Over the Radar - The Endomorph BG Attempt-By Les Barker

This is my best recollection of events leading up to my recent Bob Graham Round (BGR) attempt. It'll be interesting to see how accurate they were and what I missed.

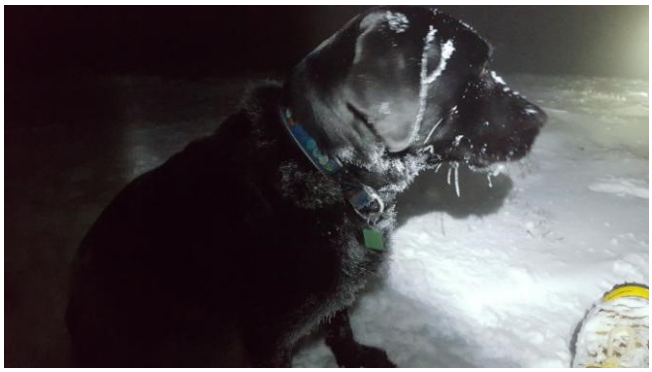
Summer 2006. Ian Cousins asks "can you ride the last 4 miles of my BG attempt with your bike lights on at about 8pm on Saturday night. I had no idea what it all meant at the time. It turned out it was some sort of run that elite fell runners did that lasted a whole day!!! I found that unbelievable, but Ian was one of those blokes who excelled at all sports and always ran well for CFR. I knew him through a love of mountain bikes. I was doing endurance cycling at the time. I recall waking through the early hours of the morning 6 hours after Ian started his BG with the rain and wind lashing against the window and thinking that there was no way he was still going. News came through in the morning that he was still going. That blew my mind away. I had no concept that he was probably on Helvellyn Ridge at the time in conditions 10 times worse than I could see as I looked out of the warm and dry bedroom window.

Later that day, Ian made it to Newlands Church where I met him. Unbelievable. He had been running all night and all day! Someone had set up a chair for him to sit in to allow a shoe change. While changing his shoes, in an attempt to lighten the atmosphere I remember pretending to kiss his feet. Ian claims I did and I may have.

I concluded the BGR was inhuman and reserved for the elite.

Winter 2014 - I had spent the past 8 years watching from afar at local Fell Running legends attempting a BG. I'd even taken up Fell Running temporarily while Anita, the real fell runner in the family, was having our 3rd child in 2013. I'd been encouraged by Andrew and Mel Bradley to join CFR club runs on a Tuesday night. CFR welcomed me in and they became a wonderful community of people that I could escape to. It was the sort of escapism that we all need, but this time it was an escapism that everyone at home seemed to approve of!!!! All my previous hobbies had been distractions from necessary DIY and urgent parenting.

Nev – My faithful training partner. I think he made every session



Summer 2015 - By now I got the impression that a BG was a very special thing to fell running people whom I respected. I'd seen Paul Johnson allow me to support leg 5 of his summer attempt. This time I felt involved. I recce'd the route in case Paul was unable to know which way to go. The sense of responsibility was set to "serious". I could not be the one who would be known for Paul missing the cut-off time, getting lost, or getting injured, or anything at all in those 3 hours he would be with us. On the day Bill Williamson took care of navigating after doing the honours on leg 4 and carrying on to do leg 5 too. I tried to chat too much to Paul as we climbed up to Dale Head and realised there was more to supporting than met the eye. Paul seemed in distress, but in no great need of help, so I hovered about and chipped in the odd comment when needed. In the last hour of the leg, a scraggy old packet of salted cashew nuts that I pulled out of my pocket was just what Paul needed. His face lit up and he seemed to speed up. I felt a real sense of "being part of the BG thing" for a moment. I may have saved a few seconds on Paul's round!!! I made a positive contribution. What a feeling.

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January 2015: After the euphoria of the unprecedented successful triple mid-winter round by Paul Johnson, Mario Yeomans and Mick Allen, it signalled an end to BG fever within CFR. "There's nobody doing it next year, that's a shame" said Tracy Park. I wondered if I could do it? I had managed 5 hour fell races and 12 hour cycle rides. Hmmm? I mentioned it to Paul Johnson some days later and he was then egging me on to have a go too. Within hours Paul Johnson was the unofficial coach, but I said I would have to spend a month ramping up the

First training session on Skiddaw January 2016. Can I take the training?



training to see if the body responded to it and I would need to get the family on-side. I discussed it with Anita. 4 sessions a week for 6 months was the plan.

