been postponed from mid-June until August because of a knee injury sustained on The Hundred. Chris Dodd and Frank Thomas (who were to play a very important role in the pacing) were also approached and readily

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agreed to assist.

The Plan

Over the next few weeks plans were formulated and it became obvious that in order for Roger and Brian to both work on Friday afternoon and start work again on Monday morning it would be necessary for them to begin their run at some time during the Friday night. nights sleep. This unfortunately would mean the loss of three An event of this length and severity would be too harsh for the majority of ultra-distance runners starting fresh in the morning and so one wondered whether it was proposition at the end of a day's work. a sensible

Mike Hayes, the organiser of the Dark Peak Fell Runners attempt at the single round, had decided on a Saturday morning start at 09.00 in an anti-clockwise direction. In order to combine these two attempts so that Roger and Brian could stay with the main group for the majority of a single circuit, a fairly unconventional plan was adopted.

They would set off at midnight on Friday 29th in a clockwise direction covering the Skiddaw/Blencathra section first, followed by the Helvellyn range to Dunmail Raise and then the long section across the Langdales and Scafell area to Wasdale. It was hoped that they would reach Wasdale within 14 hours (a fairly modest target). The aim was for them to immediately ascend Yewbarrow, where if everything was progressing as planned they would meet Dark Peak Fell Runners coming from the other direction on the single attempt having already passed through Honister on their way to Yewbarrow. At this point the groups would join forces and Roger and Brian would retrace their steps down Yewbarrow into Wasdale, then run back over the long 6 hour section to Dunmail and via Threlkeld to Keswick. Hopefully, for the sake of those attempting the single round, Keswick would be reached by 09.00 on the Sunday morning where for them the ordeal would end.

Meanwhile, after a short break Roger and Brian would have to face another 15 hours of running and walking on the fells if they were to crack the 48 hour target. From Keswick they would travel anti-clockwise over Robinson, Hindscarth and Dale Head to Honister and then upwards over Gable and Pillar eventually reaching the summit cairn on Yewbarrow. At this point they would turn round and retrace their steps first to Honister and then on to the Moot Hall, Keswick to complete the Bob Graham in both directions.

Although this plan seemed to contain many uncertain variables there would be a few distinct advantages if things clicked: 1) Both night sections would be undertaken on the Helvellyn

Range/Northern Fells, the safest areas to cover at night. 2) By climbing Yewbarrow on Saturday afternoon while still fresh and making the summit the turning point for the event they should gain a major morale boost the following day. If they

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reached Keswick on Sunday morning in a fairly fit state then the mere thought of not having to descend into Wasdale and climb back out of the valley should alter their whole attitude to the remaining 15 hours of the event. On reaching Keswick they might even feel quite confident of success.

3) It was to be hoped that their second night on the fells would be spent in the company of many other members of Dark Peak and this should keep their spirits high.

The Pacers

The problem of securing enough pacers who could be available until midnight on the Sunday evening posed major difficulties. Many Dark Peak members were committed to helping those runners attempting the single round and we were eventually to rely on a very small nucleus of pacers and support.

Frank and Chris were asked to be available from 02.00 on Saturday morning until midday on Sunday. Roger arranged for Joss Naylor to pace from Keswick-Wasdale on Sunday morning and Mike Hayes kindly offered to stand in for Joss at the Skiddaw race to carry out his duties. There remained a large time-gap to be filled from Sunday afternoon onwards and a gap on the first section until Frank and Chris arrived hotfoot from London.

Roger had partnered Martin Hudson in The Saunders Mountain Marathon the weekend before the Double and hoped to persuade him to pace the first section on Friday night in addition to one of the final sections on the Sunday afternoon/evening. As Martin was already committed to pace at least two sections on the single attempt, he quite understandably wished to stay fresh for Saturday morning. He decided against pacing on Friday night but offered to pace them all the way back to Keswick from Wasdale on the Sunday afternoon/evening providing he was still fit. Roger then made a fairly loose agreement with Roman Halenko who said that he might be available to pace the first section from Keswick-Threlkeld and if so would meet us at the Moot Hall on Friday at midnight.

The Support

It was decided to use Brian's small Ford Escort Estate as the support vehicle for the Double. In addition to supporting Roger and Brian it was agreed that the vehicle would also be available to support those attempting the single round. I offered to look after Martyn Greaves and Howard Artiss throughout their attempt and also to keep an eye on two Irish friends of Martin Hudson, Jim Patterson and Denis Rankin.

