Central Fells (2 Jan 2019)

I was inspired at the Club's annual get together last year by those members who'd completed all the Wainwrights in a book in a single outing and spent several of the following days planning routes for all seven books, greatly helped by Steve Birkenshaw's 'continuous' route. At the turn of the year I decided to make a start with the easiest – the Central Fells. I parked in Dale Bottom just outside Keswick along the A591 and caught the bus down to White Moss car park. Sixteen and a half hours later I arrived back at my car. I'd predicted twelve hours so that was way off the mark! This was partly due to spending nearly eight hours in the dark rather than the three and a half I'd anticipated. The weather was perfect with occasional sunshine, cold, no wind, bogs often frozen and I wore only a thermal top for much of the day. The ground north of Ullscarf was particularly heavy going, more so in the dark. Whilst ascending High Rigg I petered out of energy completely forcing me to stop and make up an energy drink arriving at the summit eventually; then it was a mile back to my car, arriving at 12:30am. At the end I could still walk quite briskly but running had become a shuffle that was no quicker. The car showed the temperature was 1 ℃. Interestingly, whenever I ran, the slight increase in wind chill was enough to make my ears cold – good job it hadn't been a windy day! I was pleased I managed to keep going for so long with no major body part failure, especially as I hadn't done anything longer than three hours since the OMM two months before. I found running in the dark much trickier than I remembered – the pool of light burning out any chance of seeing the shape of the land and judging distance and scale was almost impossible.

(70km, 3343m of ascent. Time taken – 16:33; stationary 0:29; 7:49 in the dark.)





