

**Trip Report: The White Peaks****Date:** 24th February 2017**Group:** Jim G (Leader), Dave C, Jeff, Lynda, Mike W, Selina**Route:** The Four Peakland Peaks**Total Distance:** 10.7 miles**Total Ascent:** 2260 ft**Weather:** Dry, bright & a bit windy**Time:** 5 hours 15 mins

Last minute withdrawal from Sicknote Hiscock left a small squad of 6 departing from the Yew Tree at 8.00am for an uneventful one and a half hour drive to the start of the walk from the car park in Alstonfield, equipped with toilets, shame that Lesley couldn't make it. There had been some mutterings about 4 Peaks, not helped when the Leader read out the walk description from the guide book "This is an unorthodox walk from the more adventurous and energetic explorer" more muttering ensued. We did experience a small problem finding our way out of the village but after a couple of circuits we eventually found the correct path. Typical Peaks & Dales paths, requiring 20:20 vision to spot the wicket gates, wall-stiles and squeeze-stiles from long range. We successfully navigate these and reach our first peak, Gateham Hill (372m) a venerated Bronze Age burial site, fine views from the top and we can clearly see the three peaks ahead that we have still to climb. A swift descent and a steepish ascent sees us on top of our second peak, Narrowdale Hill (367m) we start the descent southwards and are intrigued by an air ambulance helicopter buzzing around How Narrowdale, more of that later. We walk down a green lane, stopping at a lonesome field-barn (converted into a camping barn by the YHA) for a well earned coffee break, basking in the sunshine. There is some discussion about whether completing three of the four peaks would qualify for Statto's purposes, the Leader points out that only completion of the full route counts and that any short cutting or any other shenanigans will result in automatic disqualification. Weaving between the fields and stone walls and warned off by a "friendly" farmer we arrive at the top of our third peak, Gratton Hill (363) fine views and still the helicopter buzzing around How Narrowdale. A fairly easy if somewhat steepish descent brings us into the narrow How Narrowdale, which has a boggy bridleway running through it. We pass an old Lister water pump and going through a gate we can hear the aforementioned helicopter just behind a ridge to our right. We are flagged to a halt by a paramedic up the hillside and we wait whilst the helicopter takes off and disappears down the valley, we think it is a

training exercise. On we go and catch up with two paramedics walking down the valley and back to their ambulance parked on a nearby road. We find out that this was not a training exercise but the rescue of a lady walker who fell down the hillside (steep grass) and managed to break both of her arms! We chat to the paramedics, who are from Leek hospital, after a team photo (could be calendar material) we turn off onto the Sabrina Way heading for the footbridge at the head of Wolfscote Dale. Crossing the river Dove, a rising track leads to open hillside and a short grassy flog sees us on the summit of our final peak, Wolfscote Hill (388m) adorned by a fine trig point we are treated to extensive views in bright sunshine. Dropping off the summit we find the ideal lunch stop with fine limestone pavement tables and chairs to sit upon. We retrace our steps back to the head of Wolfscote Dale, turning left down the Dale which has a fast flowing river Dove after the rains of storm Doris. A delightful stroll down Wolfscote Dale to just below the junction with Biggin Dale, we cross the Dove at the Gipsy Bank footbridge. Then comes the steepest climb of the day, claims that this is the fifth peak of the day are quickly quashed, a lot of muttering from certain members continues all the way back to the cars.

An excellent walk in surprisingly good weather, an uneventful drive back to the Yew Tree for early doors rehydration at 4.30pm where we are joined by the usual suspects and Sicknote!

Jim G