

Trip Report – Pendle Hill 8/12/18

Squad:

Mike H (leader), Lesley, Selina, Sarah, Lynn, Steve, Mike A, Jim, Mike W, Ian, Tony, and Riley and Jess

Distance: 10 miles

Total Ascent 2100ft

Just as I sat down to write this report, I opened my specs container and water poured out. They were last used on the walk – enough said.

Within a short time of leaving the M65 motorway we were travelling along the tiny roads to Barley. With a strong wind blowing and occasional showers it was waterproofs on from the off.

The start of the route took us along a tarmac (a word to be used later in my report) access road through Barley green. As we followed the road we met our first hazard of the day – a huge fallen beech tree, which had come down during the night, blocking the road and demolishing the dry stone walls on either side. The local farmer paused the use of his chain saw to let us clamber through. Passing Lower Ogden reservoir the amount of rain that had fallen overnight produced a gush of water along the overflow and the strong wind creating waves battering the reservoir wall. Further along the we passed the Upper reservoir which has a very impressive holding wall. By this stage we were getting hit by a very strong head wind coming down Ogden Clough. Comments like ‘I’m not enjoying this, but it’s better than following Penny round Cheshire Oaks’, and “Is this meant to be character building” showed that the group still had their sense of humour despite the adverse weather.

Before heading upwards along Boar Clough, we took the opportunity for a brief coffee stop in the shelter of the rocks. Then climbed up towards the plateau of Pendle Hill and surprisingly it was not as windy as expected. We reached the trig point on the summit to have the usual photo shots – thank you Lesley and Jim.

The second part of the planned route was a descent through Downham Moor, from here events became more challenging. Checking my OS map to find the right path down seemed straightforward so off we trudged on along a very clear path. However, it soon became clear that the path was taking us in the wrong direction. The well-used path we were on wasn’t on the paper OS map, even though we later passed a massive cairn built to mark the history of the Scouts. Checking Satmap confirmed it was wrong path and there was a clear route down requiring some changes to the planned route. Query – do I let on or keep quiet as the path brought us onto Pendle Road as planned – just a bit further along.

As we came down from the moor, we found a sheltered spot for lunch. As we were munching through our goodies, the sky was getting darker and darker. So, a very brief lunch and on we went, and then the heavy rain started and never stopped for the rest of the walk. The ground was now saturated making it heavy going and the early spirit of the group was being severely tested, as was the quality of our waterproofs.

The plan was to take a footpath off the tarmac across the fields to reach the car park.

Normally this would be the preferred route, but this presented another challenge. With all the rain draining off the moor and the ground already saturated which is the best way back. So despite it being the least favoured surface we stayed on the tarmac road – which meant two miles of road walking!

I am sure everyone was relieved when we arrived back at the cars. My thanks for the advice received during the walk – it wasn’t an easy one to lead, and to the whole group for their perseverance.

As we arrived back in Bunbury, a further challenge awaited. Our hydration hole was taken over by the hoard of shooters. And so another change of plan and hydration was taken in the Yew Tree

A final thought - I have made no reference to our canine companions. Little Jess coped

brilliantly just needing the odd helpful hand to cross the swollen becks, and Riley who extended the walk to his usual very high standards, and the photograph of him drying out in the Yew Tree deserves a place in the calendar.