

## Râs Fynydd Pedol Peris - Peris Horseshoe Mountain Race

16 September 2006 - 17½ miles/8,500 feet ascent

After the “success” of Ennerdale, i.e. I lived – see July’s Torrier – I realised that to similarly survive the OMM I needed to have some more ALs under my belt. Having missed both Borrowdale and Sedburgh in quick succession through injury, that left the Peris Horseshoe in Snowdonia and the Pentland Skyline on the southern outskirts of Edinburgh. I must be mad....



Peris was the sixth and final counter in this year’s 2006 British Championship. Although shorter, but with more climbing, than Ennerdale, the drop out rates for this year’s races were comparable and that backed up Mandy’s helpful pre-race advice, “I’ve heard it’s harder than Wasdale”. Oh goody...

I was familiar with the route over the Glyders from the Welsh 3000s, and had recced the second half with a friend from work, so this knowledge made the morning’s forecast of clear blue skies, no breeze and 23°C somewhat alarming. Two hours later we were in Llanberis and wandered into the Community Centre to register, a huge and recently constructed building which made for a fantastic race HQ. A local physio’s practice was on hand to offer both pre and post-race massages – an excellent idea and surely a must at every SL!

The race starts with a half runnable slog up through a disused slate quarry to the summit of Elidir Fawr, a climb of just shy of 2,700 feet in about 2 ¾ miles - Lloyd Taggart was first to this checkpoint in 38 minutes 12 seconds!! There is then a fantastic stretch of running via Y Garn and Llyn y Cwn to the foot of the Glyder screes, and then it’s just a case of digging in to get to summit of Glyder Fawr. I’m nearly there in the photo below, and Llanberis is just a dot at the head of the furthest lake.

Now, this is where the fun starts. I’d heard stories of The Perfect Route off Glyder Fawr down to the “half way” point at Pen-y-Pass youth hostel (it may be just under half way in distance but only about 1/3 in terms of effort), but on my recce the clag was down and I mostly followed the walkers’ path. Fortunately, I was able to reel in an Eryri runner and I held onto him down to the road, saving minutes off the group I had left the summit with. The Pen-y-Pass checkpoint was just brilliant – gallons and gallons of water and tonnes of Mars bars.

The next section, from the road over Y Lliwedd down to Bwlch y Saethau to the summit of Snowdon, run in those conditions, is unquestionably the hardest bit of fell running I have done since taking it up in April of last year. Looking at the split times, everybody faded on this stretch apart from Rob Jebb, Christine Howard and Jackie Lee. Of the leading runners, Simon Bailey in particular looked to have found the going tough.

From the summit of Snowdon, there are still 5 miles and over 3,200 feet of descent to go and many of the DNFs dropped out here and caught the train! There is also the 600 feet climb to Moel Cynghoria – felt like 6,000 feet – and the cramp inducing struggle through the very boggy Maesgwm, but not longer after the finish appears at the end of the wood. I’ll let official route description take it from here:

“A last sprint and you’re at the finish gate opposite the Victoria Hotel. Hot food and tea is only about 500 metres down the road at the community centre, but you’ll probably be so knackered by then that a 20 metre shuffle to lie down on the nice soft hotel car park will do.” Absolutely! But what a sense of achievement.....

James Riley

The view from Snowdon’s summit looking back across East and West tops of Y Lliwedd. Bwlch y Saethau – Hell’s Toilet – is hidden, but is directly below the bare chested runner in the foreground.

