

# Run 172: Thirlmere (ish)

Hare - Happy Sac

You can tell that you are in for trouble when they warm up first!

It was clear that the usual CH3 pack was going to have its hands full with the bright young things that had joined it for the celebration of Sam's/Superman's/Little Lord F's 30th birthday weekend. (The man with too many names?)

Despite having celebrated seriously the night before, these spring heeled youngsters were tiggershly bouncy and raring to go. It was depressing.

Miss Demeanour started the morning in style, flogging the Nash-Hashing Plum's wares on a commission basis, and then it was On On. The smart money was on a romp around High Rigg given the start point but we'd have lost, as usual, as the flour took us into the oncoming traffic and over the road towards Thirlmere.

The route disappeared into the woods with the youngsters bounding on ahead. There was a knowing smirk from the older hands as a call of On On was rescinded after detailed forensic investigation showed that the blob of flour was in fact, guano. Hare and Tortoise we thought, they know nothing. A series of fishhook checks kept the pack together as we contoured across the edge of the woods but it was starting to be a worry that the fastest young pup, known as the General (General? Maybe a Sixer at best?) seemed to get every check right.

We hit tarmac on the road up to the dam and then turned off uphill. And boy, was it uphill. According to Memory Map, it was a kilometre of ascent, taking us up 211 metres. By my reckoning that's in excess of 1 in 5. No wonder Thong had migrated south - even visiting relatives would have been preferable in his eyes. Insult and Injury sprang to mind as the General trotted downhill after another fishhook, saw us gasping and then trotted back up again.

It was an odd sort of trail as we neared the cloudline. We could just about make out the ridge not far above us but the ascent just kept on going - it was physically impossible to keep going up that far - and a bit like being in an Escher drawing of an endless uphill spiral.

To our immense relief, we found Happy Sac with his Knappy Sac of beer and waited for the walkers on the old Hill Fort and contemplated the view down Shoulthwaite Gill. It transpired that the walkers were somewhat lost down in the valley and the Hare did his best rescue dog act and went to find them. As the cloud rolled in the runners were already trying to find the route down as the walkers eventually crested the ridge. As they settled down with the beer, it eventually dawned on us that they had come up the

way we were to go down. They had carelessly removed all the fixed ropes, pitons and belays required to get up, leaving us to tackle the precipitous descent unaided. It was a masterpiece of trail setting with flour sprinkled on trees, fences and anything else that was sticking its head above the bracken.

Finally, we reached the valley floor and followed the beck down towards the road, over some ankle breaking territory. A regroup by a bridge saw Themanwithtoomany names take the plunge, twice, cape and all. Unlike Duddondale a couple of months earlier, there wasn't the enthusiastic rush to join him this time. Wonder why? Wonder if he'll make 31?

Walkers and Runners joined up briefly on the On In and Happy Sac trotted past confident of a job well done. Quite how he had set that route single handed, then carried the beer up, then gone and found the missing walkers (OK his parents were with them, so there may have been some sense of obligation) and was still moving, all after the night before, is something of a marvel. One for the annals - a really good'un.

