

3 races in a month - Matthew Holt

1. Blubberhouses - 24 March

The LDWA Blubberhouses event is one I've done a few times, for 2 main reasons. First, it's quite local, second, the scenery is fantastic. The climb up to the top of Beamsley Beacon, around mile 17, offers great views over the surrounding Yorkshire Dales.

The course is about 23.5 miles long, with a few climbs dotted along the way, totalling 2,900 feet of ascent. The weather was perfect, a nice change to all the recent storms, with the sun and blue skies making for quite a warm finish. A load of Ripon Runners attended, with Alan Kyle claiming 3rd overall and Victoria Morris first female. I managed to finish in 4 hours 28 minutes, which was good for me, and a really great day out.

2. Wensleydale Wander - 13th April

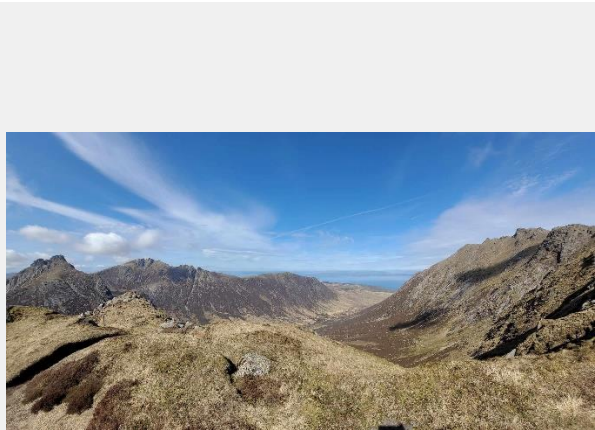
A new event for me, the Wander is a 22-mile loop from Leyburn. A bit flatter than Blubberhouses, with just under 2000 feet of climb. Again, we were lucky with the weather, plenty of sunshine lighting up the gorgeous Wensleydale valley. Another good number of RR's attended, with some opting for a shorter 13-mile route. Alan Kyle ran well again, this time claiming 1st place overall in just over 3 hours. He was changed and gone before I got back in 3 hours 46 minutes. A great route, well worth trying, and not too far from home.

3. Ultra Tour of Arran 20/21st April

This two-day event takes in a southern loop of Arran on day 1, with a northern loop on day 2. Day 1 is tough, day 2 is much tougher though.

According to the locals, the weekend was the first spell of good weather in ages, so once again, I was spoilt with fantastic views in all directions. Both days start from Brodick, with Day 1 just over 28 miles with 3930 feet of climb. The climbs are spread fairly evenly along the route. The scenery is absolutely stunning, with mountains on the horizon in all directions. A great day and back to Brodick in 5 hours 46 minutes, for some much-needed rest before day 2.

Day 2 has just two climbs over its 31.5 miles. However, both are long and never ending, totalling 6,500 feet. Only 2 checkpoints are available due to the remoteness of the course. The first climb is tough, but leaving the first checkpoint which is the car park of a whisky distillery is harder. 8 miles of relative flat terrain along the northern tip of the island gets you to checkpoint 2. From there it feels like a long slog to the top of Goat Fell. The climb is quite technical in places, with mountain rescue and ropes in places for advice, help and guidance in a few sections. It took me 9 hours 30 minutes to return to Brodick, a long day, but it didn't feel that long due to the company of others and those great views.



(all photos from Arran)

All in all, a good month, which got me back into some kind of fitness for the coming summer events.

Accumulated totals from 3 events were 105 miles with 15,330 feet of ascent.