

## Bullock Smithy Hike, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – Warm, a race of three thirds (40<sup>th</sup> running of the event)

*[Most photos are provided by fellow competitor Nick Ham]*



For the few days running up to the Bullock Smithy there had been a feeling of autumn in the air, and the coolness of the early morning led me to wondering whether this was a two shirt day. However, as so often happens in September, the sun comes out, it warms up and we're left wondering about sun cream. I certainly have a few tan lines after the event this year. So a bright, sunny midday provided the backdrop to the pre-race announcements at Devonshire Park from Steve Hoults (also walking it this year). Three worthy race dignitaries banged the anvil and we were off on the 40<sup>th</sup> Bullock Smithy.



I had said hello to some regulars such as Julian Brown and looked around for a few others who were absent this year. Karen Nash was taking part – as part of the Runfurther grand slam – 12 Ultra races, which I'd managed last year. She is going well given that she is also doing a huge set of extra events now that she is 'retired' from work.



*Karen – before and after*

Some roadworks needed to be navigated along the main road and then we could get into a rhythm. James Scott-Buccleuch with fast times in previous years was not taking part this year. However Ian Symington was and he took up the lead with another chap. I was happy to jog with Steve Jackson (26 finishes) and pleased to keep up with him as he normally starts fast. Paul Rushworth was back from his world tour (holiday) but not quite at peak fitness yet so had set of at a reserved pace. Jayne Lawton – women’s record holder from last year - and her (male) friend jogged with us for a while until Steve and I left the a little behind in Lyme Park. So there were five people ahead of us at this point.



*Jayne Lawton*

I'd decided to start with a full water bottle and it wasn't long before this was being sipped, necessary in the arm conditions. Past CP1 at Bowstones and down the road we looked across the valley and could see no sign of the leaders so hopefully they hadn't quite got that far. Steve and I stayed close together with him having the edge uphill and me slightly downhill. Round the grass slope, down the field and into Furnace Vale, making a dash through the traffic then over the railway crossing (never any trains?) before starting the gentle climb up fields and track to CP2, Chinley, near the ridge top. No refreshment just yet, the long sweeping curved descent and then refreshment. I even took on board a Blue ribbon bar to go with the salt and vinegar (?) crisps.



Nick Ham

A CP for an alternative trek (Trekfest, probably walkers only, 54 miles - £160 entry) was in the field as we marched up to CP3.. The BS is a bargain compared to Trekfest – both events had exactly the same weather after all!

Why are the stones on the track up to Edale Cross so large? No chance of even a jog for me on this bit until we get over the rubble. Steve at CP3 before me, I make my first unscheduled stop to tie up one shoe lace ready for the Jacob's ladder descent. It goes well and for once I feel comfortable jogging along the valley, over the fields and into Edale. Often there will be faster people around here – like Paul, and I'll struggle and suffer trying to keep up. As it happens Steve is just a little way back so I arrive at Edale CP first and gobble some rice pud (without fruit chunks) and say hello to Tracey – Paul's wife. The CP marshal said that as it is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BS that some of the check points are additionally providing a biscuit! [this was in evidence at Chelmorton too].



Edale CP

I'm enjoying not having anyone pulling away from me – all the faster people ahead have already disappeared – except for one chap who is slowing. So over Hollins, down the steps and track, where my stomach starts to feel a little rough. It has been a good first third of the race. Soon into Castleton, jam sandwich on board and then a visit to the toilets – worth it, including the sit down. Up to Cave Dale and I overtake Steve J who is a little surprised to see me but guesses why. I feel better, and move strongly through the gorge. Someone is retiring – cramps – in the heat, I'm in 4<sup>th</sup> place at this point. My spirits lifted I begin jogging over the fields, past the stone wallers – who have jack knifed their Landrover across the track – and gentle over the fields and into Peak Forest CP. Crisps, Orange and banana taken on board plus drink. Crisps go first as I jog along, then orange and finally half banana peeled and slowly eaten, the last bit finished as the path on the sharp road corner is reached.



Peak Forest CP.



