



Mike's Challenge



Mike raised money for The Swallows by completing the UK's Premier Ultra Trail Race

In July 2019, Mike undertook the Lakeland 50 Ultra Trail Race to raise money for The Swallows in memory of Craig Smith.

After the funeral of Craig I wanted to show my respect and sympathy to the family. I'm not very good with words and to give my respect I wanted to give something back to everyone involved.

As I'm already a runner I chose to find a challenge that would push me to my limits and also inspire others as I feel very strongly that running helps mental health and stress that life throws at us. So I looked at the Lakeland 50, it seemed to tick all boxes and looked a fair old challenge.

I started increasing my mileage and setting my alarm clock for 4am and doing 5 days a week of running up and down the pavements and local trails. While juggling a full time job and 3 kids I got on with what I had to do. There were days I didn't want to go out again and times I felt in pain but to know how others have different pains and strains I just carried on as some people don't have a choice if it hurts.

The day of the Lakeland 50!

The day started at 830am in Coniston where we had a briefing and a very yucky hot bus on twisty roads to Dalemmain where the start line was. At 1130am I headed to the start, and in the pouring rain we were off!

I got Kentmere feeling okish, but I couldn't understand after all the training how I could feel so rubbish with such a long way to go. I made myself eat loads of cake (I love cake!) and a cup of tea,

then gave myself a reminder of why I'm here doing this and set off again. After this re-fuel I was now flying and happy enjoying the experience and journey.

Just over half way I came into Ambleside and people were everywhere! I could hear my family and friends calling out, I smiled but really I was trying not to cry as it felt very emotional to get this far and see loved ones.

I stopped here to say thank you to everyone and have (more!) cake, and then gave myself a small motivational talk. "I've got this now," I thought. If I carried on as I've already done I'd be fine, but this time it was 15 miles of Lakeland trails with only a head torch. It was actually sooooo fun - it's amazing seeing all the other head lights going through the trails and snaking up Tilberthwaite.

Once at the top I took off the brakes and ran into Coniston feeling so happy. I couldn't stop smiling and thinking about why I was here.

"I came through the village to the finish line and looked into the sky - gave a wink to Craig and came over the finish line, very tired but extremely proud."

I couldn't have done any of this if it wasn't for all the kind words, the generous donations, the positive people round me and most of all, Emily, my partner.



The Swallows

Head & Neck Cancer Support Group
Registered Charity Number: 1149794

To read more patient stories or find out more about Head & Neck Cancer support visit:
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