

## **Trip Report: Braithwaite Weekend**

**Date:** 25th-28th April 2014

**Group:** **In the House:** Colin, Amanda, Bob Christie (guest), Roxie (doggy), Mike A, Lesley, Mike H, Ann, Neil, Dave, Ali, Jeff, Lynn, Caryle **In the Coledale Inn:** Tony & Lynn **In the Braithwaite Farm B&B:** Hugh & Mari

**Route:** See below

**Total Distance:** See below

**Total Ascent:** See below

**Weather:** Far better than forecast!

Amanda had once again made perfect arrangements for the weekend in Braithwaite to book us into the same house we'd been to previously. Being the year of the classics it was a perfect location to bag a few peaks and although we were all anxiously weather watching the week prior the classics gods were smiling and we were incredibly lucky. A wash out was on the cards but the reality was that we had great walking on all 3 days and had a great time!!

There were a couple of unfortunate withdrawals as the Grants and Delia were unable to make it, but Neil and Ann were brilliant last minute replacements and young Bob C joined us to cut his stripes on some proper hill climbing. As an aside, being a bad Dad (mind you there is also an argument you can lead a horse to water of course!!), Bob had hardly been up a mountain in his life and within 3 weeks his first 3 "bags" were a brilliant scramble up the Glyders, followed by Sharp Edge / Blencathra and then Scafell (including some gratuitous Wainwright bagging on way down from Scafell). Not a bad baptism! Hopefully he'll keep it up!

Hugh and Mari chose to do their own thing on Saturday and climbed Skiddaw. Amanda and Caryle did Sail Fell and say the Ospreys meeting us later in the Royal Oak to recount a great day for all of them.

With Jim G having to back out, I was grateful to Mike A (with a little help from Mike H) to get us up Sharp Edge on the Friday, Mike H then lead us up Scafell on Saturday and Lesley (with a little help from Mile A) picked the perfect Sunday jaunt for the whole group.

Here are there respective tales;

**Day One - Blencathra - Friday 25<sup>TH</sup> April 2014**

**Location:** Blencathra

**Weather:** Overcast with glimpses of sun

**Party:** Mike A (Leader), Lesley, Colin, Mike H, Ann, Neil, Jeff  
Bob Christie (guest) + Roxy Christie

**The Walk:** Scales - Sharp Edge - Blencathra summit - Scales

Distance: 5.3 miles    Total Ascent: 785m (2552 ft)    Time: 5 hrs

The weather forecast for the weekend was not promising and for Friday's planned "Classic" Blencathra jaunt specifically, the rain was due to arrive shortly after lunch. This required an early getaway from Bunbury to allow a quick "up and down" and definitely incorporating an early lunch.

We managed to find 3 parking spaces in the layby at Scales on the A66 and headed up on to Scales Fell, then contouring round to Scales Tarn above the River Glendermackin. Conditions were still pretty good with light winds and with Sharp Edge drifting in and out of the clag, we took our coffee break on the path above the tarn.

With loins suitably girded we tackled the scrambly ascent up to Sharp Edge, picking our way over the slab to the narrow chimney which leads to the broad ridge of Blencathra's summit. This was the first chance to regroup and take a headcount. Nobody had been lost but there had been some drama. Roxy the 4 legged member of our party had apparently slid down a rockface Tom and Jerry style but was still here to tell the "tail" Get it?!"....

Meanwhile, Jeff, who was a virgin on the matter of airy scrambles was reportedly dry mouthed and jelly legged on Sharp Edge but "enjoyed" the experience hugely. Lucky that it was fairly mirky on the Edge, obliterating the great views, hundreds of feet down!

From the summit plaque (not even a summit cairn) we headed south down Halls Fell ridge which is justifiably Wainwright's favourite ascent of Blencathra. We descended to a grassy clag free plateau about a third of the way down, where we enjoyed our lunch with great views and even some glimpses of sun! Obviously the doom and gloom of the weather forecast had been greatly exaggerated.