I spent a month of running up hills and it was going well. A chance encounter with Sir Peter Strong Lonscale Fell sealed my fate at the end of that trial month. Peter said if I decided to do the BG he'd be my rope man on Broad Stand. That was it. It my mind was made up. That was too good an offer to refuse and it was the heartfelt genuine offer of unconditional help that is part of the BGR magic.

I decided training with friends was going to get me through it and help me gain knowledge needed on the day. A Facebook group "Endomorph BG Attempt" was created to keep everyone informed and to remove the noise from the CFR group and from non-running Facebook friends.

I loved the freedom of the routine training sessions. Many great runs in all weathers were done. Bad weather was never an excuse. I practiced eating, trying different equipment and clothing. Being able to navigate over all parts of the route was important to me.

The first BGR date of 8/9th July was set as it was before the school holidays and the maximum time to train. It was later cancelled as the weather was going to be too awful and the following Friday 15th July 2300hrs the weather was adequate. The forecast was awful for leg 1 with gale force winds coming in from the west, but then it would be dry by leg 2 with a 30mph max westerly wind over The later part of leg 3. Weather watching became an essential art and we watched many attempts fail through lack of local conditions.

15th July 2230hrs

Leg 1: Planned time 3:56mins. Support - Ian Cousins (navigating), Paul Arts and Peter Crompton



A small crowd had gathered at the Moot Hall. I remember Steve and Alison Whitehurst, Tim Mosedale, Rod, Clare and Sarah Welford, Paul Johnson, Mario Yeomans.

No more thinking to do, time to get on with it. Let the story unfold. I decided there was no way of knowing what would happen, so don't worry about it. All mental and physical energy was required to propel me 66 miles and up 27000ft of climbing (and back down again). I had served my time learning the route and I had done the training which was over 700 horizontal miles and 200,000 feet of climbing over the past 7 months with Team Endomorph. There was a great team of support ready to support me over the next 24 hours that read like the who's who of Northern Fell Running. The plan was to stick to the 23:38hr schedule until at least Wasdale. 10 minutes was schedule for every pit stop. Minimise pit stop times. Keep moving, as sitting still is losing time. I had to eat 15000 calories of food (120 calories every 30 mins) and drink 19 litres of fluid (750 mls every hour).



Anita was doing all the road support which equates to 120 miles of driving with little sleep over 24 hours. No mean feat. As ever, she was organised.

I met Ian, Paul and Pete in the drizzle at the Moot Hall.

Fell running legend and ex-CFR runner, Nina Walkingshaw had popped over to join in for a jog up Skiddaw with her training partner Mike. Pete and Ian had successfully completed their own rounds and knew what it all meant. Paul was reliable and organised. Another contender, Mark Turner, and his Team were assembling too at the Moot Hall.

I cast my mind back to 2006 at that first glimmer of BG Magic and then ran through all the Rounds I'd watched and supported. It was a pleasant build up in my head. The countdown to 2300hrs, 15th July 2016 started. The official watch was the one I had on my wrist. As it got to the final 10 seconds, I felt the need to shake Mark Turner's hand and wish him good luck. He looked like a proper fell runner and very strong. He would have to give up in 12 hours' time on Leg 3 after being unable to keep food down.

I tapped the green door on the stroke of 2300hrs. The cheers went silent for a moment and Keswick went into slow motion. I thought of my mum in her hospital bed and I could see her forced smile wishing me well and I knew she would be thinking "be careful". I would do my best. The silence was broken as I mentally came back to The Moot Hall. The cheers of everyone was heart-warming and a wave of love washed us eastwards on the diverted route to Summit no.1 – Skiddaw.

