Enjoying the Process
Hannah Bradley

On the 4th of June 2021 I successfully completed my Bob Graham Round. It was an amazing experience and a personal achievement that I am very proud of. Now, many people before me and after me will complete their own rounds and mine was in no way record breaking.



Sometimes as runners we can get very caught up in external validation; who have I beaten? Who has beaten me? Was I faster than last time? This can be a great motivator and can actually allow us to take on challenges, like the Bob. But it can also be our own downfall, by encouraging us to base our self-worth on external factors. My lovely spoon full of sugar antidote to this… Enjoying the process!

Before

I first seriously thought about doing a Bob after helping my other half, Nic Barber, successfully complete his round last summer.

As I'm sure I don't need to remind anyone, we had another two lockdowns since then which meant we were unable to get back from Middlesbrough, where we currently live. Having a genuine enjoyment of spending time outside, in the elements and getting to move my body helped get me out to do the training needed to complete a Bob.

Enjoying the process also helped me deal with the unknown, specifically if going up and down the Tees link (half a mile with 200m of climb) over and over and over again was going to translate into going up and down big hills! Spoiler alert, it does!!

Finally in April, I was able to get over into the lakes again, and it was so worth the wait! I made some fantastic memories running over the fells whilst reccying the legs. Some highlights included days out around Leg 2 with Dad and Mark (first fell run of the year for me!), a warm Wasdale with my Dad, some snowy Leg 3 with Nic and helping out on Miriam's Bob. I definitely got a taste for how good the moon and dawn are on the fells! There was plenty of *can I, will I, should I moments*, but enjoying the training meant I had done enough and had plenty of cheerleading from my family and Nic.

During

Trying to be in the moment throughout my Bob was something I really wanted to do to help me enjoy it as much as possible. The sunset, the never-ending orange glow on the horizon, the sunrise around Fairfield and the breaking of dawn were some of the most amazing moments I've had on the fells.

Being surrounded by such an amazing support team definitely kept me going.

Their positivity and rubbish chat kept me going especially through some low patches and set me up for a lot of laughs in the high points.



Whilst preparing to enjoy the actual process of putting one foot in front of the other, I was aware that I would not feel good for every step.

Leg 4 was particularly hard, eating was not fun anymore and just before Gable I thought I was going to get to Honister too late to finish within 24hrs. Being realistic and knowing these low points would come helped me focus my mind and tell myself that feeling better would come, even if that was when I finished! One thing that struck me was as soon as I could look back on a part I had found hard was that I could pick the good bits out of it which helped power me on. Standing on the summit Robinson with my Dad, knowing it was all downhill from there was the most amazing feeling!



Finishing was super emotional! Seeing my nearest and dearest waiting for me to come in and having Nic and our dog Pebble run in with me was just the best feeling!



After

At time of writing, I am currently 2.5 weeks post BG. Going from running so much during training to allowing my body time to properly recover is a bit of an adjustment. I've been focusing on using this time to do some different things other than running. I've been on my bike for the first time since after my Frog Graham in 2019. Turns out pedalling away is super enjoyable!



Thankfully, I'm still in one piece, unlike after my Frog, so things are looking up already! But, if anyone sees me on a start line any time soon, please tell me to go home!