Well so much for the theory, but how did things work out in practice?

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Friday 29th June pm

Members of Dark Peak were arriving throughout the afternoon and early evening at the usual Dark Peak 'basecamp for B.G. attempts, the campsite at Threlkeld. Rumours were rife that Roger would be unable to attempt the Double due to an attack of gastro-enteritis suffered during the week. At about 8.30 pm all doubts were dispelled as Roger and Brian rolled up, chauffeur driven from Sheffield by Pete Lewis and in very high spirits. Unfortunately, they had been too excited about the challenge ahead to snatch much sleep during the journey. It wasn't until all the contenders and pacers had arrived that we realised just how many people were attempting the single round. Nine members and friends of Dark Peak in addition to Roger and Brian were hoping for success. These included Jim Patterson, Denis Rankin, Howard Artiss (a member of Verlea) and Dark Peak members Neil Piper, Richard Lewsley, Malcolm Sandals, Howard Biggins, Alan Bond and Martyn Greaves.

The main party wished good fortune on Roger and Brian before settling down for an early night. The majority did not rate the duo's chances of success very highly. To even consider starting the event 9 hours before the main group, meeting and joining the group at Wasdale after 14 hours had elapsed and then to have to carry on for a further 15 hours after the main group had returned to Sheffield seemed to verge on the side of lunacy. A strange quietness

had suddenly taken over the campsite and for a while we were left to contemplate the magnitude, complexity and isolation from the main group of the task that Roger and Brian were about to undertake.

In the semi-darkness we prepared the support vehicle, filling every available flask with hot soup, stew and drinks to be consumed in the early hours of the morning at Threlkeld. The weather had gradually deteriorated during the evening and now low cloud was scudding across the Northern Fells, obscuring almost the whole of Blencathra.

Originally, my role in the attempt was to be purely in support at each of the road crossings but as there seemed little likelihood of Roman turning up at the Moot Hall to pace I offered (as a last resort) to help them on the first section to Threlkeld. A member of Clayton-Le-Moors who happened to be staying at the campsite was very interested in the activities about to take place and invited us to his caravan for a pre-event coffee. We stayed for about an hour until 11.30 pm and persuaded him to drive us down to the Moot Hall in Brian's car and then to deposit it at the quarry car park above Threlkeld.

Keswick-Threlkeld (00.00-04.00 Saturday) by Martin Stone

As midnight struck we jogged down the main street making the usual mistake of almost missing the tunnel under the house which

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leads off towards the gasworks. Keswick was quiet and the streets deserted. It was a very dark night and as we reached the Gale Road the visibility decreased and we became enveloped in low clouds being driven by a ferocious wind. Steady progress was made to the top of Skiddaw and was followed immediately by an error on my part. The visibility was by now virtually zero and instead of keeping to the ridge going north from the summit we managed to become cragbound too far to the left and found ourselves slithering down over very steep wet rocks. After a quick mid-course correction, a few frantic minutes and an apology to Roger and Brian the ridge was regained. We made a few unnecessary zig-zags on the descent to the track in the valley bottom but then reached Great Calva without further difficulty. By now it was raining heavily and following a brief stop to take bearings and extract some chocolate from the sac a hasty descent was made to the Caldew where we were able to escape the full force of the wind. In the darkness we were continually stumbling in deep heather and bog. The weather was foul all the way to Threlkeld and the long drag up Mungrisedale Common seemed interminable. We slithered down the rocky Halls Fell Ridge and reached Threlkeld in early morning gloom, the rain still tipping down, to be greeted by Frank and Chris who had arrived at about 02.30 and been briefed by our man from Clayton. I was very glad to hand over responsibility on the fells to the next pacer. Roger and Brian both took their first change of clothing (all brand new and originally purchased for the Pennine Way run) and after a short break for soup and butties were raring to go. Chris had decided to pace the section from Threlkeld-Dunmail and Frank agreed to take them on from Dunmail-Wasdale.