Soon, we were off the tarmac and onto Spooney Green Lane and we started climbing. I was the fittest I'd ever been. The urge to run was strong after 3 weeks of semi-rest (tapering), but the support team made sure I walked. The saying goes "10 minutes faster on Leg 1 is 30 minutes slower on Leg 5". The conversation was varied. I'd not seen Ian or Nina for years and it was a great chance to catch up. Paul and Pete were poised with the job of 30 minute feeding.

The next waypoint was Lattrigg Car Park. As we approached I could see lights. Probably some couple having a quiet moment. Closer still and I could see flashing lights and hear music and then someone in a white suit. This could be kinky or some sort of Ku Klux Klan event. The theme tune to Rocky came into earshot and the white suited individual turned out to be Paul Johnson dressed as a rhinestoned Elvis. He also had a battery powered glitter ball on the go. I was high on life anyway and this was sensory overload. Paul jogged with us for 10 minutes, until the memorial stone



and wished us well. He was then due to dash to Threlkeld support Mark Thomas on Leg 2. Mario was filming. It was great to see them both as we had trained for many miles recently in all weathers.

As the path turned super steep, the wind picked up and the rain intensified. The windproof jackets came out and I took an opportunity to eat and drink early. The target was 120 calories every half hour and 750ml of water per hour.

The food for each leg looked like the above. The first food down was always bananas (90 calories) as they don't travel well and were there to keep cramp at bay. Next was the PBJ (Peanut Butter and Jam sarnie) in the easy to open foil wrap. This had been the main food of training runs. They are a whopping 500 calories and so cheap to make at 25p. To get this energy from gels would cost a fiver. Strangely by the end of leg 1 I'd gone off the crusts and by leg 3 I couldn't stand the thought of them. I'd marked items with the number of calories when trying to sort food bags out if you are wondering what the numbers mean. I'd calculated that I'd only need my goretex shell as it was 18oC in Keswick at the start. Trekking poles were being used.

We talked of bracing ourselves for the summit soon and it did not disappoint when it came. The rain was being fired into our faces like bullets. As per weather forecast, we were getting picked up off our feet, but by crouching low we

could make progress. Nina and Mark turned back as planned a little earlier. I felt for Nina's lack of weight. It must have been difficult.

Skiddaw's featureless moonscape is notoriously difficult to navigate along. It wasn't the location of the faked moon landings for no reason. We were bang on the planned 86 minutes as we approached the summit, but the final few yards in near zero visibility, with the sound of flapping goretex almost deafening me was difficult. I noticed the wind on one side of my face and then the other. I cursed myself at not paying more attention on recces. It is easy to have fun on these recces and you don't learn. The night recce we did was so bright with moonlight and I let others lead the way.

Lesson no.1: Stop enjoying recces, pay attention or else you don't learn!

I quickly turned the navigation function on my watch and waited for GPS to help. Ian was calm and he had declared before we started he's not done the leg since 2006, but I was so cocky, I thought all my recces would have filled in any gaps.

It took 9 minutes to find the summit. Well done Ian, I should have backed you up earlier.

Ian navigated perfectly to Great Calva. It passed so quickly that I thought it was further to the summit and carried on past the summit, thinking we were on the similar looking "fence corner" nearby. Ian's preferred line differed from mine to get us down to the river.

Lesson 2: Discuss your route beforehand. You've no time or energy to debate it on the day.

