

Trip Report: The Low Alpine Mountain Marathon Scotland

Date: 7th-8th June 2008

Group: Jim G & Jim W

Route: See below

Total Distance: See below

Total Ascent: See below

Weather: See below

The LAMM along with the Karrimor is reckoned to be the most demanding 2 day mountain event in the UK. Jim W and Jim G entered this years event held on the 7/8 June. In common with most mountain marathons the actual race starting point is not disclosed until a few days prior to the start to prevent competitors reconnoitring the route.

So it was that on the 5th June we drove the long road to Glenfinian in the north west of Scotland. Basically you go to FortWilliam, turn left and head towards the Isle of Skye. We arrived on a glorious afternoon and camped in a field close to the railway viaduct where the Hogwarts Express of Harry Potter fame is always filmed.

We were slightly perplexed by the number of nets for sale, and only after the sun was setting did we finally see the error of our ways in not buying one when the midges came out in force. There was the futile hope that they would leave the Scottish Jim alone and concentrate on the Sassenach but this did not prove to be the case.

The camp site was in a field, but had all mod cons including slit trench toilets. These are now to become a regular feature on all BUMS walks.

The day of the race dawned perfectly and after a short bus ride we were given an early start time. Now I do not wish to worry fellow BUMS, but your Secretary and Treasurer, both highly experienced mountain men, went into the wrong start point and therefore ended up on a far more challenging course than they had entered. Even worse they did not realise until about 3 hours into the race.

The race took in some spectacular scenery in a very remote part of Scotland. Navigation had to be spot on as there are no paths and virtually no features, and it is matter of pride that we managed to find all the check points without too much difficulty. However about three quarters of the way into the first day a huge problem developed. Jim W for some reason started to become disorientated and had no energy left. From moving very swiftly one minute, the next he resembled one of those people you see in a marathon who cannot walk in a straight line. No reason can be given for this, although blood samples had been taken at

the doctors the day before as he has still not recovered from a virus picked up in Morocco in October.

Whatever the reason as we were in a remote location there is no prospect of simply stopping and hopping on a bus/taxi etc. This is why these events are two men events as in times like these you rely on your partner to get you out. We decided to complete the course, and the next few hours were spent stumbling about the mountains of Scotland, including one difficult traverse of a bog, which claimed many people falling in up to their waist. We made it back to the camp site for the Saturday night and Jim W was attended to by a doctor. Rehydration and energy was required and flat coke was prescribed. To make this take a can of coke, add a spoon of sugar and stand back. It really is extraordinary. The coke was washed with by a banana and crisps for salt, and after an hour full recovery was made. Jim G in the meantime had erected our tent, with a wonderful view of the ladies slit trench toilets. And yes Lesley they are used by many women at the same time.

The next day we decided not to take part in the race and hike out back to the start line. This being remote Scotland, it was not an easy task and involved about a four hour journey including quite a lot of climbing. However we made it easily and after a bite to eat at Wilfs made our way home.

An epic of a weekend and definitely to be repeated next year. The next mountain marathon in which BUMS members are competing is the Saunders in July.

Jim W