

OMM 2018 Report – 27th/28th October

For some this is the highlight of the event calendar. Two days running in a stunning remote location, navigating through a series of checkpoints before arriving at an unknown campsite, carrying all that is needed for survival, and getting almost intimately close to your race partner in a somewhat undersized tent... what's not to like. The Original Mountain Marathon or OMM this year was held in the Black Mountains of South Wales. This year featured stunning blue skies and clear visibility, except for the blizzard on Saturday afternoon!



For the unfamiliar reader, the OMM is a two day mountain marathon event, which takes place in a different location each year. This was its 51st running. It is open to 1000 teams of two across 7 course options; Elite, A, B, C and Long, Medium, Short score. There is a detailed mandatory kit list and competitors are self-sufficient for the duration of the event. What to carry inevitably comes down to a battle between weight and comfort. Comfortable things... are heavy. With an overnight forecast of 'Feels Like' temp of -12degrees, we opted for the inflatable sleeping mat as oppose to the bubble wrap (what a wimp).

Having been plagued by calf issues, which meant missing Langdale and the Hodgson relays, it was fingers crossed for this one. I partnered with Steve Ireland and ran the A course. Having not successfully completed the past 2 events, the primary aim this year was to just finish the course. Having negotiated the long drive south we registered and camped up Friday night ready for an 8:45am start Saturday morning (team start times are staggered). Day 1 went well, clear visibility and relatively straightforward navigation. The afternoon blizzard freshened us up and we finished well up the last climb and descended to finish in a time of 6 hrs 46 mins. To our surprise we had finished the day in 4th position! What!! Narrowly ahead of 3 teams behind. This was a huge bonus for us and also a big surprise. It meant that the race would be on day 2 to maintain our position. The overnight camp was a great location, just bloody freezing. There was a serious risk to life during every walk to the portaloos! The 'comfort packers' seemed happy standing in down coats and chatting outside. We huddled in our tent, wearing every layer we had. The extra hour lying with condensation dripping on my face wasn't exactly a pleasure. Day 2 was much more runnable on great trods and numerous times we both had a real buzz about where we were and what we were doing. I felt like we raced day 2 more than day 1 and despite one navigational error we maintained our 4th place at the end finishing in 5hrs 10mins. Often described as the worst finishing place, to us on this occasion it was a great achievement. 1st place went to Yasha and Lova Chechik.



A fantastic event, for anyone who has not tried it, get a partner and get entered next year.

Full results and event maps:
https://theomm.com/results/OMM2018/multistage_index.html#a