

Trip Report: The Yorkshire Dales

Date: Saturday 15th September 2018

Group: Jim G (Leader) Mike H, Ian, Mike A, Steve & Sarah

Route: Buckden Pike (Squeak & Bog)

Total Distance: 9.5 miles

Total Ascent: 2070 ft.

Weather: Cloudy, mild and a bit of drizzle

Another bright and early 7am departure, that seems to put off all but the hardest of Bums! The weather forecast had gradually improved all week but you wouldn't have guessed that based on the monsoon like rain we drove through near Wigan. The weather slowly improved as we drove north and east arriving at the pretty village of Buckden, complete with pay & display car park and toilets.

The leader is sporting his brand new, but sickly green, rucksack. It is clear from the off that this replacement, for his previous squeaky Osprey sack (different model) is plagued with the same defect, when you walk it squeaks! No amount of adjustment to all and every strap, buckle and attachment could stop the very annoying squeaks, but it did give Ian ammunition (as if he needed it) to taunt the Leader the whole way round. Indeed, I did have long spells walking on my own.

Anyway, the route starts by following a clear track, remnants of the 16th-19th Century industrial landscape, surrounded by the Buckden Gavel lead mine and remnants of the High Smelt Mill, abandoned over 130 years ago. The path climbs over a number of false summits before a recently paved section takes us to the summit trig point and large cairn. Heading south along a wall there are lots of very large slabs of York stone awaiting the path builders to put them in position, Mike H is eyeing them with envy but decides the helicopter hire charges makes stealing them uneconomic.

We cross the wall to a large memorial cross, which is dedicated to the memory of five Polish airmen of the RAF who crashed their Wellington Bomber on 30th January 1942, erected on August 8th 1973. Following the wall, we come to Top Mere Top a boggy area worthy of inclusion in Tony's forthcoming guide book "The Best Bog Trots of Great Britain". Flogging through this area the Leader has one of those memorable moments. Loudly announcing (over the squeaking of his rucksack) "you don't call this a proper bog" he manages to step into a hole in the bog, his right foot going in up to his knee, bog water and peat fill one boot, coating his leg and shorts with muck and bullets. As you can imagine he receives the appropriate amount of sympathy, none, lots of piss taking and remarks such as "have you got two different coloured socks on today" etc. etc. A quick rub down with a spare panty liner and we are on our way.

We are now dropping down off the ridge, the bog decreasing, before we gain a walled track, Starbotton Cam Road, that zig-zags down to the village of Starbotton. Ian, doesn't need any encouragement and reels of as many "bottom" related jokes as he can remember, and that is quite a few.

Starbotton is over run with wazarks, occupying all best lunch spots, so we head on to cross the river Wharfe and eat our lunch sheltering under some trees as the drizzle has started to fall.

The walk back to Buckden is a gentle stroll beside the river Wharfe, following the Dales Way.

An uneventful drive back sees us back in the Dysart at 4.15pm for rehydration. We are joined by no other Bums, a reminder that Colin must be on holiday.

Jim G