Threlkeld-Dunmail Raise (04.10-08.07) by Chris Dodd

Roger and Brian were in high spirits as we strode up Clough Head, while I was full of apprehension at the mist above. We ran off Clough Head on a compass bearing I had prepared. I was weaving about so much, Roger and Brian kept well behind and followed the middle of the various directions I was taking. Brian appeared not only to be attempting a Double Bob Graham, but also the record for watering the most peaks. After a nod at Calflow Pike ('it's not on the list, you know') we were quickly over the Dodds and Sticks Pass, frustrated only by the bad visibility. Suddenly between Raise and White Side, a gap opened in the clouds and we caught a glimpse of Thirlmere on the right and High Street on the left as though through a blue filter. Our spirits lifted instantly, and after taking in the Helvellyns, we descended to Grisedale Tarn exchanging 'good news, bad news jokes and shouting at imaginary crowds in pidgin Spanish, which seemed to be a speciality of Roger's! Fa Fairfield and Seat Sandal felt easy, and after Brian had added significantly to the amount of water in the beck, we reached Dunmail.

MAJS

Soon after Roger, Brian and Chris left Threlkeld, Geoff Bell

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walked past the quarry leading a group of walkers (Rucksack Club) who were attempting 'The Top 20', a route which takes in the highest twenty peaks in Lakeland. They looked very bedraggled and despondent as they trudged past and a couple of them wanted to drop out. Frank, as charitable as ever, offered them a lift to Grasmere while I drove directly to Dunmail and Frank joined me there a few minutes later. The weather was improving fast and we were very pleased at the excellent time the trio had made across the Helvellyn section.

Dunmail Raise-Wasdale (08.21-15.9) by Frank Thomas

Dunmail was buzzing with feverish activity as the colour co-ordinated duo of Roger and Brian trotted down from Seat Sandal with Chris. Now it was my turn to steer them safely across the tortuous route to Wasdale and at 08.21, after their short rest and feedup we posed by the stile for a quick photo and then scurried up Steel Fell. Roger talked a lot as usual (good for the morale!). Brian seemed hell bent on asking embarrassing questions like, 'Which one is Sergeant Man?' and 'Is that High Raise over there, or over there?'. I told Roger and Brian what I thought was a fairly amusing 'good news, bad news joke only to be asked by Brian if that was the only bloody joke Chris and I knew (they had heard it already from Chris on the Helvellyn Ridge a few hours earlier).

Onwards to High Raise and going well, with the route fixed in my mind and the map firmly clutched in my hand. The Langdale Pikes were ticked off and we sped towards Rossett Pike. There was a mutual misunderstanding over the nomenclature of Rossett Pike which I insisted on referring to as Rossett Crag. We started to climb to Bowfell picking our way very cautiously through the confusion of sheep trods and ledges. Said hello to a Doctor Deall of Kendal AC who seemed to be going strongly on his anti-clockwise attempt, accompanied by an army of pacers. (We learned later that he started at 02.00 from Keswick and completed in 19 hrs. 51 mins.)

Now we were really motoring, knocking down the summits like ninepins but I felt that we could not afford to slacken the pace. At Esk Hause, quite by chance we met Selwyn Wright, a recent addition to DPFR who was out for a training run from Langdale. He decided to join us all the way to Wasdale. By now ramblers scattered as we forged our way over the roof of England and down to the foot of Broad Stand. Up and over in a personal best time and a short boulder hop to Scafell.

Roger and Selwyn took one route and Brian and I another on the descent to the campsite at Wasdale but in both cases we had to do battle with leg-resistant bracken which was very tedious. At the bridge by Brackenclose, Howard Forrest, John Wagstaff, Tim Godolphin and Mick Farmery passed us going anti-clockwise on their joint attempt.

I was about to hand in my resignation to Martin S. when it

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became apparent that I had volunteered to lead the tireless pair up to the top of Yewbarrow and back. We were only allowed the time for a quick drink and given a butty each to munch on the way up before setting off. We were half way up the grim scree slope when I suddenly felt knackered and it dawned on me that Chris, who had joined us on the climb for good measure had now assumed the pacer's role. As I dropped behind, countless Dark Peakers and their pacers appeared from above, tumbling downwards soon to pass us on their own anti-clockwise attempt. The summit was reached and we all four returned to Wasdale where, after Roger and Brian had had their fill, I received much sustenance from the food-laden boot of Brian's car, under the watchful eye of Martin Stone, co-ordinator extraordinary!