The heather was deeper than when Ian did his round. It was strength sapping. This was a low point as I knew there was an easy line a few yards away, but I didn't have the confidence to mention it more than once, This could have been an easier route, but unfortunately wasn't. We linked arms to cross the swollen River Caldew. The long drag up Mungrisdale Common in the persistent drizzle gave me lots of time to get some proper food down. Beans or tomato soup? The Heinz cans are handy. They have a ring pull. I had practice eating them out of a can successfully during training runs. Something I'd recommend. Fruit cocktail from a can was a disaster and tends to avalanche out of the can and end up all over you. I opted for soup and it slipped down easily. Good advice from Pete to put my feet in the horizontal foot holes in the trod to save my achilles tendons. The talking was a nice distraction. Flawless navigating to Blencathra summit where I took over navigating as planned. It was still raining and it had got more misty. My normal 22 minute route down the east side of Hall's Fell didn't look possible in these conditions. The mist meant that I couldn't see far enough down the grassy drop off the ridge to be sure I was in the right place. I had recce'd in the dark and in the mist, but this was worse. Ian had a route down the west side of the ridge. It wasn't one I'd done before. I chose to follow Ian's route, rather than the alternative route down Doddick that I perceived was much slower from previous recces. We took 34 minutes getting down. I was slow down the slippery rocks. My lack of confidence with my route had lost us 12 more minutes. I knew I'd lost 9 minutes on Skiddaw and more in the Heather (capital H on purpose for that heather) off Great Calva. There were so many positives I had to remember. I was feeling strong and 99% of the navigation on the leg had been flawless. Paul and Peter had kept a steady flow of food down me. Was ok mentally and physically. Ian gave me a pep talk as we came into Threlkeld. It worried me as I thoughtm I couldn't be going too badly. The whole team had suffered the worst of conditions and I was glad to be finished Leg 1. It is never a glamorous leg as it is normally done at night, with boggy ground, river crossings, and rocky descents.

It was great to see Anita ready with a cup of tea and buttery ham buns at Threlkeld Cricket Club car park. I found out I was 36 minutes down on the 23:38hr schedule.

At end of Leg 1 Planned time 3:56hrs, actual 4:32hr – 36 minutes down on 23:38hrs schedule, so Expected Time for Round (ETR) 24:14hrs

I promised Anita I would make up time and I was feeling strong. I apologised for a quick stop and I was off within a minute after picking up my warmer Paramo Quito jacket. I left the Leg 2 support team picking up equipment from the leg 1 team. I would recommend future contenders to pit stop on the road to Clough Head to save the 100m deviation.

Leg 2: Support Team Mario Yeomans (navigating) and Duncan Potts.

I'd put 10 minutes in the schedule at each pit stop so 7 minutes was made up here.

ETR 24:07hrs. After half a mile Mario and Duncan caught me up. Duncan had my dry bag full of emergency kit under his arm. He said he'd put it in the bag on the climb up Clough Head, but I wondered for a moment as his pack looked pretty full. There was an optimistic sense that dawn would be appearing soon. My head torch was removed half way up Clough Head and the extra weight passed to Mario. I noticed the extra kit wasn't going into Duncan's bag. It would stay there for the whole of the leg. It looked so funny. At the summit of Clough Head we had made up 8 minutes and we moved off quickly.

ETR 23:59hrs. By Sticks Pass the sunlight was streaming through the clouds and Mario took some photos of the shafts of light spearing Ullswater. I'd lost 11 minutes on The Dodds

I was feeling a little tired as the body clock was wondering what was going on. Mario fished out some paracetamol with caffeine out of his bag as he'd had a long night and offered me one. I had discussed at length the ethics of taking any "drugs" and where the line was drawn. I had hoped to not need anything other than the food I'd packed, but I'd had a general ok from everyone around me that paracetamol, caffeine and ibuprofen was acceptable. I made the call to take some of Mario's pills. I felt a slight sense of failure. Thinking of the words "if it feels like cheating, it probably is". I decided not to think about the ethics anymore and focus on the job in hand. I did feel it helped and they we're taken until Honister.

The tiredness went away and after Raise. I insisted on doing the actual summit of Helvellyn, rather than the trig point that is often visited 100m away. We had not made any time upon this leg. I gave myself a good talking to and stepped up a gear.

Another lift as we descended to Grisedale Tarn. Elvis Johnson had again come to visit in his full Elvis kit. I was starting to feel better and this was a further lift. We ran to the west of Grisedale Tarn, so bags could be dropped off for the "out and back" to Fairfield. A further 3 minutes were gained by the time we summited Fairfield. I shouted out loud, time to start taking a few risks and I took a straight line down on the screes on the descent where I could. It felt great. I couldn't risk a major injury, but I had to make up time. We were moving quicker now. I ensured the poles were digging in harder as we turned upwards again and the summit of Seat Sandal. I needed to knock some minutes off.

