

Wyresdale Skyline Traverse-Quernmore Post Office to Scorton Post Office 07/05/06

Richard Davies and Stewart Forsyth

Me and Richard are fairly new to Bowland Fell Runners (indeed Richard has not yet joined the ranks, but it's only a matter of time). Neither of us has any `history` of longer distance `off road` runs (Kentmere Race the longest for both of us). After reading Andy Verdens `Dig the Peat` report we decided on the Wyresdale Skyline Traverse.

After a fairly dry week we decided on Sunday 07/05/06 with the next Thursday as reserve day if needed. The day started cool, still, overcast with a touch of light rain - not too bad.

East Leg

We set off, far too fast, from the Post Office at Quernmore (520591) at 8.05am, up the road and on to the track toward Clougha Pike. By the time we reached the last cottage I was blowing like an `old horse` and wondering if I'd make Clougha never mind the full route. We now had our 1st navigational issue - we took the wrong path and had to make a `long, lazy loop` across the field and back up to the summit of Clougha (544595) 28 mins. What a start?

We `picked` our way over to Grit Fell (560588) 42 mins, the rain became a little heavier as we went over Cabin Flats the clag came down, but nothing too bad. We kept up a good pace, for us, through to Ward Stone west (586586) 1:03 mins and then Ward Stone east (592588) 1:07 mins. Neither of us had ever run past this point, so it was all `new ground` from now on.

Following the fence line we knew we had to `strike off` east at some point to Wolfhole Crag. We passed a small pool and thought this was Brown Syke (618584), but we were wrong. This error led to our 2nd `navigational issue` of the day. We turned off too early and lost a lot of time wandering around Mallowdale Fell looking for a Trig Point that was not there. There was a spooky `Hitchcock-The Birds` atmosphere with hundreds of screaming (or were they laughing) Sea Gulls circling overhead in the clag, as we searched in vain. We finally back tracked to the fence and carried on disappointed, convinced that we had missed one of the check points. However after about 10 mins we came across a gate complete with sign post and path (627577) to the `missing` Wolfhole Crag. We hadn't missed it after all, just hadn't gone far enough. (This over estimating how far we had run was a constant snag all day especially in the clag, and on long featureless stretches) We still can't decide if we would have made this mistake on a clear day. To celebrate we had a good drink and a Gel at Wolfhole Crag Trig (633578) 2:09 mins.

South Leg

The sky started to clear and the sun almost came out and we had a good run across Woodyards (623573) and south over Brennand Great Hill (621564) to Millers House

(623555) –a pile of stones.The going was wet and boggy,but we don't know how good/ bad by Bowland standards.The climb up Whins Brow looked a lot worse than it actually was and we had the best views of the day from the Trig Point (637533) 3:03 mins.We had a quick drink stop and Richard `shed a layer` and then descended to the road at The Grey Stone of Trough (623531) and had a `photo stop` at the stone.What a difference the clear weather makes.

West Leg

It was like `flicking a switch` as soon as we started the steep plod up Blaze Moss the low cloud and rain came back.We followed the fence line to the Top of Blaze Moss (620524).We then made what was not really our 3rd `navigational issue` but non the less a mistake.We followed the `advice` on the sign `to avoid the fragile bog of Blaze Moss/Holdron Moss follow the way markers`.We left the fence line and followed the markers for a some distance,but it was really slow,tough going through thick heather and taking us way off route.We gave up on this `long way round` and headed back to the fence line.The going was better but never easy over Holdron Moss (606514) until we began to climb to the Trig Point on Hawthornwaite (579515) 4:17 mins(never seen a Trig Point like that before).We swung south with the fence up to the top of White Moss (576505) 4:30 mins.We could see nothing on the top so we trotted on,best we could, through the deep heather.Both of us now getting very tired by this stage-stumbling and falling more often.The novelty of running through the heather had long gone.We then `hit` the mowed path up to Grizdale Head (558507) 4:53 mins.It was much easier going ,the clag lifted and we had fairly fast run up the gentle slope.It was with some relief we saw Nicky Nook in the distance.We ran over to the top of Harrisend Fell (538499) 5:14 mins and down,over the road to the path (501500) and through Fell End Farm on the tracks toward Nicky Nook.As we started the climb up Nicky Nook I regretted the earlier increase in pace and realized just how tired I was.It was a real slog for both of us up to the Nicky Nook Trig Point (519486) 5:42 mins and down to the road near the Kennels.After our 3 `navigational issues`.I had given up any hope of what proved to be an `over optimistic` sub 5 hour target.We could just about manage a `fast trot` down the road to touch the Scorton Post Box (502487) 5:56 mins ,just under 6 hours.

Brilliant!

What next?

Stewart