MAJS

After the trio left Dunmail with Frank, Chris and I realised that we had just enough time to get back to Keswick for the 9 am start of the DPFR single attempt. The centre of Keswick was absolutely choc-a-bloc and not just because of the Saturday market. In addition to the nine on the DPFR attempt there were four in the J Wagstaff group, Bill and Ann-Marie Grindley attempting 58 summits A/C and Ros Coats attempting a fast A/C round of her own. They left the Moot Hall almost as one massive party.

Chris and I arranged to meet at Honister to see the Dark Peakers through at about 10.30 am. Chris visited the launderette with a pile of damp clothing used during the previous night while I purchased half the groceries in Keswick to feed diverse parties throughout the next 36 hours. It was soon after this that one of the major problems of the weekend became evident, petrol or lack of it! For the previous two weeks no petrol deliveries had been made to the Lakes due to a tanker drivers' strike. Petrol was scarce throughout the whole country but in Lakeland it was almost unobtainable. There was no petrol available in Keswick but I was able to pump up one of the rear tyres which had developed a slow puncture. I drove out to Threlkeld to pick up Howard Artiss' food and spare clothes from the campsite and eventually reached Honister at 10.40 am where Chris and I looked after Howard and Martyn during their brief stop. We calculated that the single rounders were exactly on target to meet up with Roger and Brian at Wasdale.

Just to pour oil on troubled water, Brian's large Butane gas cylinder ran out. Pete Barron, the hostel warden, advised us to look for petrol and gas at Egremont on our way to Wasdale. Pete Lewis, who had just paced the main group from Keswick, joined me for the trip to Wasdale and Chris followed in Frank's car. There was no sign of fuel or gas in Egremont but a helpful shopkeeper advised us to drive over to a caravan site at Beckermot near the coast. The detour took us miles off course but at least we succeeded in renewing the gas cylinder.

Every car in Wasdale seemed to be supporting the B.G. attempt.

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We expected to see the trio descending from Scafell about five hours after leaving Dunmail but they did not come into view for another 40 minutes. At about the same time we saw a number of figures descending the scree on Yewbarrow. Fortunately it was Ros Coats and J Wagstaff's groups. After a rather messy descent off Scafell, Roger and Brian arrived looking very strong and relaxed, keen to climb Yewbarrow immediately. They set off at a cracking pace, a butty in one hand and a drink in the other. It was an amazing sight as they met the main DPFR party about 300 feet below the summit. We felt confident that Roger and Brian would now be safe on their long return journey to Keswick. Martyn Greaves and Howard were serviced with food and drink, the main party staying at Wasdale for about 30 minutes. Roger and Brian arrived back from their short excursion just as the other Dark Peakers were about to leave for Scafell. I persuaded Selwyn to pace Roger and Brian back towards Dunmail and assumed that they would be able to catch the main group before Selwyn turned off to Langdale.

Wasdale-Dunmail Raise (15.35-21.45) by Roger Baumeister

We started the long climb up Scafell about 20 minutes after the main group, determined to catch them up. Brian and I were steaming away but Selwyn was unable to go fast enough for us to close the gap behind the others. However, we did pull back 8 minutes by the summit of Scafell Pike and at Great End we were only 10 minutes behind. Selwyn left us at Esk Hause almost 6 hours after meeting us there 'by accident' and we carried on alone towards Bowfell. The weather and conditions were near perfect and we first caught sight of the main group as we came off Bowfell. We dug in hard on the long drag up Martcrag Moor and made good progress to the Langdales, eventually catching the main group around Harrison Stickle.

Mike Eaton, one of their pacers, told us a bad way and very annoyed that his group Wasdale. I offered to look after him and Brian wasn't too happy about this decision. That Alan Bond was in had gone too fast to try to buck him up. After Thunacar Knott, Chris Worsell made the unfortunate decision to take the rucksack and meet us down below High Raise. I would have preferred him to lead us over that next section as the navigation wasn't too easy and I was having second thoughts about my offer of help. I made an error in my route choice off High Raise and we made an unscheduled visit to Greenup Edge on our way to Calf Crag. Alan Bond had by now lost heart and couldn't run any further so very slow progress was made from there to Steel Fell. The rest of the main group was out of sight and we didn't see Chris again until Dunmail. We reached Dunmail quite late (21.45), a little the worse for wear, having wasted a lot of time and were just in time to see the main party leave on the night section being paced by Mike Hayes. We were really fed up that we had allowed the main

group to get so far ahead and were definitely not looking forward to a second night, alone on the fells.