ETR 24:09 at Seat Sandal summit. We were gaining time. There were a few whoops of joy as we started to descend and the legs were working well. The bracken was high and the trod well worn. The Inov8 Roclites weren't ideal for these conditions. I used every horizontal foot placing as Pete Crompton had advised and the heels were digging in hard. Mario and Duncan lead the way. I fell a few times in the mud.





Duncan paused to look behind for me at the stile at just before Dunmail Raise. I had too much momentum and had to push him out of the way with a quick "sorry mate". 8 minutes was gained on the schedule on that descent I was buzzing as I looked at my watch.

Leg 2: Planned time 4:32hrs, actual 4:26hrs, ETR 24:01hrs

Pit stop at Dunmail. It was great to pause for a cup of tea and I was aware of a lot of new faces. Andrew Graham and Colin Rhodes were ready and waiting. Andrew's son Samuel was going to do the first part of leg 3 with Alison and Steve Whitehurst. What a treat.

Afterwards Paul Johnson admitted that he though I looked defeated at Dunmail. I was focussed and still feeling in the game as nothing was hurting. I'd been eating all my food and drinking all my drink.

Only 2 minutes was taken at the pit stop, so we gained 8 minutes.

ETR:23:53hrs – 9hrs 3 minutes elapsed time so far.

Leg 3. Planned time 6:17hrs. Support Team: Andrew Graham (navigating), Colin Rhodes and Samuel Graham. Steven and Alison Whitehurst going as far as High Raise.

A quick changeover in 2minutes.

ETR at Steel Fell 23:52hrs. Alison and Steve were only doing the first bit and seeing how far they would get as Steve had a stag do to Chris Cookson's secret stag do with the Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team. They had all been told to bring a fold up chair and a bus would pick them up. The conversation was about where they might be going. Steve eventually correctly worked out it would be Cartmel Races.

Andrew took me up his favoured route to do High Raise before my usual Sergeant Man first. I'd never done it this way. I felt myself running while others beside me were walking just as fast, so I conserved energy by walking quickly. The watch was given an hours charge to ensure it would keep going for the full 24 hours as per the test runs. Steve and Alison turned back at High Raise. Every event like this is a pleasant distraction. Samuel, at only 15, was committed to carry on. I had no hesitation in agreeing to this when Andrew asked. Samuel had been getting to the summits first and logging times and looking very strong. Colin Rhodes was doing a perfect job feeding me and taking care of my mind. Like the previous legs every bit of care was taken to unwrap food or to open the drink bottle. It is this level of care that really helps. I took my eye off the clock and got confused by the alternative and unfamiliar route. We lost 10 minutes over the next 4 peaks.

ETR at Thunacar Knotts 24:02hrs. A further 4 minute were lost to the top of Rosset Pike, the notional half way point. Andrew had a plan to take my poles off me going down all but the steepest of hills. This change did the trick. I was running more freely and the pace picked up. Over the next 2 hours with a bit of verbal encouragement, we reached Scafell Pike. We'd made up an amazing 22 minutes.

ETR at Scafell Pike 23:44hrs. Broad Stand was the only part of the round that I had not recce'd. As I looked across, Broad Stand looked huge and was still a little damp. I was in safe hands with Sir Peter Strong and his Team doing "The Ropes" so it was a case of blind faith for those few minutes. It must be ok as I'd not heard any concerns and I'd never heard of anyone dying. So statistically I'm ok. Many things in my life are like that. As we reached the stretcher box at Mickledore, I could swear I could hear the theme tune from Rocky "da, da da darrrr…… da da darrrr….". The next thing I could hear was the loud roar of "c'mon Les…. Keep it going". It was a great surprise. Unexpectedly George Armstrong was waiting at the bottom. George had encouraged me into endurance events by betting me a tenner I'd not do the Fred Whitton cycle challenge in 2003. That transformed me from casual rider to focussed training machine.

Andrew had run ahead and was already scampering up the scary looking rocks. I took a moment to enjoy the sit down and chat with George as I put my harness on and socks over my fell shoes for more grip. I became aware of how selfishly unaware I was of Colin and Samuel. They were just getting on quietly with the support tasks.

