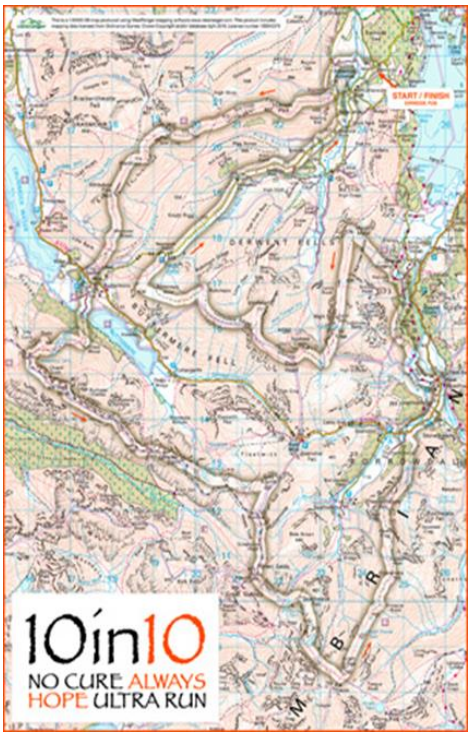
No Cure, Always Hope
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19th September 2020

So this time I jumped in on Jim's plans to complete this challenge, 67km and 4300m of climb, as he had signed up to it just as I had committed to give the BG a go. I had kind of ignored he was doing it, as I thought well, I'll be in no state to had a stab at it. However, one of life's great lessons, if you're going to fail, fail fast, which was the case with my BG. Although this did mean physically, I didn't need to recover, mentally is a different thing but a long run with Jim would be a good way of getting back on the figurative horse.

For those that don't know (where have you been there's more CFR names on the Board in the Swinside Inn than any other club), it's a route that was created by Borrowdale FRs, Simon Booth, as a challenge to support fundraising efforts for his brother Duncan in aid of MS Society UK.

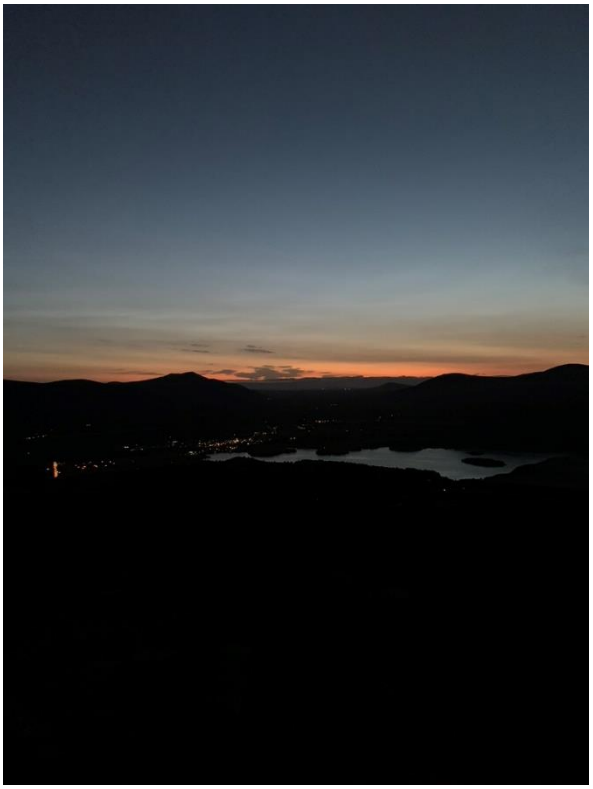


It weaves together the three 10in10 walking challenge routes to take runners on a circuit from the Swinside Inn up Causey Pike, over Sail, Crag Hill, Wandope and Whiteless Pike, before descending into Buttermere. There he will head up Dodd, Red Pike, High Stile. High Crag, Seat, Haystacks, Grey Knotts, Brandreth, Green Gable, Seathwaite Fell, Allen Crags, Glaramara and Thorneythwaite Fell before a descent into Rosthwaite. Then the climb up to Castle Crag, Maiden Moor, High Spy, Dale Head, Hindscarth, Robinson, Snockrigg and Newlands Hause, before arriving back at the Swinside Inn.