Thick grass after leaving the road from Peak Forest

After track and road it is a shock to be in long grass and the height/thickness and slight uphill means I allow myself to walk this section. Frisky cows plus a black bull in the next field spur me into action. As a cow chases me towards the stile over the wall I get faster and am over before the cow has slowed. A few more fields of long grass, just jogable then a straight quiet lane into Wheston. Closing in on me now were Jayne and her friend. They soon passed me on the track to Miller's Dale CP and I move back to 6<sup>th</sup>. Oh well, at least I don't have to try and keep up with them. Jayne has an unusual toe first running style which obviously suits her – she is also incredibly cheery. A bit of an effort to get through the double gates into the farm yard to the CP in the barn. I thought there might be a bit of food on offer, but only water for me.

Now there is a long section of road for those wishing to take the straightforward route – and that was my choice again this year. I managed to keep jogging the whole length and somewhere near the top gained sight of Jayne again. Over the A6 and there was a mini support crew including Tracey. This little crew started appearing at many other places along the way too. By now I'd lost some oomph and walked from here to the top of the rise before reluctantly moving to a jog to take me to the Chelmorton CP. One of the marshals presented me with a stainless steel lidded box containing food items – which he revealed as ... some biscuits and I think a few donuts and half a donut. I took the half.



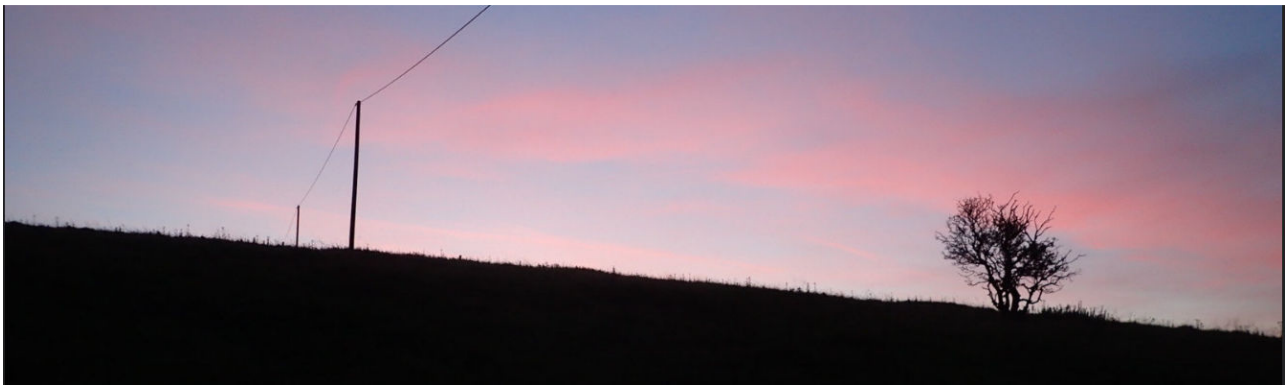
Chelmorton

After about 5 minutes I'd managed to complete the eating of the half donut whilst walk/jog down the track. Now back into a jog to take me over to Earl Sterndale. Slowness though and I couldn't really get going much so at the CP I paid a second visit and had a 2 minute sit down. I left the CP with a butty, ate the none crust bits and carried on. Over the hump, steep down to the road, then gradual climb, making way for the odd tractor, and heading for the mad dogs. At this point a chap in a bright yellowy top plus bumbag caught up with me and we travelled nearly together around the mad dogs to Brand Top CP.



*Earn Sterndale*

In and out, down the track – another car parked in the way which we squeezed past. For a change I took the grassy track up to the hamlet of Flash rather than the road. There is a little more height gain and a bit less distance. Ahead down the road I was surprised to see Jayne and her running partner – they should have been a huge distance ahead by now. The chap in the yellowy top has easily passed me and joins up with the two ahead, moving me back to 7<sup>th</sup>. On to Knotbury and up the field in the dusk after a lovely sunset I saw them again crossing the tall stiles and that was it. Tracey was waiting for Paul at the road crossing – so dedicated. Cumberland cottage CP another in and out and own to the road all just about managed without headlight on.



After a poor middle third of the race, this year I am now actually enjoying the road and was soon jogging along in the peaceful, cooling evening. I decided as last year to go the Macclesfield Forest track although I do not know why as my road jogging was fine. It does get you off the road at night which is a good thing from a safety point of view, but the track is tricky to run until you get over the high point. Into Walkers Barn CP and with no one in the room at the back I struggled to lift a full huge water container to get a little into my bottle – until the marshal came in to help. I left the CP and coming along the side road was Paul – probably only 2 mins behind. I expect he'll soon be catching me up, despite his lack of 'Ultra' fitness.



