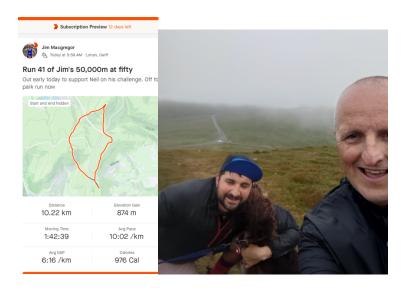
Run 41 – Saturday 1st July 874m climbed, cumulative 43,938m



Back on our usual run with Svet and Ruby joining us today. We set off super early as Neil (one of the Manx fell runners) was doing a challenge of running all 37 miles of the TT course and then finishing with a park run in Douglas. We wanted to finish in time to do the park run with him. Neil is a super impressive sportsman who has been running consistently at a high level for years. We happened to see him on the mountain road on our drive up to Windy Corner so gave him some encouragement.

The run was probably one of the hardest we have done for a while. A straight up the side of Beinn y Phott down to Millenium Bridge and then up Snaefell. The wind was bonkers today and we could barely stand up on the tops. This has come as a bit of a shock after having such amazing weather over the last month. As Svet put it "it feels like someone has punched me in the face!"

With time pushing on to make it for the Park run we cut it a bit short but after having run on Wednesday I was happy with this. We finished with enough time to get an "athletes breakfast" of McDonalds. Quite amazing that we straight away put ½ the calories back in with a small breakfast!

We made it to the park run and Ruby came round for her first one. Had a great time chatting to some of the past legends of the fells and with all the extra people supporting the park run achieved 207 runners which is the first time it has ever got over 200 runners.

Walk 42 – Wednesday 5th July 698m climbed, cumulative 44,636m

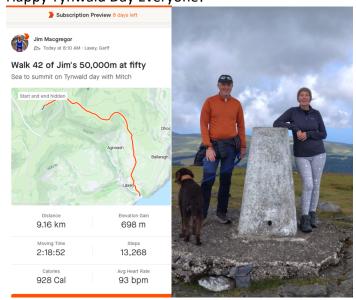
It is Tynwald day today, our national day when we get a Manx bank holiday. Excellent news to get another climb in. This time I had the pleasure of walking with my partner up Snaefell from sea level where we live. My whole plan for the year is to do challenges with people I know and love and they don't get more special than this! We set off at 8.00am with the intention of walking up Snaefell and then down to Bungalow to go for a meal with my son who would join us at Victory Café at Bungalow.

Ruby of course came with us. Not being too sure how long it would take walking we thought it would be better to have lots of time and just have an enjoyable relaxing walk. The morning was great and actually on the track up towards Clagh Ouyr we saw an incredible amount of wildlife including grouse, birds of prey and mountain hares. Views today were spectacular and the ground is still really dry underfoot after a very dry spell. We made great progress up to Black Hut. Snaefell is 621m in height but you have to drop down to climb again so we knew it would be over the 600m mark.

The climb up the last section is brutal but we are blessed on our mountain on the island that it has a café. Before we got there we met a young lad called Tom who is climbing all the mountain with prominence over 600m. He only has a few to go and was raising money for Bristol Children's hospital. He was a fascinating bloke and we ended up having a cuppa with him. He has been going since 25th April and said only 7 people have ever done the challenge before. We swapped stories of the Isle of Skye and wished him luck!

A quick stroll down to Bungalow and then a delicious meal in Victory Café. They make Bettty's pies there and cant recommend them enough!

Happy Tynwald Day Everyone!



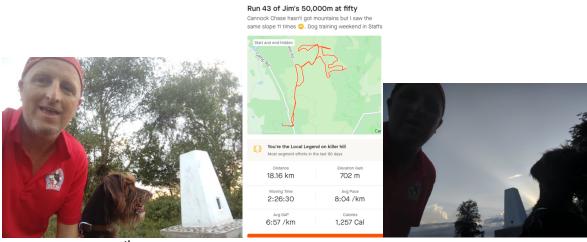
Run 43 – Saturday 8th July 702m climbed, cumulative 45,338m

On fairly regular occasions we train across with the search dogs and assess each others dogs to maintain the high standards. This weekend we travelled over to Staffordshire on Cannock Chase where representing the other National search teams there was the Isle of Man with 6 of us, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Kent.

With the light mornings I have been waking up fairly early (another 5.00am start) so decided I would go and find a valley and slope and try and achieve my minimum 600m. The highest point where I went on Cannock Chase is 200m with a prominence of only around 50m. I knew this was going to be more of a mental challenge and trying to achieve it without having to travel too far!

Me and Ruby quickly found the top of Glacial Park and dived into the main valley. I had looked carefully at the map and found a slope with a 35m climb. Well 11 times later I was getting closer to my target. I know Ruby was looking at me wondering if I had gone mad

turning around at the top of the slope and then heading downhill only to do it all again! It was quite a warm morning with thunderstorms forecast so thankfully there was also a good sized stream that I get stopping at for Ruby to have a wallow and drink. I also really couldn't let her off today as she is a natural hunter and with deer and adders in the area I didn't want the extra drama. It is a beautiful area Cannock Chase although the gradients are not that steep which meant todays run was over 12 miles long (meaning I missed breakfast cooked by the Staffs boys)



Run 44 - Friday 14th July 768m climbed, cumulative 46,106m





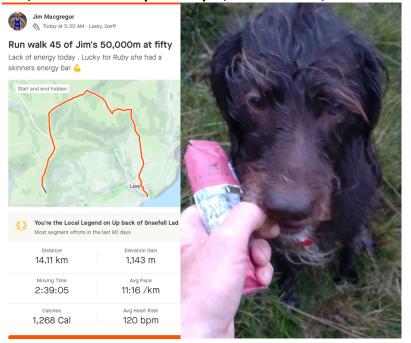
Well firstly yes it's a Friday run. I have something on tomorrow and hasn't really fitted in with the weather as numerous events have been cancelled due to strong winds and heavy rain. This is the sort of time when the challenge becomes a bit more of a challenge. Normal times of course it would be feet up at home slobbing on the sofa!

