

Denis' round 30 August 2014

My report is more of a personal one, so if you are hoping for an epic 24hr running tale, sorry.

As a brief introduction, i'm an average 40 something mum of two who loves jogging in the mountains, I especially love the long distance stuff. I'm not fast and thus my aim was to get around Denis' challenge, thats all, nothing more.



Myself, Steven and a random blue circle just before heading off.

Points of note:-

The low point : Getting into Billy's car.

The High point: Getting out of Billy's car.

Section 1: Newcastle to Silent valley.

Having stuffed my face with porridge and coffee and had a good moan about the rubbish windy weather, Steven [my better half] and I got ready to go. My good friend Greg and his dog Charlie had come over to see us off. It was a unexpected boost that got us out of the

cosy car and going. We set off just about 03.28.

From the start I said I was going up the Glen river route, and I was very glad too. The wind was unreal and by the time we crossed the Glen river it was raining and by the col, visibility was down to a few meters. It stayed like this over Donard and Chimney Rock mountain making the descent off Donard very slow and finding Chimney's cairn a nightmare.

It was light when I said cherio to Steven on Slieve Beg as he headed back to the car to get round to the Silent Valley in time.

Half way up Slieve Lamagan a random bloke came bouncing out of the clouds behind me, scaring the sweet life out of me but at the Cairn I said goodbye as I was hanging a right towards the Dam and he went straight on - good luck with that I thought as I've tried that one to my cost in the past. Two minutes later he came bouncing past again.

So it was back up into the clouds for Binnian and back out of them all the way to Silent Valley for a lovey Pot Noodle, having picked up 20mins I felt happy that i'd some leeway should I need it later.



The gully at Wee Binnian.

Section 2 : Silent Valley to Deer's Meadow.

Steven kindly stayed with me until the base of Doan then he headed back to get round to Deer's Meadow. Doan and Ben Crom came and went as did heavy wind and rain but on the descent off Slieve Muck I got back out of the dense clouds. It was great to see our 'postman pat' car waiting...alone...no Billy, oh hell I thought, hope everything is alright. Moment's later a silver car speeded to a halt, Billy Reed jumped out ready to go.



Looking a tad worried at Slievenaglogh.

Section 3: Deer's Meadow to Slievemartin.

The wee stop proved welcome and Billy easily caught up with me on the climb to Pigeon. I got a good chance to warn him that this would be nothing more than a long walk in the rain, but I was super glad of the company and it's just as well that one of us was alert as coming away from Wee Slievemoughan I was far too busy looking at my feet and not paying attention to my planned direction. So I lost a bit of time but would have lost a whole lot more had I been on my own.

After some food at the Windy Gap I got way too cold, so no more stopping became the focus. Billy's hand held GPS proved invaluable across the cloudy peat hag wilderness of Finlieve which we just got out of when the cloud lifted and the sun came out.

The leg across to Slievemeen flew by and Steven was there at the top of the zig zags with supplies and smiles. However knowing what lay ahead in Crenville I convinced myself that it was only a tiny section and that it would be the same for everyone no matter when they were trying the round.

Section 4: SlieveMartin to Spelga Dam car park.

Painkillers were needed by the time I got out of Crenville!, magic stuff.

The next 4 hills were fine, our chats about family and all things running related made the hours feel like minutes. At Rocky my trotting pace was getting slower and slower and I felt like I may not make it round in 24hours, but Billy's positive 'just put that negative thought right out of your head' comment put an end to that.

Steven was down on the hen track armed and ready with more supplies and smiles and luckily too, as I'd run out of the ever essential toilet paper and felt sure a kidney might pop.

At that point I thanked them both and set off alone up Cock mountain at dusk.

I was to meet Steven in a few hours at Ott car park where Billy was dropping him off, so I took only the bare essentials with me at this point. Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

The headtorch went on as I got to the far cairn on Cock and managed to get down to the Spelga road as complete darkness set in, I was 45 mins ahead of my target at this stage. Another hour and I'd be over in Ott car park...how wrong was I !!

Section 5 : Spelga Dam car park to Newcastle.

I'd been up Spaltha and Slievenamuck two weeks previously but man alive I'd wasted my time doing that. The wind was howling a gale, the cloud thick, the only bit I could see was the actual circle on the ground of my headtorch. If I looked up I got glare back, nothing else, every feature I'd memorised was non-existent. I swore at every passing sheep and without the GPS I most certainly would not have made it up there.

By the time I found the top I was in tatters, with no food and water and getting very very cold, I quietly called it an absolute mother hubbard and blindly plodded my way over to Slievenamuck. I contoured too far and bounced off the back fence, but by now I was exceptionally cold and couldn't even manage to get my gloves on, my hands didn't want to work anymore and I was really panicing and frightened.

At the top I took a slow motion bearing for the car park and could vaguely see lights through the fog but then began to worry that it might be a car load of Sat night hell

raisers, please God nooooo.

Thankfully it was Billy's car, I sat down in the boot but felt so sick and cold.

Steven was there as usual with supplies but no smiles anymore ' You are eating that Pot noodle or going nowhere'. I just shut up and did what I was told.

He got me more clothes as my rubber hands were still on strike and then Billy suggested heating up in the car, the heat was my turning point. All the time I had picked up was instantly gone but without that stop the game would have been over, for sure.

Armed with a chocy muffin I was feeling positive and determined to finish, so out we got, said cherio once more to Billy and headed for Ott, missing the attack point gully on the way in the poor visibility. Once we got over the top and across to the wall I had warmed up and we stayed on the inside of the wall most of the way back to keep the wind down only crossing when necessary.

Visibility was so bad we missed the ruined wall section that should have been the alarm bell on Meelmore, it took an age to work it all out so by the base of Slieve Bearnagh I was certain I'd be 10 mins or so over the 24 hours.

Climbing Bearnagh was an all fours job, and the descent, well, it was more like Mrs Doyle on a window ledge. Unbelievably at this point we moved back on target time wise.

Then on the way to Slieve Corragh Steven mentioned me needing a second wind to make it as my target time slipped away once more, hell that was about 10 hours ago, there was no second wind coming anytime soon.

It was only at Commedagh with 48mins left on the clock that I thought there might be a slim chance. We both pelted into the fog like total nut jobs and half way down the shoulder we got out of the clouds, so with full beam on I asked Denis to keep me upright as a fall now would mean lights out and game over.

We made it down in 44mins just 4 mins under the 24 hours. It was a quiet, calm finish, with no one around, but I hope Denis was smiling, it's his round and unlike all the others available out there you constantly remember the amazing person behind it all, a truly brilliant tribute to him.



The car is where?? at the Newcastle centre!!

A million thanks to Steven for all his support before, during and after, Billy for giving up your actual Birthday day!!! and for the loan of your GPS and tracker and Greg for the middle of the night send off.

I'd do it all over again in a heart beat.

Violet Linton.

The actual start time was 03.29.23, finishing at 03.25.15 [23 hrs 55 mins 52 secs]

The GPS held out until Slieve Bernagh and can be viewed here: **Aaron!!!! help please**

The back up tracker can be viewed here it has the lot on it, please note it stayed in my pack : **Aaron!!!! help please**