

Trip Report: North Pennines

Date: Sunday 22nd July 2018

Group: Jim G (Leader) & Mike H

Route: High Cup Nick & Backstone Edge

Total Distance: 10.2 miles

Total Ascent: 2788 ft.

Weather: Clag, cloud, warm & dry

This was the re-arranged walk from Saturday 14th July in an effort to attract a bigger squad, this failed as there were still only 2 participants. Another early start seems to have put off all but the keenest but I suspect that the lure of lycra may have put off others.

A bright and early 7am departure sees only 2 Bums up for the challenge with a visit to the North Pennines, in just over 2 hours we arrive at our start point, the village of Dufton. Note Ladies there is a car park and toilets here.

The route at the start is straight forward as we are following the Pennine Way from Dufton to High Cup Nick. Mike is a little disconcerted by a mile of tarmac up to Bow Hall farm, no red flag flying today so all is quiet on Warcop Artillery Range. The path then follows a green lane below Peeping Hill before we traverse around the craggy amphitheatre that leads to the Pennine watershed that is High Cup Nick. We pass Nichol's Chair, named after a cobbler who used to live in Dufton. He reputedly climbed it and repaired a pair of boots whilst sitting on the top! Arriving at High Cup Nick thick clag prevents us from seeing the classic u-shaped valley that marks this famous geological formation.

We back track a little here before leaving the Pennine Way and the bushwhacking begins. There is a very faint intermittent path before we head straight up to the edge seeking out Narrowgate Beacon in the thick clag. We finally find a very impressive pile of stones where a coffee less coffee break is taken. Now the fun really begins and bushwhacking through the heather we are seeking out a trig pillar just west of Seamore Tarn along Backstone Edge. The edge is very indistinct and peppered with a number of large cairns and tarns as we walk along the watershed of Britain. The waters of Little Rundale Tarn flow westwards to the river Eden and the Solway Firth while those of Great Rundale Tarn flow eastwards to the North Sea. After a few minor detours we finally arrive at the trig point which is in serious state of disrepair. The route continues along Backstone Edge where we seek out a shooting hut just past Great Rundale Tarn, where lunch is taken.

The route back to Dufton follows a broad track along the line of Great Rundale Beck, sure enough, as we drop down the clag lifts off the tops and the sun comes out! The upper part of the route is a large slag heap from old quarry workings relics of the search for barytes (barium sulphate).

A very uneventful drive back down the quiet M6 sees us back in the Dysart at 4.0pm for rehydration. We are joined by a couple of the lycra boys, Gerry & Riley

Jim G