I have a route from Greeba Castle up Kings Forest to Greeba Mountain that mostly was sheltered by the plantation. Just the last bit on top was a bit blowy. Also the gradients were nice and steep following the mantra of max height/min distance. It did mean I had to do it twice. It does take a bit of mental will power to do this but it is good training.

Two main things I learnt today were I wore the wrong fell shoes so on the descent I was like bambi on ice! The other thing was I jogged all the way up on the first ascent in 26mins but decided to fast stride it on the 2nd ascent on the steeper section which turned out to be a minute quicker. Not always best to jog then!

The other thing was it was so wet I didn't want to test my "waterproof phone so took the photo on return to the van.

Run/walk 45 – Sunday 16th July 1,143m climbed, cumulative 47,249m



Calling this the lack of energy run!
Sometimes you just don't feel it, maybe illness, maybe too close to my run on Friday but whatever I knew this was going to be a tough one right from the start.

Ruby is here with a Skinners energy bar which is packed with honey. They really do make a massive difference and we are always so chuffed Skinners supports the Search Dogs!

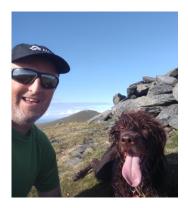
Left my van the night before at Windy Corner in foul conditions so knew this was going to be a tough one today. The good news is that after all the recent rain there was plenty of water for Ruby on the hill. Straight away I was walking up sections I usually run which I a fair indication. Getting really close to the target now in just 7 months so fully intend to complete the 50,000m in July after just 7 months. This will equate to almost doing on average Snowdon twice a week from sea level. Blustery on the tops today but didn't meet a single person which is really nice at times to have that bit of solitude.

Run/walk 46 – Wednesday 20th July 822m climbed, cumulative 48,071m

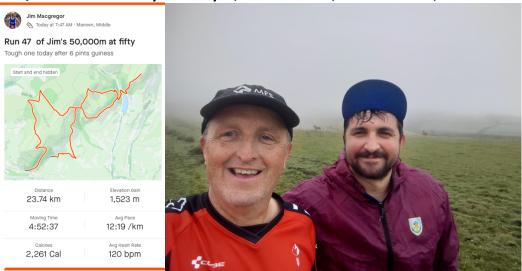


An unusual Wednesday evening run, unusual as normally it is Civil Defence training on a Wednesday. A cracking night on the Manx Hills but amazingly only saw one mountain biker and. O walkers.

Ruby was full of beans tonight and my estimates reckon only two more exercises to go to hit the target!



Run/walk 47 – Saturday 22nd July 1,523m climbed, cumulative 49,594m



A big push with this one today. A visit back to Greeba Mountain today. My route planning was at best questionable as some of the moorland was quite thick underfoot which certainly adds to the effort required. We ducked down to the far side and climbed back up to the ridge again, also visiting Colden and Carraghan. Nearly 5 hours later and with me having time pressures to get back to a family 30th birthday party. I also found a tick crawling across me for the first time. Hardly surprising with the bracken we were fighting our way through.

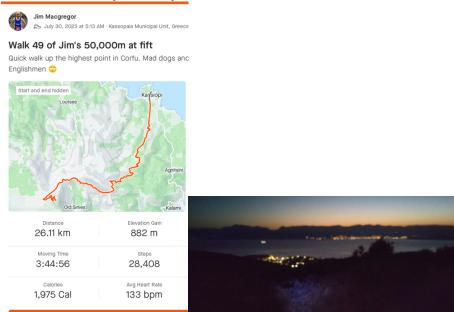
The other thing about today was the fact that it is the first day of my summer holidays. That means we had our usual last day of term drinks so to say my head was a little fuzzy at the start is an under statement. Certainly is a great hangover cure with my mate Svet!

Walk 48 – Monday 24th July 664m climbed, cumulative 50,258m



Well that's it, challenge officially completed. Always a strange feeling and one I have had before on the London Marathon several times where it is almost an anti-climax. That said had a lovely walk from home up to Snaefell with my son joining me for the last bit and pulling out a couple of bottles of Peroni on top to celebrate! Certainly not going to stop here as I have still 5 months to go but no new targets to reach, just interest sake to see what I do in a year.

Walk 49 – Sunday 30th July 882m climbed, cumulative 51,140m



A week's trip to Corfu and luckily we were staying in Kassiopi which apart from being an amazing place it also had Corfu's Highest mountain within walking distance at over 900m. Being Corfu and it being a heatwave I set off at 5.00am. Very quickly the village became a twinkling set of lights and Albania can be seen in the background. The other small issue was that the area had had bad forest fires so I wasn't even sure if I would have access to the mountain or if the tracks had been destroyed.



I have to say to say this is the first walk/run I have done where I had picked up a big stick. This was after reading that the area had lots of poisonous snakes which is not my favourite creature. Thankfully I didn't see any and actually I wonder whether any survived the intense fires. I made it just after sunrise but couldn't do the last 30m where there is a monastery as it wasn't open the time I arrived. The summit isn't the most attractive with all its aerials but the views, especially towards Corfu town were spectacular. I made it back to our apartment by 9.30am with the last bit of my juice finished off. Have to say the effort of running 16miles in extreme heat knocked me for six for a bit and I suffered a bit for a few days.