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MAJS

We watched the trio start their climb up the long slopes of Scafell and were confident that they would soon catch up and join the main party for the remainder of their round. Until now all our plans had worked perfectly and the only serious problem was the desperate shortage of petrol in the Lakes. Frank and Chris drove straight to Dunmail for a short kip while Pete Lewis and I visited Ambleside to look for petrol. Every garage was dry and so with the needle flickering on empty we drove up to Dunmail Raise where we witnessed an incredible scene.

Cars were parked nose to tail on both the Steel Fell and Seat Sandal sides of the carriageway and there were even a few cars parked rather untidily on the central reservation. It seemed that every car approaching Dunmail was destined to support a runner. Fred Rogerson was also present to witness probably the largest number of simultaneous attempts in the event's history. Pete and Chris decided to replace the duff tyres which had now almost deflated and after 20 minutes of chaos the job was done.

At about 7 pm the first group of runners appeared on the skyline having just visited Steel Fell. It was Ros Coats' group and she was obviously making very fast progress. Soon John Wagstaff and friends appeared followed shortly after by the Grindleys. Just after 9 pm Dark Peakers began to arrive in dribs and drabs but there was a certain amount of confusion regarding the whereabouts of Roger and Brian. They had definitely been seen in the Langdales but had dropped behind on the way to High Raise (they actually visited Sergeant Man before High Raise). The next 20 minutes were very hectic as we serviced Martyn Greaves, Howard Artiss and the two Irishmen who didn't seem to have anyone looking after them. As the time passed we became concerned about Roger and Brian who were well overdue. Roger hadn't arranged in advance for anyone to pace them over the Helvellyns as it was assumed that they would by then be integrated with the main group. Chris was very concerned that Mike Hayes was the only pacer for the next section and would be responsible for 6 runners (not including Roger and Brian). I took the view that Roger and Brian should carry on alone from Dunmail without a pacer but realise now in retrospect that due to their tiredness this would have been dangerous and would probably have caused the attempt to fail. Chris came gallantly to the rescue and offered to pace his earlier section, now in reverse.

Dunmail Raise-Threlkeld (22.02-03.55 Sunday) by Chris Dodd

We left Dunmail at about 10 pm in a forbidding light, Brian's appetite seeming undiminished by the banquet he had scoffed at the cars. Although we were only 19 minutes behind the main group, we saw no sign of lights ahead. We clambered up Dollywagon in a thickening mist, and during the next two hours the navigation became a personal nightmare, as Roger and Brian plodded faithfully behind. Roger was asleep on his feet much of the time, while Brian

and I sang a medley of hymns and rugby songs to keep all our spirits up. After Sticks Pass the navigation became more relaxed, and so did Roger, to judge by his sleepwalking. At Clough Head he awoke a little and we made a good descent to Threlkeld. After some confusion over the venue of the checkpoint, Roger and Brian sank into the car for 40 minutes much needed sleep.

MAJS

By the time Roger and Brian left Dunmail for Seat Sandal the col was quiet once again; our cars were the last to leave. We would see the many supporters later on at Threlkeld. Frank and Martin Hudson drove into Keswick for an evening meal before returning to the campsite at Threlkeld for a much needed sleep. Their pacing services were required again on Sunday. Frank was to pace from Threlkeld to Keswick and we arranged to meet at the quarry car park above Threlkeld at 2 am. On my way to the quarry I picked up more water at the campsite and dumped mountainous quantities of scrap which had built up at the road stops. While trying to wake myself up with a cold wash it suddenly occurred to me that I had forgotten to phone Joss to tell him what time the lads were expected to reach Keswick. By the time I found a phone it was 11.30 pm. Joss was asleep but his wife passed the message on: 'Keswick by 8 am Sunday'. I drove up to the quarry where I found a number of cars belonging to other attempts, their occupants fast asleep.

I fell fast asleep, my alarm clock set for 2 am. Disaster struck! I was woken at 3.50 am by Chris Worsell who was banging on the window. Chris shouted 'Roger's coming up the road. He's completely knacked. You'd better drive down and meet him.' The other DPFRR support vehicles were apparently parked down in the village and should have been parked in the normal place; with us on the quarry car park. I was bloody annoyed both with myself for sleeping through the alarm and with the other supporters for not waking us earlier.

