

## Joss Naylor Lakeland Challenge – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The sunrise on Loadpot summit was spectacular, the day was still cool, and it was dry underfoot. It was a pleasure to be out on the fell with friends at the start of my Joss.

I had started early at 5 45 am to avoid some of the forecast heat and humidity of the mini heatwave. After a quick photo at Pooley Bridge, I was off running along the lakeshore with my pacers Natalie (Northern Fells) and Mike (Dark Peak).

The early summits passed quickly and we were soon on High Street with pleasant running conditions. The nav became tricky on Caudale Moor with thick mist. Between us we found the trod to Pike How in the clag. Natalie took an excellent direct line skirting Raven's Edge, bringing us into Kirkstone bang on my 13.5 hour schedule. My road support (Julia's campervan) was on hand with squash and a banana. It was also good to be greeted by Rainer on behalf of the JNLC.



*Red Crag, leg 1*

Leg 2 was completely clagged in. But I knew it well as it overlaps with one of The Hodgson relay legs. Supported by Roger and Rob (both NFR), I found good lines to Fairfield where we briefly emerged into the sunlight.

We dropped into Dunmail Raise where Julia's van was again a welcome sight. Roger wondered if there would be a bone china set to accompany the requested earl grey tea. There wasn't – but the refreshments still went down a treat.

Leg 3 started with a steep and humid climb into the clag up Steel Fell. My pacers Andy & Mark (both NFR) kept an eye on the nav. After a hot and sticky trudge through the mist, a welcoming breeze cleared the clag on High Raise. A lovely runnable descent took us to Stake Pass and a chance to dunk my hat in the beck. Some more good lines took us smoothly to Bow Fell. Andy was prompting me to eat and I was doing my best – but it was becoming a struggle as I wasn't feeling hungry.



*arriving at Dunmail Raise*

We took the direct descent off Great End, taking it carefully though thankfully the rocks were dry. Mark took a great little contour at the end, dropping us straight on to the stretcher box at Styhead. After a brief break here, it was on with leg 4 and the climb up Great Gable – a toughie as the sun was now out in full and there was hardly any breeze.

My pacers Guy (Keswick), Adam (NFR) and Freddie (Adam's collie) encouraged me all the way. I struggled with nausea on this leg – I couldn't eat much and Guy reckons I set a world record for the most amount of belches/dry retching. But the views were beautiful – seeing Steeple emerge from the mist framed by Ennerdale was memorable. Emma my wife met us at the col before Haycock and ran with me over Seatallan and Middle Fell. She kept me going over the last few tough miles.

The sight of Greendale Bridge was very welcome. I touched the bridge and immediately lay down to recover, watched over by Freddie who was like a concerned St Bernard. The challenge was complete in 13 hours and 13 minutes.

Afterwards I read a text from Joss's family which said: "Joss says to keep John well-watered as it'll be hard in the warm weather. He wishes him well for the day – enjoy it". Wise words indeed. It was a memorable day out on the fells, and the 48 mile / 16,000 ft challenge is the furthest I've ever gone in a single day. I was too tired for a beer that evening, but I'm pleased to report the raging JNLC thirst was slaked on the Sunday. Many thanks are due to my pacers and road support.



*on Kirk Fell, leg 4*

I have given a donation to Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team. If anyone reading this report would also like to donate in recognition of the challenge completion, please do so at: <https://nnpmrt.org/donate/>.

John Duff  
Northumberland Fell Runners