

Trip Report: Standedge from Marsden

Date: Friday 28th July

Group: Mike W (leader), Selina; Jeff, Debbie, Spot; Mike, Lesley; Jim G; Colin; Ann; Jo.

Route: A circular walk from Marsden round Standedge on Close Moor via Haigh Gutter returning round Plume Hill

Total Distance: 12.5 miles

Total Ascent: 2,000ft

A group of 10 verified BUMS and 1 canine BUM assembled in the car park at Mountain Feet in Marsden, after an interesting drive attempting but failing to negate rush-hour in Oldham. Except for Jo who joined us directly from Bingley.

We set off in bracing conditions with the fervent hope of the weather improving through the day. This was but a vain wish not to come to fruition.

Striding along side the canal in Marsden we soon passed the edifice to all that is holy in Marsden, The Riverhead Brewery Tap. Known to many a BUM through one of Tony's train outings. Walking up the hill and passing the railway station we soon came to today's point of historical interest, The Standedge canal tunnel. The canal tunnel is on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal linking Ashton-under-Lyne and Huddersfield. It opened in 1811 and is the longest at 5,500 yards and highest canal tunnel at 643 feet above sea level (636 feet underground at its deepest point) in the United Kingdom.

The route took us away from Marsden with the stream to our left and the road on our right towards Close Gate Bridge. Then it was up and across wild moorland (in every sense of the word with the wind howling by now) to reach Haigh Gutter. At this point we picked up the indomitable Pennine Way (257 miles Kirk Yetholm – Edale) heading South-east over Close Moor and ultimately along Standedge (1470ft). Coffee was taking at short notice and in short order along here as the wind was howling and a distinct lack of shelter. Although the group was of a mind to take coffee as "usual" the lack of respite from the wind led to cries of "lets see what round the next corner" and so we did.

We carried on descending to Brun Moor before crossing the A62 Oldham Road and gently ascending Rocher Moss. Lunch was long over due, once again due to a lack of shelter. At last partial shelter was to be found in the lee of Swellands Res Dam wall. The concept of "shelter" turned into but an illusion as the wind was whipping up the water and blowing it over the reservoir. Although the "shelter" was enough to have a somewhat later but hurried lunch.

Having been refuelled we continued our route back to Marsden over Blakely Clough before walking the final section into Marsden along the Kirklees Way, having joined it after the Butterley Reservoir. The walk could have been extended and very nearly was, by taking in the waterfalls at Wessendey Lodge.

Although I did start this section I felt it was in the best interest of my own personal safety to return via the slightly shorter route.

And so back to the Dysart for rehydration.