Frank and I drove off down the road, still half asleep and met Chris Dodd half way up with Roger close behind. Chris said, 'For God's sake go back up to the quarry otherwise we'll never get them up there.' We returned to the car park, still in a complete daze. Roger arrived looking in an absolutely terrible state and collapsed into the car. His eyes were deep sunk, his face very strained and tired. Brian was apparently still eating further down the road at the lower checkpoint and he arrived some five minutes later looking only slightly fitter than Roger. I was horrified to learn that they intended to snatch half an hour's sleep before carrying on. Chris Dodd told me in no uncertain terms that sleep now was absolutely imperative for them and that unless they managed to renew their mental as well as physical attitudes to the event, the battle was as good as lost. Chris ordered me not to wake them for at least 40 minutes. I prepared some breakfast for them while they slept. Brian stiffened up badly during his sleep but Roger

certainly seemed to benefit from it.

The duo set off with Frank pacing after a stop of 1 hr. 10 mins. at about 5 am. Roger and Brian looked like a lost cause as they dragged their stiff bodies up the road to the foot of Halls Fell. When Frank returned to the car 5 minutes later to look for a toilet roll it was the final straw. The attempt seemed to have lost all its impetus and we firmly believed that at Keswick it would grind to a halt. Joss trip over Styhead from Wasdale to pace would be a complete waste of time and I certainly wasn't looking forward to the criticism that would be levelled against us for organising such a 'lunatic' and dangerous venture.

Threlkeld-Keswick (05.05-09.38) by Frank Thomas

Up at the quarry the parked cars and supporters seemed numberless but there was an air of suspended activity. We could all take some well earned rest while the Dark Peakers and Roger and Brian's own attempt continued its non-stop circuit from Dunmail.

I snoozed off in my car parked near to Martin who was already asleep in Brian's car, but with an ETA of 3 am, I just had to be up and organised well in time. Then, panic! At 3.50 I was suddenly jerked into action by the arrival of Chris Worsell. No time to speculate on the disappearance of all the other cars and people (they had in fact passed through while we slept), but a mad dash down to the main road to find a weary Brian and a still more weary Roger plodding on up to the quarry. Chris Dodd had done a sterling job getting them over the Dodds and now made sure that they both got an hour's rest which they so badly needed. Standing there in the rain and mist I felt cold and apprehensive. Could I steer these two lads over what, at the best of times is tricky country, but in present conditions could be a disaster? Martin reassured me with confirmation of bearings and I took heart as we limped out from Threlkeld on that damp morning.

After reaching the bridge above Gategill I couldn't find the toilet roll for Roger. Ran back to collect it. It amazed me how they climbed Halls Fell without so much as a minute's pause. Their sleep was indeed a tonic for them.

On Blencathra summit the mist swirled round us and the route was completely out of view. I checked the bearing but somehow we steered too far to the east and the optimum route to Great Calva was lost. Tension mounted as I realised with increasing alarm (though I tried to keep it to myself) that I did not recognise any of the terrain. Roger and Brian kept a sense of proportion about the whole affair and we calmly worked out a new, though slightly longer route to Great Calva.

The north side of Skiddaw was as usual a terrible slog but Brian and Roger were treating it like a gentle slope. Once on top we ran into Keswick, separated from Brian at one point, but united

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for the arrival at the Moot Hall at 9.38 am, marking the end of my ordeal but far from the end for Roger and Brian. It had been a fantastic experience to be a part of this epic test of human endurance.

I delivered the pacers sack to Joss Naylor who was raring to go. He was to take the lads up the Newlands Valley and over as far as the summit of Yewbarrow.

MAJS

By now Chris Dodd was worn out and desperate for sleep. drove Frank and Brian's cars down to the square in Keswick. We As there wasn't enough petrol in Brian's car to even get down the valley to Seathwaite and back, I commandeered Frank's car and drove off leaving Chris fast asleep in Brian's car. Half way down the valley near the Watendlath turn-off my dulled senses were suddenly awakened by something I caught sight of out of the corner of my eye. At some time (presumably during the night) a brand new Cortina had left the road and careered down the steep bouldery bank, its progress halted by a large tree near the lakeside. screeched to a halt and ran back to examine the car for 'bodies' I The car was a complete write-off but as there was no-one around I drove on towards Seathwaite (with a great deal more concentration than before).