*Walkers Barn*

Head torch full on now, and jogging down to Kerridge, across the back field along the road then sharp left as the jog comes to an abrupt halt and walking resumes until level ground is reached. Head torch off now and the spread of Stockport and Manchester over to the left glow. I'm pleased I know the route as even in the dark I can switch off and cruise. Feet feeling surprisingly good. Through Bollington down to the canal and continue with the jog. No sign of

anyone else at the moment and if I can keep jogging maybe no one will catch me although many are quicker – such as Paul – over the last sections compared to me, and in other long races.

At the last CP the marshal asks me whether I'm staying or going. After a water top-up I go. Onto the last section. Jog, jog and more jog, under three bridges and then finally, my normal route but not that of others, I turn off for Wood Lanes. I had expected Paul to come past and if so I was going to try and follow him down the more usual route further along the disused railway. Anyway, this could be the point I'm overtaken without knowing it.

Eventually through to Coppice and then Towers Rd. No one ahead that I can see and no one behind. Head torch off where ever possible as it's easier to make out the ground, but on in the no street light sections. Care not to trip over the speed humps – after a prompt from Steve Jackson on the way out. At last I'm at the A523 so I make a final check behind and see no one back down Towers Rd. Jog again up the slight hill to the traffic lights. I have been overtaken here a few years ago. Keep going, downhill now – and there is Tracey at the scout hut car park entrance – which means Paul has not come in yet – so yes, I have not been overtaken.

Great, finished, after a good final third. But the time – only same as last year – after all that jogging, nearly all the way from Walkers Barn. Oh well, another BS in the bag. I sit down outside to let my body acclimatise to keeping still, even do a few stretches. Paul comes in after a few minutes. Back in the hut it is not long before others come in too, meaning I would have lost 5 or more places if I had been 10 minutes slower. Phew. Note for next year – improve on middle third. Two cups of mile then off for a sleep.

The online information screen which is continually updated ...

Finish - 138

**3HG Welcome you to the Bullock Smithy Hike HQ**

**Latest**

1: 36~ Kevin Smith has completed the hike in a time of 13.35  
1: 37~ Angela Oldham has completed the hike in a time of 13.36  
1: 37~ Andrew Hastie has completed the hike in a time of 13.36  
1: 39~ Tracy Vernon has completed the hike in a time of 13.38  
1: 43 ~ has retired at checkpoint 11  
1: 53 ~ Gervase Lancaster has retired at (9) Earl Sterndale  
1: 53 ~ Steve Muir has retired at (9) Earl Sterndale  
1: 58~ Paul Bayley has completed the hike in a time of 13.58  
1: 59~ Nigel Coates has completed the hike in a time of 13.59  
1: 59~ Hannah Hall has completed the hike in a time of 13.59

**Bullock Smithy Hike 2015**

88 - Christine Benson last passed CP 12  
89 - Philip Musson last passed CP 12  
90 - Paul Emsley last passed CP 8  
91 - Jan Emsley last passed CP 8  
92 - Richard Hook last passed CP 9  
93 - Jane Parry last passed CP 9  
94 - David Wilson completed in 12.20  
95 - Paul Bayley completed in 13.58  
96 - David Bell has retired at CP 4  
97 - Rick Somerset-Williams completed  
98 - Alwyn Nixon completed in 12.32  
99 - Tracy Vernon completed in 13.38  
100 - Dawn Ballard last passed CP 9  
101 - David Coley last passed CP 10  
102 - Richard Singson DNS  
103 - Nick Ham completed in 12.20  
104 - Alan Firth DNS  
105 - Maureen Watson has retired at  
106 - Dave Fiddell DNS  
107 - Jo Redburn has retired at CP 5  
108 - All Short DNS  
109 - Ron Wallwork last passed CP 10  
110 - Kevin Mackay last passed CP 11  
111 - Corinne Mackay last passed CP  
112 - Bill Johnson completed in 11.59  
113 - Nicola Dawson DNS  
114 - Beatrice Therin last passed CP 8  
115 - Geoff Pettengell last passed CP  
116 - Luis Broz last passed CP 9  
117 - John Robinsons last passed CP

Thanks to the organisers and volunteers who manned the start/finish and all the 13 check points and the finish.

Nigel Aston (12 finishes)