Right…. Time to start the climb. There was some grip on the wet off camber rocks. It didn't seem enough as I hoisted myself up. Blind faith time. The feet held and I was soon up the dangerous bit and out of the harness and socks. Andrew guided me upwards as he waited for others. Now alone I found there were a few more times as I scrambled vertically up that I felt out of my depth but good old "blind faith" did the trick. We somehow lost 7 minutes by Scafell summit. We zig-zagged down through Scafell's rocks towards Wasdale. I felt well. I indulged myself with a quick look at the view. Out of nowhere came a huge stumble and I crashed down on my left forearm causing a huge cracking sound in my shoulder. "It's broken" I thought and I awaited the hot searing pain as I dared to move. I was

on my feet. It was only a mild burning feeling, so I started to wonder if I could finish with a hairline crack. I signalled to Colin that I was ok and gave him the poles. I held my left wing close to my chest and supported it with my right arm. A couple of paracetamol + a stiff upper lip and I was moving well again. I turned to Colin who was hanging back with me. "You're going to enjoy this bit. It is as close as you'll get to flying". We were soon into the Red Chute a scree strewn valley. We were whooping and hollering. The shoulder pain was now classed as a mild sprain as I skied down to Wasdale. Off the scree and onto the grass. Paul Cornforth suddenly overtook me flat out and we exchanged a quick pleasantry. I looked back to see Rob Jebb close behind. I knew he'd set off 6 hours after me, so this meant it was close to record pace. I shouted "Good luck with the record Rob" as we made eye contact. I didn't notice a reply. He's a nice guy, so I assumed he had other things on his mind. I enjoyed watching him free-falling to the river. What a treat.

As planned, my Roclites were full of scree, but it wasn't too sharp to need immediate attention. My Mudclaw 300s and a replacement pair of Woolie Boolie merino wool socks were awaiting me at Wasdale. This was my first of 2 planned clothing changes.



There was a great welcome at Wasdale. I remember Jane Hunter, Sarah Rhodes and Bill Williamson being there. Another lovely surprise. Bill had cracked ribs from the stormy Wasdale Fell Race the previous weekend otherwise he would have been lending a hand as he so often selflessly does. A quick glance at the clock showed that we had planned leg 3 in 6:17hrs and had done it in exactly 6:17hrs!! I felt fine and feeling like I'm in with a realistic chance now.

ETR 23:53hrs at Wasdale. Elapsed time 15:20hrs.

As my backside slumped into the chair the shoes were coming off like a formula 1 pitstop, quick towel rub, then socks and shoes on. I was aware of a lot of people helping. Sorry if I didn't say thank you at the time.

6 minutes pit stop and I was off.

Leg 4, Planned time 5:12hrs. Support team Rob Stein (navigator) and Steven Breeze. John Fletcher, Debs & Chris Cripps would come with us to Green Gable.

ETR at leaving Wasdale 23:49hrs.

Up Yewbarrow I could feel the sun getting hot on my head. I resolved to risk a bit of sunburn and I promptly forgot about it until showering the sink with frazzled skin the next morning as I rubbed my sore head.



Yewbarrow felt easy. I was honoured to be joined by some great local knowledge in Chris, Debs and John, who were coming as far as Green Gable. Rob and Steve were a safe pair of hands. We made up 6 minutes on Yewbarrow and I felt unbeatable. All the familiar twists and turns passed underfoot with pinpoint accuracy and I started to enjoy quick glances at the views. Eating and drinking was fine and there was only a minor sore shoulder and a bloodstained forearm. Heart rate was low and we were moving fast enough.

Steeple has always felt special. That sneaky out and back to the amazing view is always memorable. I was feeling like I could start to push hard now and was straight lining the zigzags up and down.

Rob was cracking the whip and I was asking for more reminders to hurry up. He read out a Facebook post from Andy Bradley to say he'd spent 3 euros on holiday to get Wi-Fi to check the tracker. It was great to know Andy was watching. He has done so much to encourage me to run on the fells.

Great Gable was always going to be the point at which I would allow myself to believe I could do it. At the summit a quick check of the watch.

ETR at Great Gable 23:44hrs. Near enough. We're looking good. No issues to report. Sorry if this is sounding boring and going to plan. Chris, Debs and John said goodbye as we reached Windy Gap. Just as they left we could see Paul "Elvis" Johnson coming to meet us coming off Green Gable to meet us.

