

Trip Report: The Lakes Weekend

Date: 15th-16th October 2005

Group: Jim G (leader) Colin, Jim W., Jean, Lesley, Mike, plus 2 guests
Hugh & Marie

Route: From Mungrisdale to Blencathra summit via Scales Tarn and Sharp Edge returning by Foule Crag, Bannerdale Crags and Bowscale Fell

Total Distance: 9 miles

Total Ascent: 2200 ft

Weather: Overcast - Cloud base about 2200ft

This walk was incorporated into the Lakes Weekend / Chris Bonnington Lecture at The Rheged. Back in the early part of the year, during the planning stage, it had seemed likely that there would be a huge gathering but some fell by the wayside and just 8 of us met at the car park in Mungrisdale. The forecast had been good so we were disappointed to find the weather on the dull side, but least it wasn't raining.

It was good to see Hugh (of Dolomites fame) again and his partner Marie. We set off after a minor false start in a southwesterly direction following the River Glenderamackin. There had been a lot of rain recently and it was a bit boggy underfoot but we reached Scales Tarn without incident and set off for Sharp Edge, which was looming in the mist ahead of us. Sharp Edge is notoriously tricky in wet conditions and some of the slabs were definitely a bit scary, but with our Dolomites training, we were up for the challenge. We were now in the cloud cover and the wind was gusting which meant we had the perfect challenge! Hugh and Marie decided to avoid Sharp Edge and went off to enjoy themselves somewhere less treacherous. By a stroke of bad timing we were stuck behind a group of very nervous "Horaces", some of whom were seemingly marooned, unable to go forward or back! We did the decent thing and barged past them before they had time to spread too much panic! For all we know they are still there.

Sharp Edge is not long, and afterwards there is good chimney scramble and so we were soon at the summit of Blencathra where visibility was pretty poor. We navigated by map, compass and a bit of luck to Foule Crag, then as we descended, conditions improved and we could see the rest of our route ahead. After we had reached Bowscale Fell and were returning to Mungrisdale we saw the rescue helicopter hovering around the Sharp Edge area so there could well have been some drama taking place there. Well it makes a good story!

Back at Mungrisdale we stumbled upon the Mill Inn which along with it's fine ales, offered a bewildering rage of pies which it turned out were

famed throughout the land - or more precisely in the Keswick region. We were so impressed we booked a table there for our pre-Rheged meal. I can confirm the pies fully justify their reputation.

The Chris Bonnington Lecture was really excellent. He talked about his Everest Expedition by the South West face in 1975. It must have been really tough for him because he seemed to appreciate what we had been through hours earlier. "Well done to Jim & Jean on Sharp Edge" he has inscribed in their book at his post lecture book signing. Enough said!!

Mike A