

There is a saying that one thing leads to another..... the Joss Naylor to The Lap to Abraham's Tea Round!

Having initially been truly daunted by the pace required to complete a Joss Naylor, I was persuaded to have a go by several LOC members at the end of August. Thanks to the flexibility on behalf of everybody who volunteered to support me I landed up running in very good weather conditions. However this meant my attempt was on a bank holiday Saturday and it was thanks to a very fortuitous encounter at Greendale in Wasdale that enabled the leg 4 pacers to be taxied up to Wasdale Head in time to meet me at Styhead (a massive thank you to Derek Fryer).

I enjoyed the day far more than I thought I would and due to very wise pace making and good route finding from all my pacers I completed it with plenty of time to spare. We even had the luxury of making the most of photo opportunities on the last few summits.

Thus deluded me into a belief that I was running well and with the absence of many other competitions 2 weeks later I entered 'The Lap' (having said after last year that there was no way I would ever do it again!!) The Lap goes round Windermere on trails and minor roads visiting several viewpoints on the way, notable ones being Loughrigg and Wansfell (72km with 2,500m of ascent). Well I set off far too fast and paid the price by Wansfell. I missed my pacers from the JN; making sure I was eating and drinking enough. Clearbarrow back to Lakeside was really hard work, fortunately I landed up running with others which helped enormously. That hill from Newby Bridge up to Finsthwaite Tower and Great Knott wood is an absolute killer after 40+ miles!! Disappointingly I was 30 mins slower than last year (but first in my age group!!)

Clearly, I was not getting any wiser because a week later a friend, John Douglas, was looking for support with the Abraham's Tea round, a 30 mile loop from George Fishers in Keswick (12,000ft ascent). I volunteered to do the first section with him. Well, my approach to fell 'running' is definitely to walk up the hills so it came as a shock when he ran up the first hill. I quickly readjusted how far I thought I could support him - possibly Catbells (hill #1) or at a push Robinson (hill #2). He did moderate his pace and I stayed with him to Buttermere - the weather was incredible and views stunning. It was brilliant to be out on hills I so rarely get to visit.

We had a very civilised 30 minute stop at the café at Buttermere and were joined by 2 others so the pace was steady so I carried on. And yes - I did go all the way round. A support team on Barrow (the last hill) was most welcome and John was brilliant at encouraging me and even got me to run up an incline coming into Keswick. It was a good feeling arriving back at our starting point. It has been another great socialable run.

It wasn't the month that I had planned but it was certainly very memorable! (just don't offer me any more flapjack or jelly babies)