

Trip Report: The White Peak

Date: 31st May 2013

Group: Lesley Arrowsmith (leader), Co-leader, Mike Hiscock, Support navigator Jeff Ewin, Sue Lancaster, Selina, Lynn, Caryle, Amanda, Colin, Chrissie, John Foster

Route: Axe Edge to Chrome Hill

Total Distance: 10.6 miles

Total Ascent: 2808 ft

Weather: Unknown

Quote from Co leader- 'A difficult one to navigate' - kindly spoken and sincerely meant but the leader is humbled by the whole experience of navigating on a clear day with directions from a book, a compass, map and route map as well as co-leaders sat map.....what could possibly go wrong? Arriving at the 'car park' at the top of Axe Edge in the Peak District I was filled with confidence that at least the start was obvious, that is until a local 'lady' screeched to a halt in the now, overfull car park, and asked if we were following the AA book of walks.....'Oh dear, you don't want to do that' she cried, 'it's not right. Brand Farm is not where it says', then she roared off leaving me anxious about the navigation - an understatement.

Descending down a narrow road to an obvious (!) footpath, I thought to myself and may have said out loud, 'what could possibly go wrong'. It was a lovely bright, sunny day, not a cloud in the sky and sun tan cream was being applied liberally, there was a constant giggling sound from the many lady walkers....all was right with the world.

My group seemed to have every confidence in me.....I think they could see the backup leader with his sat map GPS was in constant attendance.

Thank goodness for the chairman who earned his keep that day? What a great chairman he is shaping up to be. After a very pleasant walk down a valley, stopping for a short coffee break with some gorgeous and very generously donated home baking from the leader, we began to catch glimpses of Chrome Hill, hiding behind Hollins Hill. The 'dragon back' as it is known locally, and all the other fin backed hills nearby were coral reefs over 320 million years ago when Derbyshire lay under a warm tropical sea near the equator....that is what the AA book says, so you have to believe it.

After skirting the edge of Thirkelow Rocks we headed for Booth Farm (remember that name) and then struck out towards Chrome Hill. It looks very dramatic against the rolling landscape, rearing up, very like the fin of a shark. There was scrambling to come so Amanda and Colin took the

lower path which skirted the Hill and met us at the other side. Drawn in by the basic BUMS desire to bag peaks some of the party decided to climb the next, lower hill, Parkhouse Hill. The rest went frolicking off towards the foot bridge at Stannery and we got on with the climb....actually it was quite steep and after much sweating, finally summited the peak and climbed down the other side. Navigation was still a doddle at this point and we quickly found the picnic spot and lay down like sunbathers. All agreed it was nice to sit on warm grass.

After much discussion on fasting diets, many pork pies and scotch eggs later I called the party together and we walked off towards Hollinsclough, a small village/hamlet. What a lovely place, with its own flower show and some lovely locals who invited us in to the church to see the flowers. No time for this as we were very hot and thirsty and half way round the walk. What could possibly go wrong.....?

A climb out of the village took us to a pack horse bridge where there was much posing for the next years calendar. Then it all seemed to go wrong....with hind sight perhaps this was the bit in the book where the directions didn't match the map. With much faffing, retracing of steps and downright dilemma, we finally decided to make a shortcut and head back to Booth Farm (remember this one above?).

Here we were figuring out, using map, directions, sat map and compass, which direction to head in when a resident of said farm insisted that the way we needed to go was not a proper path and we should take the road behind us (and as it turns out heading in completely the wrong direction....John was all for this - easier waking, roads lead to cars and boy was he thirsty! (note to self....never listen to a man without a map) Well, the co-leader and assistant navigator finally brought us all back to reality and we found the direction we wanted and a path to go with it. The mutinous group was brought back under control and we began retracing our steps.

The path was easy to follow now and we soon had the whiff of the cars in our nostrils. A steep climb up the road towards the A53 led us fairly quickly back.

Moral of this story:

1. Always have a backup leader and navigator who use a GPS
2. Never rely on directions from a walking book as they sometimes cause a conflict from following the map
3. Never say ' what could possibly go wrong'?
4. Never apologise for errors as we can all make them and everyone on

the walk claimed they had thoroughly enjoyed it, though it may be
sometime before we see John again!

Lesley