The Frog by Hannah Bradley

A silly, silly idea



It's early March and my bank account is lighter to the tune of 1 wetsuit. I am now committed to the niggling idea in the back of my mind to attempt the frog graham round. I have swam in the lakes my whole life but over the next few months I discover that the never ending blue, or worse, murk is mildly frightening. Provoking thoughts such as "I wonder if pike attack from below like sharks" and "I wonder if the lakes suddenly have pods of Orca in them".

It was because of this I decided that I should probably have people on the swim legs, even though the ethos of the frog is to do as much as you can unsupported whilst remaining safe.



Today's the day

Because I work shifts I had to pick a Saturday and stick to it, and so began a lot of nervous weather watching. The drive over to the lakes on the Friday was nerve inducing, torrential rain and wind. Luckily the forecast was set to be okay for the most part so I found myself stood at that famous green door at 4 am with my loyal support crew (Nic Barber) and I was off! I ran the first leg solo heading up Skiddaw, all was going well until I was running round the back of Little Man. Here I found the worst weather I have ever known! Sideways rain, blowing a hooley and dark. Reasoned with myself that down to Mirehouse was just as far as Keswick and Nic and the car would be there, not Keswick, so I had to continue. Was very pleased to have been caught up by another fellow frogger just after the summit which made me feel a lot safer.



By some minor miracle Bassenthwaite was flat as a pancake and myself and childhood friend, Michela Kellet, set off on the first swim of the day.

Dad and daughter

The first lake went swimmingly (pun very much intended) and I found I felt very comfortable in the water. For the second leg I ran with my Dad, good chat (mainly verbal incontinence for myself) to distract myself from the heavy weight of a sodden wetsuit in my pack. I definitely found the carrying of the pack and the slow change overs the hardest bits of the route. The wind picked up as we went up GrisedalePike making the next bit of running a bit tougher. However, it was absolutely fantastic to be supported by my Dad on such a challenge on my favourite hills.



Beautiful Buttermere

We descended the slippery steps of Rannerdale to Crummock where I was pleasantly surprised to see Rosie, detouring her run to Mongolia to spur me on. Into a very choppy Crummock where another pal Max Wainwright was a godsend in spotting for me over the waves. I found the swims were almost a break and completely refreshed me for the dreaded climb up Melbreak! For the 3rd leg I was joined by Miriam Leonard and Paul Jennings, the climb up Melbreak was a breeze, I felt great! The same could not be said for Red Pike, I was getting bored of battling the wind now.

A sketchy swim

After hauling myself out of my wetsuit after the Buttermere swim I was joined for the slog up Robinson by Keswick's Tom Partington and Rachel Findlay-Robinson who plied my with coke as I was no longer feeling like the avocado wraps I'd been munching on the rest of the way. By this point my



toes and knees were feeling it and coming down off Dale Head was not very fun, and Cat Bells even worse, but was cheered on by surprise visits from Nic, Les and Vic Haworth. One last swim to go! I got down to Derwent for my last swim and suddenly gained some perspective on what I thought had already been rough swims. Derwent looked like the sea! Huge waves! If it wasn't so close to the finish I would never have swam in conditions like that. Felt very glad to be joined by Alice Fellbaum and Jennie Chatterly who guided me safely through the 3 islands and out the other side. Where I found Nic had lost my dry sports bra, resulting in tears (Nic says: it was in the bag but well hidden. It's the thought that counts right?...) Luckily Alice kindly lent me hers for the last few kms back to the Old Moot Hall in 15 hours and 30 minutes.



I am very proud of my body for carrying myself and all my kit over mountains and lakes. It was such a heart-warming experience spent with all the support I received.

On to the next adventure!