Having parked the car where Joss couldn't fail to see it I fell asleep to be woken by him 15 mins. later at 7.30 am. On the way back to Keswick we discussed the problems that had arisen during the night and the condition of Roger and Brian. The centre of Keswick was now filling up with cars in anticipation of the completion of numerous single rounds. Chris and Martin Hudson kerb-crawled round the town, scavenging for petrol, but, alas, Keswick was completely dry.

At about 8.15 am, the successful Dark Peakers started to arrive at the Moot Hall. First back was Jim Patterson, who looked very fresh, closely followed by Howard Artiss. A while later Ann-Marie and Bill Grindley completed their 58 summits and were soon followed by Denis Rankin, Martyn Greaves, Neil Piper and Richard Lewsley, all from the DPFR group.

An hour passed before Frank came into sight, jogging up the High Street. Frank told us that Roger and Brian had recovered well and were in high spirits once again. Although by now we were terribly short of time, our pessimism and depression of the previous night at once evaporated. Roger and Brian had just over 14 hours left to get from Keswick-Honister-Yewbarrow summit-Honister-Keswick and thank God that didn't include a descent and climb from Wasdale. After I had discussed deadlines at Honister and Dore Head with Joss he led the dynamic duo off down the main street amid tumultuous applause and encouragement from the gathered mass of runners, supporters and Fred Rogerson. By now Roger and

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Brian looked far more relaxed, confident and strong. the previous night was nothing more than a bad dream. could now bring about a miracle and recover some time! The ordeal of Maybe Joss

Keswick-Honister (09.51-12.10) by Joss Naylor

The alarm went off at 5 am, I got out of bed and straight into my running gear, grabbing a handful of Alpen on the way. Then I was off to help Roger and Brian on the Bob Graham

Double Round. As I ran along the road to Wasdale Head the valley seemed deserted, the campers were all fast asleep in their tents. A nice run over Styhead, it's always magic at that time of day. Arrived at Seathwaite to the first signs that something was on. I found an exhausted runner asleep in a car. After banging on the roof he came to life and gave me a progress report on the way to Keswick.

Keswick was a hive of runners and I think everyone had done the Bob Graham Round apart from Fred Rogerson who was helping and encouraging everyone. It was not too long before Roger and Brian arrived. They ate a large amount of food and tea and then off we set.

Time soon passed and we arrived in Little Town, at the foot of Robinson. The test was now on. It's a slog at the best of times, but when you have been running for two days it's hell. They made the summit after a lot of effort. Roger was able to let his feet drop on the descent. The tension went out of his legs and he relaxed, he was away. Poor Brian's legs seized up. He'd made a tremendous effort but now he sat down in disgust and waved us on. As we reached Dale Head the mist arrived on Grey Knotts. It was a blessing in disguise. Roger seemed to be getting stronger all the way to Honister.

MAJS

After the exciting departure from Keswick we were left to ponder on our most immediate problem; how to get Brian's car over Honister to Buttermere where it was rumoured that unlimited supplies of petrol were available at the hotel. As a last resort I phoned a number of local hotels which I picked randomly from the telephone directory. Eventually I spoke to the owner of the petrol pump at Grange who after some gentle persuasion (and name-dropping) offered us five or six gallons.

It was time to say farewell to Frank and Chris who had given such valuable support. They had the long drive South to London ahead of them. Most of those involved on the single round were returning to Sheffield immediately and so we were on our own once more. Apart from Roger and Brian, only Joss, Martin Hudson and I were now involved.

At Grange there was a rather amusing misunderstanding. I thought we had been promised five or six gallons but it transpired

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that there were no more than six gallons left in the whole pump. We were thankful to be able to scrounge just two.

We didn't have long to wait at Honister. At midday we spotted two figures descending Dale Head so rapidly that we supposed they must be locals out for a short training run. As they closed on the hostel we recognised Joss and Roger, but what had become of Brian. On arrival Joss muttered something about Brian having given up and wandered off Robinson in the direction of Buttermere.

After a 4 minute stop Joss and Roger shot off up Grey Knotts, Roger climbing as though he had just started fresh. Both Martin and I voiced our thoughts aloud. Roger was now looking so good that he must surely succeed.

