

## **Trip Report: The Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon**

**Date:** 7th-8th July 2007

**Group:** Jim W & Jim G

**Route:** See below

**Total Distance:** See below

**Total Ascent:** See below

Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon is a two day event held in July each year, where competitors, in teams of two, navigate their way around map grid reference points and visit them in the order given. The event venue is not disclosed to competitors until shortly before the event to stop teams reconnoitring the area. The first day finishes at a mid-way campsite (actually a farmers field). Competitors must be totally self sufficient and carry clothing, tent, sleeping bag, stove, food, and safety equipment etc. Once started no outside aid is given to competitors. Jim Walker and Jim Grant entered the 2007 event which was held in Patterdale on 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> July.

We had to register on the Friday night, as we had been allocated one of the earlier start times, and therefore we decided to camp at the registration centre that night. Rain marred the journey from Bunbury, but we took advantage of a brief respite between showers to erect the tent in dry weather. Having ascertained with some relief that we both slept on our left sides, a good nights sleep was obtained.

Next morning we packed away the tent and made our way to the start line in low cloud conditions. Soon we were off, and a quick look at the map suggested to us that the optimum route to the first check point was up a very steep slope, cover in waist high ferns. This we negotiated safely, but caused early fatigue in competitors. After finding a good line to the first two check points, the rain started in earnest just as we were about to climb the highest point of the day, to the summit of High Raise. Some good navigation however brought us out spot onto the checkpoint.

The next two checkpoints were found with no real problems. The route to checkpoint number 6 was long and involved a lot of contouring which takes it out of your ankles, but again we chose a good line and went straight to the destination. The final checkpoint also involved a lot of contouring, but this was negotiated safely, and we arrived in the campsite in 14<sup>th</sup> place. As a bonus the sun now put in an appearance, and with tent erected, a brew in our stomachs, a snooze was in order. Jim G chose the alfresco option with Jim W choosing the tent.

At this camp milk and beer is sold. Now this may be difficult to believe but Jim G decided to drink soft drinks only (think it was due to his dislike

of Guinness or Lager). Miracle upon miracles one of the soft drinks available was Orangina, so Jim W was ecstatic.

Another good nights sleep ensued. The famous Jim G snoring never materialised. Next morning dawned to brilliant warm sunshine, and we set off again at 8.05am.

Our first mistake, and only, mistake in navigation occurred on the way to the first checkpoint in day 2. We climbed out of bracken onto a peak which was about 400 yards away from our destination. This lost us a little bit of time, as we had to double back, but no real problem.

The remaining 5 checkpoints were all found using good routes and we made up for some of the time lost. The route between check point 3 and 4 took us down a very steep slope through waist high ferns, we then had to cross a river swollen by the rain so it was well over our boots, and then a long steady climb. This was the toughest checkpoint of the two days.

We arrived safely back at the finish to discover we had slipped one place, and ended up a very creditable 15<sup>th</sup>. The organisers also give out the results based on a handicap system taking into account competitors' ages. Using this system, due to our advancing years, we were 11<sup>th</sup>.

This is a great event, exceptionally well organised, which should be attempted by more of the BUMS. We are all fit people, and there is no reason why anyone cannot complete the course. The time we took was 4hours 49 minutes on day 1 and 4hours 20 minutes on day 2. As the crow flies the route was 27km long with 1500m of climbing. Most people have the requisite gear, the difficulty comes in stripping this down to the bare minimum, but still be able to be self sufficient safely over two days on the mountains. Jim G had probably the biggest rucksack in the competition, but even then managed to forget to bring a cup, plate and eating utensils!!

We will put it on the list of events for next years programme, and can discuss it at future meetings.

Jim W