

Thank you all for sponsoring John! A massive £603.03 was pledged, of which £503.03 has now been received. The money has been passed on to local animal charity, NANNA – all thanks to YOUR generosity. Read on to find out what happened in the race...

John's race report : After nearly two years training and a disastrous race in 2008, this year's Three Peaks Yacht Race lived up to high expectations! On a wet and windy Saturday in Barmouth, 32 yachts set out on 389 miles of difficult sailing carrying their runners to 59 miles of running and 30 miles of cycling over the three highest peaks in Wales, England and Scotland.



Nunatak races off the start

As part of team Nunatak, John got off to a great start arriving in Canaervon in second place behind Ulula on Sunday morning at 5am. Good weather meant he and Richard Ludlow could put in a time of 4h18m in a run of 22 miles over Snowdon, the last 8 miles of road running from Llanberis leaving the runners physically and mentally exhausted. With no time for rest on return to the yacht, runners and sailors alike heaved on oars to carry them through the adverse and difficult tides of the Menai Straits. Several boats struck rocks during this section and had to retire from the race, but Nunatak came through safely and powered on up to Whitehaven, arriving at 10am on Monday.

After a fast 15 mile cycle to Ennerdale, Richard and John tightened their pack straps and ran over Blacksail pass (height 600m), back down



to sea level at Wasdale Head then up into adverse conditions on Scafell Pike (height 978 metres). A quick turnaround at the top of Scafell and the boys were back down to Wasdale Head and starting the long slog up Blacksail pass again. John reports

"With sweat streaming down my face, stinging my eyes so I could hardly see where to put my feet next, I was seriously wishing for the safety of the surgery!". Back on the bikes, John escaped serious injury when a stick kicked up off the track became entangled in his front wheel at 20mph "It was so quick, one second haring along on the bike, the next sliding face down across the tarmac with cramp in my left leg! Luckily all I did was scrape a hand, elbow and knee". In all, John and Richard covered 20 miles of running, 30 miles of cycling and over 2km of vertical climbing in a little over 8 hours.

"The sail from Whitehaven was nightmarish" says John, "winds were low and most of our time was spent manning the oars. Coming around the Mull of Kintyre we were caught by a breeze that blew us back the 15 miles we'd just rowed! A light wind picked up in the middle of the night so we put up all the sails we had, something we immediately regretted as it built to gale force and we were knocked on our side. With the tip of the mast at times only 6 feet from the waves and runners crashing around down below we sped back around the Mull on a ride better than any fairground!"

Rowing for 12 out of 24 hours the team travelled slowly North through the Western Isles. Anxiety ran high as they passed to the East of the Corryvreckan Whirlpool, the largest in the world that can produce a standing wave 15 feet high and suck water down to a depth of 30 metres.

"Still conditions meant we had to row hard to get past the whirlpool; the skipper wouldn't have been happy if the yacht was dragged down" said a relieved John. Rowing and sailing through Loch Linnhe brought the team to their last major obstacle, the Corran narrows. Only three yacht lengths wide, a fierce current against strong head winds turned the Narrows into a washing machine. Mike Jacques, Nunatak's skipper, threw the yacht into the Narrows early on Thursday morning. Brave sailing and a steady hand saw them through the Narrows and into a last 12 mile rowing drag race up the loch to Fort William.

"We arrived in Fort William at 7am on Thursday hanging onto the side of the yacht. As soon as we were within range of the quay we leapt ashore and began the run into Ben Nevis." Initially cool, unseasonably hot weather soon warmed the mountain and John and Richard were soon glad to be in the snow and mist at the top of the Ben. "We careered back down the

mountain, leaping from one foot to the other trying to keep up with the sliding scree slope underneath us. We both fell twice, the second time causing me to slide 6 feet upside down on my back!" says John

The boys made it back in 3h55 and finished the race in third place, beaten only by UK record breaking fell runners and the UK female fell running champions.



"The race was fantastic and I can't thank everyone who was so generous in their sponsorship enough!"