

Trip Report: The Peak District

Date: 19th August 2012

Group: Mike A (Leader) & Lesley, Lynn, Tony, Colin + Roxie (mutt), Mike H, Chrissie

Route: Dove Dale - Milldale - Bunster Hill - Thorpe Cloud

Total Distance: 9.5 miles

Total Ascent: 3214 ft

Weather: Warm and humid with a little rain

Time: 5 hours 45 mins

The advertised route was binned at the eleventh hour due to a grim weather forecast for Snowdonia, so yet again the Glyders will have to wait. The decent weather was available only in the east therefore this was an ideal opportunity to top up our 2012 "namby pamby walk" schedule. Dove Dale is one of the best of the Derbyshire dales but one that the BUMS had failed to visit so far.

The 07.30 start worked in our favour because we arrived at the car park before 09.00, wondering why there was someone employed to collect £2.50 from the punters when there were only 3 cars in sight. The answer was obvious when we returned to the car park at the end of the walk.

The first faux pas belonged to Mike H who had carefully stored his water overnight in the fridge and left it there. Roxie came to the rescue by donating her water. So we set off walking north alongside the River Dove past the famous stepping stones (in fact on the stepping stones for a photo opportunity) admiring the spectacular towers of rocks, the best of which were Tissington Spires and Ilam Rock.

Just past the junction with Hall Dale we left Dove Dale to climb up to The Nabs to add some variety to the walk and to try and remove some of the namby pambiness. There was an unexpected bonus as parts of the path were infested with nettles and as we were all wearing shorts, there was a lot of tingling experienced. Arriving at the top, we headed north over pastureland to the edge of Mill Dale, where we enjoyed a coffee break sitting amongst the thistles with a bit of a view below. We then walked along the edge and then descended to the village of Milldale where there was another photo opportunity on Viator's Bridge. The village was very picturesque but full of horaces, so we exited as soon as possible to climb out of the dale to Ilam Moor.

The plan to avoid rain suddenly seemed to have failed as the wet stuff began to fall. At least it was warm rain, and it only lasted 20 minutes or so. The next target was to locate a lunch spot which we found behind a

dry stone wall (always a good standby) which we managed to find after the rain had stopped and with reasonable views towards Ilam. After lunch we contoured around Bunster Hill , the aim being to "straddle its south spur" as per the route description. This sounded as if it might be painful and caused much amusement in the ranks however it was achieved without embarrassment. The route then led down past the Izaak Walton Hotel (yes, he of *Compleat Angler* fame) and back to the car park. By this time the leader had managed to persuade the troops to add a postscript to the walk by climbing Thorpe Cloud, which is a shapely hill, rising up to 300metres and only a few minutes from the car park. We dumped our rucksacks (in contravention of BUMS health and safety regs.) and set off again, this time along the other bank so that we could incorporate the treacherous stepping stones into the walk. They were so treacherous that toddlers and men carrying pushchairs were able to cross them. Anyway, there weren't so many as tough as the BUMS climbing Thorpe Cloud so we had the summit virtually to ourselves. The sun was shining and we had great views all round. It was a good way to end the day and we managed to find an alternative route back to car park avoiding the hordes. So an enjoyable day out was concluded and finished off as usual with rehydration at the Dysart.

Mike A