

Wharfedale 3 peaks
Race Report
June 28th

You'll love it, the views are brilliant and the weather's always great in June"

A rather magnificent turnout of 27 Ripon Runners turned out to take part in the Wharfedale 3 peaks challenge event, a 17.5-mile trek around the biggest fells in aid of the Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association. Starting in the pretty village of Kettlewell at the early time of 8.30am, the route takes in the delights of Birks Fell, Buckden Pike and Great Whernside before returning to the start, a colossal 3,700ft of ascent en-route with a 9hr cut-off.



It's fair to say that my car contingent were a little subdued and nervous on the short journey to the start, especially when the windscreen wipers turned on due to spots of rain and the sky got darker as we passed through Pateley Bridge and Grassington, but Hey-Ho, we've paid our entry fee (Only £20, a bargain by todays standards, when 10k's in less salubrious surroundings can cost as much as £35!)

The event caters for both walkers and runners, and we wisely chose to walk the event, despite being tempted to having a go at breaking the course record of 2hrs 9 minutes (!)

As we left the start, and the runners set sail ahead, we were soon into our stride up towards Birks Fell, jackets being removed as we moved up the valley and tackled the steep start. As we got to the summit the rain became harder and the cross winds really picked up, making stile crossing somewhat interesting, jackets put back on again. (a recurring theme throughout the walk).



A mini re-group at the Buckden Check point and we set off up our 2nd ascent of the day. As is often the case in these longer events, it's difficult to all go the same pace as each other and we split into three.

Buckden Pike was a stiff climb, visibility was reduced to only about 20 meters, and the "boggy bits" became more evident as we hopscotched across the moving tussocks, whilst combating the wind. Andy Turner and I decided to not hang around waiting for the others when we got to the top as we hoped to move to better conditions lower down quickly. As an aside, Andy had chosen this event to celebrate his 40th wedding anniversary with Jackie, we're sorry we didn't wait Jackie!

I did ask if they met at RR as they share the same anniversary as the club but alas it was not a RR Romance.



We picked up the pace a little, flapjack shared and we continued to follow the little red/blue flags set out for us, across a mixture of barely noticeable footpaths and some flag stones placed on the wetter areas.

Great Whernside is a long plateau and in the poor visibility Andy T had great fun laughing at me as I frequently called out the summit/trig point only to discover it was just another pile of stones.

Once found, we descended quickly down the steep sides, quite technical in places and the visibility improved, revealing the lovely grass meadows as we moved through Hags Dyke Scout hut and then the final mile to the finish.

Rewarded with a pork pie and a medal for completing, I was then awarded a spot prize too, which made the day even better!

I'd like to thank the "Challenge 24" group for inviting me into the fold and sharing this event with me.

The results haven't come out yet but I heard on the grape vine that one of our members completed the event in an astonishing 3hrs 19 seconds, coming 7th in the process. Well done Fraser!

And finally, Andrew Harker, yes I did love it, i'm sure the views were beautiful had we seen them and the weather....meh.....

Next year!