RUNNING INTO 2019

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Some thoughts on where I ran in 2018 and where I'm planning to run in 2019. Anyone want to join me?
Category: Observations

If I think about my 2018 running in terms of reaching my major goal, then the year was a complete failure. However, I also had some amazing days out on the hills, so it wasn't a total loss by any means. Here are a few of the highlights of last year, with a bit of news going into the next.

In April, I took part in the Derwentwater Dawdle, a 23 mile trip around Borrowdale in the Lake District. It's an absolutely stunning route in my favourite place in the world. I wasn't particularly fast, and I suffered dreadful muscle cramps on the final hill, but it was a cracking day out; improved by having a bunch of friends and family (all of whom finished way ahead of me) there for the day. I must admit that I just can't understand why people would pound round city streets on hard tarmac for 26 miles when they could be out in the Lake District running on paths in a stunning location.

At the end of June, with Sue, Dave and Lina in support, I attempted my big challenge; a three day Bob Graham round. This is a sixty(ish) mile loop in the Lake District that visits 42 peaks and climbed and descends the height of Everest. I didn't manage to finish as a twisted ankle at the end of day one, put paid to things. Just to put things in perspective, the runner Killian Jornet completed the round in under 13 hours about a month later.

However, despite the failure to complete the round, it did provide me with two amazing days on the hills. On day one, Dave and I ran and walked from Dunmail Raise, over the Langdale Pikes, Bowfell and the Scafells. It was a long, tiring day, but the weather was amazing and the views were out of this world.



Dave running up to the summit of Bowfell. The skyline behind him is the Scafell Range, the next place that we were headed.



Dave and I on the summit of Scafell Pike. Note that we are both wearing our 1,000 miles "ruffs" (although one of us has his on inside out).



My ankle on the morning after day one.

After a day's rest, and with my ankle heavily strapped, I decided to try running again and Lina and I jogged around most of what would have been the final section of the Bob Graham Round. Basically, this was a climb up onto the Hellvelyn Ridge and then a long run over a various peaks. Again, the weather was glorious and the running was outstanding. This might just be the best place ever for a run!



Lina somewhere on the "Dodds"



Dropping down from Grisedale Tarn to Dunmail Raise.

I didn't finish the Bob Graham Round, but I did have an amazing couple of days on the hills and there is nowt wrong with that.

A month or so later, I was out for a regular Saturday morning training run. I was as fit as I'm ever likely to be and, high on Ikornshaw moor, I was covering the ground really well, when I just had to stop. It was so bloomin' glorious, that I had to stand still and take it all in. The sun was blazing, the heather looked wonderful, there were grouse and curlews flying around, Pendle was visible to the west and the Yorkshire Three Peaks to the North. I couldn't believe how fortunate I am to be alive and fit enough to enjoy these places. Ikornshaw moor can be pretty bleak in bad weather, but that day it was stunning. A wee while later, I got to look at the Yorkshire Three Peaks in more detail during the Y3P Ultra, which I wrote about here.

Over the year (and it's not finished yet), I've covered about 1,200 miles and climbed the equivalent of three Everests - not bad for a bloke who hit sixty in October.

So far, I've only got one long race booked in for 2019, my first 100 km attempt. It looks as if it will be a good day out, though I'm not sure that having the highest climb 75 km into the day is a great idea. I'll

try and fit another few events in around work commitments, but I'm not sure what I'll manage. However, events are only a small part of my running. For the most part, I'll be out on the canal towpath, or on the moors around our house, putting the miles in and building strength on the hills. A lot of the time I run on my own, but increasingly, I've got a buddy who trots alongside me and who enjoys the hills even more than I do.



For the last couple of years, I've been involved in a challenge to run 1,000 miles organised by Trail Running Magazine. A thousand miles sounds rather daunting, but it actually involves running a little less than twenty miles a week, which is a stretch, but by no means impossible. The main issue for me is staying fit; when I build up the miles, I tend to get injured which can put me behind schedule. Anyway, the best thing about the 1,000 mile challenge is the amazing community that are involved in it. The Facebook group is second to none as a place for encouragement, advice and (when needed) sympathy. If you are a runner, you really should check out the challenge and the Facebook group. There are folks on there who manage to finish the 1,000 miles before Easter and others who are never realistically going to hit the target, but who want to stretch themselves. It's a great place for runners of all abilities. for 2019, I'm going to be one of the Ambassadors for the group, which means that I'll be writing the occasional blog post and trying to be very active on the social media forums - if that isn't an incentive to join in, I don't know what is!