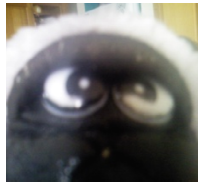


Barry G. Ross

A View from the Back Pack

Cradle Mountain Run 2011



Many Thanks to:

Richard Pickup, Dale and Keith Lancaster, Christine Brown, Paul Pacque, Bernard Walker, Doug Strohfield and all the sweepers and support crew who made this years event happen.

Disclaimer:

The events depicted in this report are as accurate as Gorrilla interpretation will allow.....

.....The Phone Call

"Sssh Caitlin, I can't hear what your Dad is saying" I tried to move closer to the very intense phone conversation so I could hear, but found myself unable to move.....probably through disbelief at what I was hearing!

"Well, I don't know" Dave said hesitantly, "I think he might have retired as well. You know he just did the 24Hr rogain last week don't you?"

More burbling that I couldn't hear, then mumbblings along the lines of "Well, I would have to consult the oracle on this matter (Caitlin) to see if Barry could....." I couldn't hear the rest,Damn!

What was that phone call about? My mind was racing, panic setting in, I had flashbacks; Three Peaks; Cradle Mountain Run, Western Arthur Range, Cradle Mountain Run, Rogaining, Cradle Mountain Run....Then there was the South West of Tassie!Window Pane Bay!Now I felt really sick!.....I was left behind! Stuck in the bush (unable to move) for a whole week without food and water, until found by members of the South Hobart Walking Club (one of whom recognised me). When I was returned home, It took me a long time to look Dave in the face after THAT ONE! You know, he was heard to say "I couldn't be bothered going back for him"HOW WOULD YOU FEEL DAVE!

I wanted to race over to Caitlin and be safe, but I found myself unable to move.....again.

.....The Legend

I can't remember being born, just turning up at Dave Ross's house one day in the arms of his Aunt. Everyone was yelling and screaming, falling over, eating cake, falling over.....a banner said something along the lines of 40th or something. His smallish relations kept running around calling me "Barry" for some reason, so I guess the name stuck. I have lived in Dave's house ever since, and strangely, for reasons known only to him, I run with him a lot.

Dave Ross is a legend, of that there is no doubt. He has completed 18 Cradle Mountain Runs, of which I have run 14 with him, some under nine hours back in the days when the track was tough (not the namby pamby run it is now!..... hardly any duckboards back then, thigh deep mud across Pine Forrest Moor, no wimpy modern latte flavoured gels and power bar thingo's, you just had to guts it out with water and fruit cake.)

.....The Git on the Bus

I digress. Remember that phone call? Well, I was rudely woken up about a week later, reeled out of bed at some ridiculously early time, stuffed into a pair of shorts to go and meet someone. We trundled down to Fitzroy Gardens in Hobart. It was a beautiful day, sun was shining, birds etc, you know the sort of thing?

Then! Whats this? People with running packs. I look at one guy, yep, its Doug Strohfield.....it must be Cradle Run time!

Quietly thinking to myself, "We are here to see Doug off on his 17th Cradle Run", and further to that thought, "You have NO HOPE of EVER doing more runs than DAVE, coz HE'LL BE BACK!"

I felt smug, till I saw this other guy.....I remember you! You were giving Dave a hard time in last years run from Waterfall Valley to Pelion! (making rude comments along the lines of "I know, I'll get T-shirts

printed up with I PASSED DAVE ROSS....CMR 2010 emblazoned all over”) I remember very well, because I had to put up with looking at you for hours on end.....YOU GIT.

Dave then told me ----- “Barry, old son. You will run with Andrew this year”

I thought.....”yeah, running with the Git Prince.....THANKS DAVE!”

I tried to run away..... but I just couldn’t move.

.....The Night Before

We had a great trip up to Cradle Mountain on the bus..... it was very scenic in the luggage bin. After our pre run briefing and weigh in at the lodge, Git boy announced we had better get ready for tomorrow. There was much laughing and merriment in the cabin that night. Stuart was getting the low down on the track from Dale, Doug and Git Face (Why ask him? What would he know anyway.....Should have talked to me! I’ve done more runs than anyone here!.....apart from Dale and Doug).

With an increasing feeling of forboding, I realised that this was not going to be a good trip. The Head Honcho of Git Central, had just about ripped my arm off while “helping me” fit my safety straps in his back pack.

“This will be an interesting exercise explaining THIS to Dave.....”, I thought.

This guy is about as usefull as a dog in a handbag. I was so sore.....the thought of running the Overland Track with a broken shoulder was not appealing at all, in fact, I was so sore, I couldn’t move.....

.....A Stroll Through The Park

Six AM. There is much laughing and joking in the darkness at Waldheim at the northern end of the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park.

Note to self.... “I wonder how much of this euphoria will still be in evidence in six or seven hours time?”

Keith had us all away on time, in good weather, with the forecast of a cool south westerly change late in the day. Pity the first bit was cloudy.....the first timers missing out on the Barn Bluff sunrise.

I kept on looking behind and seeing a familiar figure not far away. We were some way past Waterfall Valley, and Doug Strohfield was hopefully catching up.

“Doug, Doug!” I shouted as loud as I could “Help me, help me!”

He didn’t hear, the Git had increased his pace, and I just had to go too. Lake Windermere came and went in a blurr, Pelion Creek, Frog Flats (I had forgotten how long the climb was out of Frog Flats), and then into the Pelion check point. This one sure ain’t as fast as Dave.

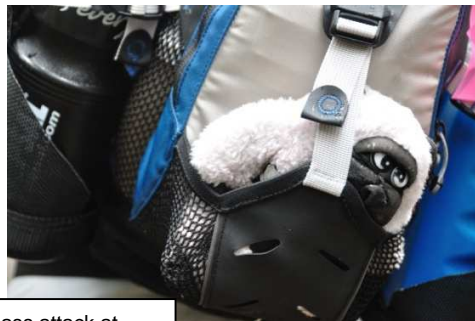
A strange thing happened after Pelion. I was nearly to the top of the climb up Pelion Gap, when I was forced to stop! Gitsky had decided to stop and talk to some American walkers. (From north of Boston, here to escape the snow, evidently!).

Dave’s words rang in my ears “Barry old son, you will run with Andrew this year...” I just had to stop with him!

Running down in to Kiora was great, great scenery, great piece of the track. Then we stopped again! This time for a half way celebratory picnic on the rocks in the middle of Kiora creek! Dave would never have done this! What IS he playing at? To finish the run, you have to ACTUALLY MOVE!

He eventually took notice and we took off again, past some Japanese(?) walkers near Hartnet Falls, over Ducane Gap and down into the Windy Ridge Checkpoint. Here I was ambushed by Bernard and Christine who attacked me with Jelly Babies.....

I cried out to Bernard " Save Me", but he just laughed and told me to "suck it up and get on with it".....(I think I had heard a similar expression before, on the bus on the way up perhaps?)



.....after the Jelly Babies mass attack at Windy Ridge.....

I felt so alone.....I just couldn't move.

In what seemed no time at all, we were through Narcissus and around the lake (it was muddier than last year I am sure!) The cold change had moved in, including the rain, which made me a tad soggy.....

.....Epilogue

Ahhh, breakfast.....toast and vegemite, and best of all.....my first ever certificate, 13:03:59! I never got that running with Dave!

Perhaps Andrew's not such a git after all!

See you all next year, if Dave and Caitlin will let me!