The idea was to have a long day out in the fells, with the usual good craic and the only time limit was the pub being open to get something to eat and drink afterwards. We set off from the Swinside in the dark, followed the usual path up Causey Pike in the dark. By time we got to the top the sun was just starting to come up, at which point we knew the weather was going to be good for the day. The light coming up was amazing making the view better than usual.

We made good time to Buttermere, but the climb up to Dodd and Red Pike really started to take it out of me. I then felt awful on every climb from that point. But never mind, I was looking forward the run across the tops down to Scarth Gap. Along this point we bumped into a solo runner who as it turned out was also running the route, but meeting some mates along the way. Once we got to Scarth Gap it was quite nice to go up Haystacks, rather than traverse around it as per the Ennerdale Race route. Not sure I agree with Wainwright, but Haystacks was nice enough. We continued the tradition of never taking the same route though all the tarns and had the usual conversation of who takes the best lines through it, either on the Ennerdale or the opposite way on the Daz Holloway (Buttermere). We bumped into the other runner again between Grey Knotts and Brandreth, this time with a few of his lycra-clad mates (they even had poles). This was the last time we saw him. Between here and Borrowdale everything was ticking along okay (other than me feeling slow on the climbs), the banter was mainly around the number of Scousers and Geordies on the fells considering they had meant to be in lockdown.

But once in Borrowdale I fell apart, the temperature on the tops was lovely but it was way too hot in the valley. I'd also convinced myself that I'd be able to get a can of coke at one of the small cafes. Jim said "not a chance" and "don't get excited", but as we ran through Rosthwaite the little café was open. Haha



up yours Jim its open, cold refreshing coke here I come!! I get to the door and a sign on it reads “Cash Only”, reading that felt like the worst moment of my life (yeah I know a bit over dramatic) I only had my phone equipped with apple pay. So, we shuffled on, only a little more dejected and getting warmer. The little climb up Castle Crag was like climbing stairs in a sauna, my need for a cold coke only grew (I mean who only takes cash in this day and age especially during a pandemic!).

Then the climb up Maiden Moor, which is off piste through the bracken and my ability to go up hill was diminishing by the minute. I ended up walking a few minutes then lying down for 30 seconds and then repeating. At one point when I got up from one of my many lie downs and I couldn’t see Jim. “Ah bollocks”. Where’s he gone, what’s happened? I found him wide eyed and stuffing his face next to one of the becks. He’d had a funny turn and decided that eating was required, but when Jim eats on a run he proper eats. In the time I’d managed to stuff half a pork pie in my face, he’d ate half a sandwich, a high calorie liquid food thing and then ate the other half of pork pie! Which by this point in the day looked like a sweaty pile of mush, yum! Anyway I slowly dragged myself to the top, and staggered my way over High Spy and zombie walked up to Dale Head. Then it felt like we were on the home straight, a quick picture on the last top, High Snockrigg, and then just a short road run to the pub.

Short my arse, those last 7km lasted forever and Jim made me run it all as the pub was calling. We even put on a good show for our families as we ran up the last hill up to the pub, I then sat on the floor with my back against the wall for 10 mins just to get my breath back.





A quick change of clothes and into the pub, despite being really hungry I couldn't face eating so I had a pint and an orange juice. Jim's ability to eat regardless of what is going on was demonstrated again. He was just going to have a few snacks, but then when the waitress came over he ordered the largest burger in existence, along with fries and onion rings. We all (not me I fell asleep) watched him demolish the plate full. They do say that Ultra Running is really an eating competition, and if that's the case Jim has got it nailed.



The last thing to do was the obligatory picture by the finishers board, which turns out to be a picture that makes me laugh every time I look at it, I look tired but Jim looks off his nut!

It's a great route that sees less completions than some of the other Lake District long distance challenges, this might be because it is hard and with some proper fell running in it rather than following the established paths. But it's definitely worth looking at if you like long and hard. Oh errr.

Footnote: I was then in bed for the following few days with a stonking head cold, which lingered for a couple of weeks. So my official excuse for taking longer than I wanted and being slow on the climbs was down to my underlying man flu.