My Bob Graham Round

Sophie Likeman

On Friday 24th July at 1am, I set off on a Clockwise Bob Graham Round. This was not the plan until only 12 or so hours before…. I had planned an attempt on the Saturday 25th July, I had 2 or 3 pacers organised for each leg, in quite an organised fashion. Then the weather reports started looking vile, “90% chance of rain” “poor visibility” wind speeds rising… then thunderstorms!! If only I was setting off 24hours earlier I thought, where the weather looked far more favourable. I casually started asking my team of helpers whether anyone would be available, and it started to look doable. Mark very kindly spent the Thursday running around making last minute arrangements whilst I tried to finish work as early as possible. I felt sick with nerves, but knew I needed to fully commit to this change of plan for it to stand any chance of coming off.

So, 1am Friday 24th, I set off from Moot Hall with Andy Bradley and Sam Holding. Mark and Winnie waving me off, how exciting!!

Leg 1 started off with poor visibility, and very wet conditions under foot, but as first light hit coming off Blencathra, we were treated to a mini cloud inversion, it all seemed worthwhile. After a quick sock change and mouthful of tea and porridge, I was off on leg 2 with Paul Johnson and Phil Archer. Leg 2 felt quite magical having the Dodds all to ourselves. The light was beautiful and each of the summits felt as though





they were arriving quickly, I wanted to bottle up that feeling, it was perfect.

I was accompanied by Phil Archer and Howard Seal on leg 3 who kindly volunteered to help me at very short notice. The dreaded Steel Fell passed quickly, and I settled into the leg which I was most nervous about. Uphill’s felt good, it was not until Great End where I started to get a bit tired of the rocky terrain, particularly downhill, but I kept plodding on. Beth Pascall, as some will already know, was out attempting to break the women’s record for the BGR, flew past us at an impressive speed coming off Broad Crag. We braved the masses on Scafell Pike and passed Daisy the St Bernard before she refused to come down off the mountain! Phil led me down into Wasdale perfectly where I think we were both pleased to stop for a rest. I was so happy to see Rebecca Crellin waiting for us in her usual wonderfully organised fashion! A quick snack and sock change later, (thanks Ryan!) I was off up Yewbarrow with Ryan



Crellin, Mark Fussell and Huw Brassington. We met Mario Yeomans on Red Pike where he had ran over from Honister. There were points on this leg where I could not breath for laughing, I do not think there was a moment where someone wasn't chatting!! This helped the leg pass quickly, as I was feeling tired at this point. My pace on the flat ground and descent were not impressive. Thankfully, I managed to balance this slow pace out by climbing well, and a sense of humour failure on Great Gable later, I was finally trotting down to Honister Slate mine, a little behind schedule, but not far off.

Rice pudding, potatoes, and coconut water later, I was off up Dale Head. It would not surprise me if people in Keswick could hear my pacers made up of Miriam Leonard, Mark (husband), Ryan, Huw, and Charlotte Harle, as they giggled and chatted up the fells. Honestly, I found their energy invigorating, even when they were taking the mickey out of my food choices!! Anyway, I forgave them for eating all the haribo as they got me to Moot Hall, encouraging me as I shuffled along the road through Portinscale. I returned to Moot Hall at 11.02pm, having had the most wonderful day out on the Lakeland fells with friends. A day which I think really epitomises what the Bob Graham is all about, and a day which I will never forget.



Thankyou to everyone involved, all the people



that sacrificed their time to help me on the Saturday, and those that were able to change their plans at such short notice. Special thanks must go to my husband Mark, for zooming around for me, and for putting up with months of incessant Bob Graham chat and my absence at home due to long training hours!

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