

Trip Report: The South Pennines

Date: Friday 30th June 2017

Group: Jim G (Leader) Mike H, Bob, Dave, Steve, Sarah

Route: Rooley Moor & Cowpe Lowe

Total Distance: 12 miles

Total Ascent: 2014 ft.

Weather: Warm, claggy, mizzle, drizzle

A leisurely 8am start from Bunbury (the Hammonds travelling direct) was largely uneventful until Mike, designated Motorway and Trunk Road navigator, missed the turnoff to the M66! We are saved by Waze, which takes us, via some interesting back lanes, to our meeting and start point by Ashworth Moor Reservoir.

Bob decides to throw his water bottle top away, despite extensive searches, including moving the car, we are unable to locate it, so Bob has to drink his day's water before setting foot on the hill! We head off up towards our first objective of the day, Knowl Hill (419m) in increasing murk and clag. Out of the clag looms a number of large wind turbines all part of Scout Moor Wind Farm, the largest onshore wind farm in England. We drop down to the Rochdale way, crossing the dam of Naden Middle Reservoir heading for the Pennine Bridleway. We meet this at the start of Rooley Moor and are confronted by a Council wagon clearing up a huge pile of builder's waste kindly deposited by some rogue fly tipper. This track is claimed to be the Cotton Famine Road constructed in the 1860's to alleviate unemployment caused by the Union blockade of Confederate ports during the American Civil War. This wide track is part cobbled part slabbed and makes for easy going to our coffee stop on Top of Pike (398m) not gratuitous peak bagging as some present claimed.

We continue on into the thick clag accompanied by steady mizzle until we eventually locate our next objective, Top of Leach (474m) which, interestingly, has two trig points! We decide the Ordnance Survey one has seniority and pose for a photo in the thick clag. Have a bit of trouble following a faint path before eventually locating the Rossendale Way, the mizzle has turned to light rain. The path then weaves its way through Crag Quarry, a collection of spoil tips and old tramways that linked 5 quarries in this area together, long abandoned back in the 1920's. Onwards and upwards, we walk along an abandoned tramway before heading up steeply on to Cowpe Lowe (440m) and another concrete trig point. We retrace our steps back to the Rossendale way where we hang a right and then settle down, on a ruined wall, for our lunch stop.

A slight navigational error leads to a bit of back tracking, but soon back on course, we stop at Waugh's Well, named after Edwin Waugh who came here to convalesce in the 1860's. The path now weaves up Scout Moor Brook, cresting the top we are greeted by a giant wind turbine that doesn't seem at all well, it emits a strange screeching sound as the giant blade turns around. We cross a very steep ladder stile and a very faint path eventually peters out at a wall, the bushwhacking now begins. After a bit of boggy meandering, the leader locates a stile and a path across Cheesden Brook. No path is present so it requires strong leadership to lead the meandering squad bushwhacking across to Cheesden Edge, where a clear path eventually takes us back to the cars.

A very speedy drive back, considering it's Friday night, sees us back in the Dysart at 4.30pm for rehydration, only Debbie joining us for early early doors.

Jim G