

WELL DONE PETE

by Bill Smith

Back in the summer, Pete Simpson of DPFR established a new record for the traverse of the "Yorkshire 2,000's", BILL SMITH reports

Pete Simpson of Dark Peak Fell Runners, a Bob Graham Club member with an additional traverse in severe winter conditions to his credit, and a former Wainwright Coast-to-Coast record-holder, has established a new Yorkshire 2000's record of 29 hours 11 mins. He was inspired to attempt the run by three factors: the 1985 LDWA "100" in the Yorkshire Dales, in which he finished 3rd to the current and former Pennine Way record-holders. Mike Cudahy and Brian Harney; a fortnight's holiday in the area shortly afterwards and a reading of Tony Wimbush's "Dalesman" book, "Long Distance Walks in



The Yorkshire Dales", which includes a route description by P. Barker. Wimbush and fellow-Yorkshireman Colin Brooke, both Bob Graham Club members, had completed a circuit in June 1982 in 45 hours 33 minutes.

The 115-mile course, involving a total ascent of 19,368 feet, is confined within the present Yorkshire boundary and therefore excludes the old county highspot, Mickle Fell, above Upper Teesdale. Pete recruited a hardy band of pacers to accompany him over various stages on the fells; Roger Canavan, Steve Chambers, Andy Collinson, Chris Dodd (former Scottish 4,000s record-holder), Clive Lane, Martin Stone former holder of the Snowdonia Round record), and Frank Yates, who had completed the Brecon Beacons Traverse in atrocious conditions the previous month.

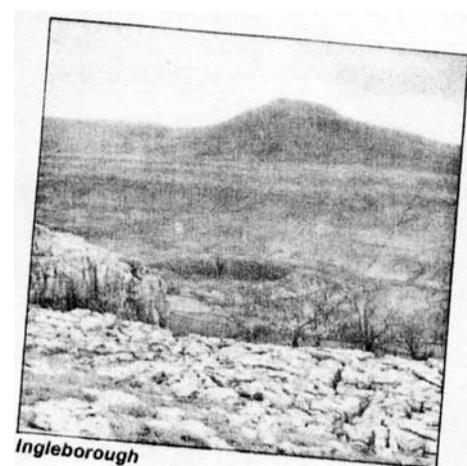
Simpson started from Hawes at 10.00 hrs on June 21st in warm, sunny weather, though with a lively east wind producing cooler conditions on the tops. He reached his first summit, Lovely Seat, to the north above Buttertubs Pass, 43 minutes later, then headed northeasterly across Swaledale to



Pete Simpson on the climb from Hull Pot Beck in the 1980 Three Peaks Race, with Penyghent in the background

Rogan's Seat (12.09) and Water Crag (12.22), then west to Coldberg Edge (13.50) on the county boundary with Cumbria (formerly the Westmorland boundary).

A descent to cross the Keld-to-Kirkby Stephen road at Lamps Moss then led to the climb onto the ridge running south, still along the county boundary, above Mallerstan Edge, via High Pike Hill (14.27), High Seat (14.42), Archy Styrigg (14.52) and Hugh Seat (15.00), which Pete found to be the most scenic part of the route. The boundary was left beyond Hugh Seat to head easterly to the Pennine Way landmark, Great Shunner Fell (15.40), then back west to Sails (16.22), rejoining the boundary to cross the Mallerstang road at Aisgill Moor Cottages to ascend Swarth Fell.



Descending to Garsdale Head, the old Coal Road over to Dentedale was then followed up towards Great Knoutberry, whose trig point was attained at 18.50. The long drag up here took its toll of Pete and he found it "hard work" approaching the summit. The wind was now growing stronger and colder, with dark clouds hovering menacingly over the rolling, grassy fells, the Fellsman route was here followed (in reverse) down to Stone House, allowing some measure of recovery, but then came the long, gruelling ascent to Whernside, reached at 20.38.

Peter was now suffering from the intense cold and made sure that his pacer Roger Canavan packed a survival bag into his rucksack along with the waterproofs and

other survival gear. They battled against a bitter northwest wind along the ridge to Gragareth (21.58), and next climbed Ingleborough in darkness and mist, reaching the gale-lashed summit at 25 minutes past midnight.

Simon Fell (00.50) was visited on the way across to Horton, where an 8-minute stop revived Pete somewhat for the ascent of Penyghent (03.06), where the night's solitude was rudely shattered by crowds of solstice-worshippers. Simpson continued along the ridge to Plover Hill (03.35) as dawn was breaking, then headed across to Fountains Fell (04.42) and Darnbrook Fell (05.05, afterwards reaching Birks Fell (06.50) by way of Litton.

The Fellsman route was rejoined on Great Whernside (08.58), ascended from Kettlewell, and followed (again in reverse; across Tor Mere Top (09.45) Buckden Pike (10.12), Middle Tongue (11.41) and mist-shrouded Dodd Fell (13.48), where Martin



Stone's careful navigation led them unerringly to the trig point. From here, the route led northeasterly to Pete's final summit, Drumaldrace (14.35), and a direct descent to Gayle led to him reaching his starting point in Hawes at 15 11 to give him a total time of 29 hrs 11 mins.

Well done, Pete!