

SOUTH DALES CIRCUIT - report by Rick Ansell

The run was completed on 24/25 July. Total time, despite the nearest I could get to a sprint through Horton, was a few seconds over 19 hours. It was completed solo and unsupported. Although I passed through Litton and Kettlewell where I could have resupplied or stopped for tea/beer, I elected to run self-sufficient. I had no very fixed schedule, beyond wanting to get back in time to have enough sleep to be able to drive back to Hertfordshire in the morning. I thought 18 hours would be a satisfying time and hoped it could be somewhere between 15 and 18.

Weather was no'but fair t' middling. I had 10 minutes of sun in Kettlewell as I sat eating a tin of rice pudding otherwise it was overcast with clag down on several of the hills. During the day the wind strengthened and became very powerful on the hill tops. In the afternoon drizzly showers came blasting in on the gale, sapping morale for a while. Darkness fell on Great Coum and thereafter progress was slowed considerably.

The first six hours to Buckden Pike went well. There were three major climbs but otherwise it was all quite runnable. After Buckden Pike there was a long and very rough section across Yockenthwaite Moor and on towards Drumnaldrace which was slow and very sapping. Just after Drumnaldrace the weather became quite spiteful, even running down hill into the wind was quite hard. A psychological low was met here and this led to a small navigation error coming off Dodd Fell which, fortunately only cost about five minutes and served to refocus me. Great Knoutberry was a good landmark to reach and although there was a long drag from Stone House up to Whernside to come after this, I felt that barring accidents it was in the bag. On Gragareth in the dark and driving rain I wished I had a GPS. My headtorch was useless in the cloud and it was more by luck than judgement that I found the trig point. Negotiating field paths and tracks between the foot of Gragareth and the foot of Ingleborough in the dark was tiresome and time consuming and ended in the scaling of several walls and the visiting of several gardens as well as wading the River Doe. The final descent took about double the time it takes me in the Three Peaks Race....