A further boost to morale. We were on the home straight. Further Facebook updates revealed that Andy Bradley felt he was getting value for money. How we laughed.



The run down into Honister at dusk was electric. I could hear Rod Welford's cowbell and the cheers. Paul had run ahead with my order for the support Teams and Anita. It was "Ditch everything. Gels and water only. I'll have paracetamol and caffeine tablet and a cup of tea please." 7 minutes made up over the whole leg, which gave a comfortable cushion. I was feeling so good, I set myself a challenge to break 23:30hrs.

ETR 23:42hrs arriving at Honister

I indulged myself in 4 minutes of rest at another perfect pit stop. Everything was good. I got up and set off with the leg 5 crew apart from Mr Neville Barker (our dog), who had been flawless in all the training runs and missed his moment of glory playing in the quarry at this crucial moment. I'll let you off fella.

Leg 5 Planned Time 3:01hrs

ETR 23:36hrs leaving Honister. Support Team Claire Russell (navigating), Jake Smith, Amanda Graham & Jack the Dog, Paul and Sandra Mason, Tracy Park and Jenny Chatterley.

Let's see what I can do. I was strong up to Dalehead, knocking 3 minutes off the schedule and probably foolishly sprinted the scheduled 21 minutes to Hindscarth in 15 minutes leaving all the pacers behind me wondering what was going on. Push push push. Robinson soon followed and a moment for a quick photo.

ETR at Robinson 23:25. Claire navigated with precision down the grassy descent from Robinson in the fading light. Nearly there. We hit the tarmac. 4.85 miles to go. A quick hug from Anita and Sid at the carpark after Newlands Church. I was set for a fairly uneventful run in now. How wrong could I be?



At Stair Village Hall we met Andy Beaty on his motorbike. At the Swinside Pub Scooby Doo in a CFR vest and a glitter ball joined us. It was Paul Johnson again. What a laugh. Mario and Duncan were with him. Jake played motivational music on his phone. I was swept along on a wave of Euphoria. I'll put together a compilation of videos sometime soon.

Dot and Jane joined us at Portinscale. That made 14 of us! Time for the second planned kit change of the day. On with the club colours for the final mile. The pace grew and grew. The orange glow of the Keswick street lights were now upon me. I could see the Moot Hall ahead. Time to try to sprint.

Passers-by started to clap as something great must be happening at 2220hrs on a Saturday night if 14 people are running up the High Street. The cheers grew louder and louder. We had made up a further 10 minutes on the leg.



A tap on the Green Door of the Moot Hall and the watch confirmed 23:26hrs. Job done. Thank you everyone! I looked around and there was a sea of happy faces.



I had heard that the record for drinking was 3 pints after at BG. I felt I could easily break that. For once in my life I could hold a record for something! Me and Sid headed down to the back bar of Wetherspoons as planned.











running support

The first pint was sliding down well when the barmaid asked us to leave as Sid was too young! He was surrounded by all of us, but it wasn't enough for her. Sadly we had to leave and head for home.



What a journey over the past 7 months.

I set out 3 goals at the start which were achieved.

a) The Round in under 24 hour
b) Not upset the family
c) Not permanently injure myself

The only injuries apart from the scuffed left forearm and sore shoulder from the fall on Scafell was one "half-pea" sized blister on my middle left toe beside the nail(?) and the ends of both nipples as the plasters must have come off early on. The next day I felt fine with the only stiffness in my arms from using the poles.

The family were committed to my training plan which really helped. I hope I've shown that a moderate athlete with determination and help from friends can achieve something great. I had to have everything going my way, so the planning was important. It would have only taken a few missed turns or some food disagreeing with me. So many people played a part in it all. I hope I have told the story accurately. There will be side stories to add I'm sure. I've had strangers walk up to me to shake my hand and congratulate me. I wasn't expecting that. I'll be having a do for all that helped in September or October. I hope this inspires someone in some small way. If I can do it, then surely you can! I'm happy to help where I can. Helping others is a big part of the BGR and a good principal for life in general.

Les Barker