Honister-Dore Head (via Yewbarrow) (12.23-15.50) by Joss Naylor

Roger took a quick drink and then on we went. It seemed like no time until we were on Gable where the mist was very thick but refreshing. It was just what Roger needed at this time of day as the sun would have been a killer. At this stage Roger was full of running and enjoying it. Over Kirk Fell, Pillar and on to Steeple where it was nearly as black as night. The mist always seems thickest around these big black crags..

At this stage Roger was going strongly and in great spirits. He knew it was in the bag and he was gaining time all the way. His support team were going to meet us on Dore Head but as we passed through, going to Yewbarrow, I could see no-one about. Through the little sheep track to the summit and back onto Dore Head. The support party had only just arrived. I'd had visions of taking Roger all the way back to Keswick. We wrapped Roger up and recharged his batteries. I congratulated him. I knew he was going to be the first man to do the Double Bob Graham in 48 hours. I left him in the capable hands of Martin Hudson.

MAJS

Where was Brian? It was now over 30 minutes since Joss and Roger left Honister. Martin and I were by now extremely concerned for his safety. He had been on the move for over 36 hours and although the weather was clear and mild he might well have sat down to rest and fallen asleep somewhere between Robinson and Dale Head. To make matters worse, Brian didn't have a map and he didn't know the ground. Time was running out fast. As the minutes passed, the possibility of Martin and I driving round to Wasdale, climbing up Dore Head, erecting a tent and cooking up before Joss and Roger arrived on their way to Yewbarrow became more remote. John Blair-Fish arrived at Honister and made a number of abortive trips for us down into Buttermere in search of our man. Terry Thorpe passed through on a road training run from Buttermere and voiced a number of criticisms about 'Double Bob Grahams and the risks involved on such long runs.

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were not very inspiring either, with a cold, damp wind blowing. Roger began to feel very sleepy, had to have a few minutes sit down on the climb up Pillar, and developed a sudden fad for a walking stick. I was worried that he had blown it I even began to wonder whether Joss had pushed him too hard earlier in the day.

Once up Pillar, I put it to Roger that we had lost too much time for comfort since Red Pike, and suggested he tried a jog to see what happened. Gradually, his stiff joints began to loosen, Roger himself declared that he was much happier, and we made good time on the big climbs of Kirk Fell and Great Gable, so much so that we were ahead of our 1978 times by now. From here it was plain sailing to Honister, with Roger getting more talkative again. Some time back I thought of an arrival at Honister at 8 pm. When we were the other side of Pillar this had seemed an impossible hope, but somehow we made it with two minutes to spare. Half-way down Grey Knotts I asked Roger what he wanted to eat and drink at Honister. Taking his order of stew and coffee I ran on to warn the support party. By now Martin Stone had been joined by John Blair-Fish and Howard Artiss, fresh(?) from his own

Bob Graham round, completed that morning! Martin and Howard looked at each other in amazement. 'Coffee? Apparently 44 hours of brewing tea had made Martin forget that coffee existed. But the magic wand was waved and a dive into the ever increasing jumble of gear in the car produced some, which disappeared down the hatch along with everything else.

The stop was cut to a bare minimum, and within 10 minutes Roger and I were off again on the long drag up Dale Head. Not quite up to Borrowdale race standards but a steady 32 minutes. Still misty, I was now very careful not to waste any time and energy with mistakes. Roger, sensing that the end wasn't very far away, made good climbs of Hindscarth and Robinson. A brief pause at the latter cairn, number 84 (accompanied by a prayer?), and we were jogging down the north ridge into Newlands. Out of the mist we kept to the ridge to avoid any steep grassy descents likely to upset Roger's knee. At about 9.50 pm we reached Newlands Church where Martin, Howard and Brian met us for a final liquid support.

Roger stripped down to the bare essentials for the road section back to Keswick. any time in the weekend. stage, the pace was hot Unbelievably it seemed warmer now than at Martin Stone and I were with him at this and suffice to say that I was hanging on for most of the way. Roger covered the last 4.5 miles from Newlands to Keswick in 37 minutes! At 10.34 pm Roger reached his goal, the Moot Hall, and it was all over. The crowds of the weekend had nearly all gone and the town centre was quiet. It was just left to the four of us (Brian, Howard, Martin and I) to witness this amazing feat of endurance. We celebrated Roger's great success with a few beers and photographs and then Roger, Brian and Martin set out on a desperate return journey to Sheffield. Both Roger and Brian were back at work by 8 am the next morning, just 9 hours after the completion of Roger's Double!