From there it was a routine descent back to Scales with weather still OK. This unexpected bonus seemed to set the pattern for a great weekend.

Mike A

Day two -- Scafell Pike Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Group: Mike A, Lesley, Colin, Bob (guest), Lynn, Tony, Ann, Neil, Ali, Dave, Mike H (leader).

At 3208ft the summit of Scafell Pike as the highest point in England had to be a peak to bag in this the year of the Bums classic walks. However, the weather forecast was for heavy rain and low cloud for the bulk of the day. So, after a group meeting the night before to discuss the wisdom of attempting the walk, it was decided unanimously to go ahead.

So we parked at a very wet Seathwaite Farm with all the Borrowdale Fells surrounded in low cloud - not a very good prospect. The chosen route took us up the main valley path to Stockley Bridge. From here we started the upward climb to reach Styhead Tarn. The onward route from here is the Corridor Route, probably the most scenic route up to the Pike with views across to Great Cable, Kirk Fell, and Pillar. It is important to select the right path from the tarn as the lower level path involves a nasty scramble up the ravine of Piers Gill, so my thanks to Mike A in helping to locate the right path. As we approached Lingmell Col, the summit of Scafell Pike came into view, and miraculously the weather started to improve and the rest of the day we walked in sunshine! So much for accurate forecasting. As we reached the summit we were met with hoards of other walkers, approaching the peak from Wasdale. As usual, the summit was very busy, so after a few snowball fights and the compulsory photo shots, we started our descent down the Grains Gill path. Ahead of us was Great End - a peak too close to avoid, and surprisingly there was no moaning when we began the ascent to add an extra peak. It was worth the short climb as the view from Great End is one of the best in the Lake District. So we continued down in bright sunshine. Having bagged two peaks already, Tony suggested we then climb the peak to our right - Esk Pike, and to my amazement there were no objections. So on we went, bagging our third peak of the day, with fine views across to the Langdales. However, when Tony suggested going on to Bowfell, the rest agreed that Tony must have got altitude sickness and Bowfell would definitely be a peak too far.

So despite a wet start we had a brilliant day in the fells, achieving a total ascent of 3933 feet and a total distance of 10.6 miles. Well done to all!

Mike H

Final Day - Castel Crag-In the jaws of Borrowdale. Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April  
Walkers: Ann and Neil Bodfish, Amanda, Robert and Colin Christie, Les and Mike Arrowsmith, Caryle Sinnott, Tony and Lynn Quinn, Mike Hiscock.

A fine day encouraged the remaining walkers out, but a short walk was needed for two reasons:

Those on the previous day's walk were slightly jaded from the excess of Scafell Pike etc (as well as a few scoops the night before)

There were some famous teams playing during that afternoon which necessitated the attendance of some of the group to ensure their team won

Lesley offered to lead the group on one of hers' and Wainwrights walks. Castle Crag (985 ft) is actually too lowly to be thought of as a traditional Wainwright, but, so fond of the hill was he, that he included it in his Book 6. The views from the top are stupendous and I made sure to let everyone know what a good morning it would be.

I included an extra stroll to Seatoller with a few undulations so that we were all warmed up before the ascent began. All was going well as we approached the back of Castle Crag, until we crossed a stile and looked up. Now Castle Crag was used as a quarry for slate and there is much evidence of this with caves and shelters as we approached. Also there is a zig zag path through the slate to the summit. I had, however, overlooked one thing; Amanda suffers from a fear of heights, and although this hill is not high, the path up gave her a few problems. Colin, as usual, came to her rescue and helped her up. No problem, I thought. She actually believed we would be descending by an easier path so I, as leader, had to tell her the bad news.....she packs a mean punch, that Amanda.

When I had received a dressing down Colin manfully took over and escorted her down. I think she was pleased to have got up, though I can't be sure.

Back through the woods and along the river we made it back to the cars, and had tea and scones at the café.

What with the football in the pub to look forward to, who could have conceived of a better day?

Lesley

...and so it came to pass that a few had to return home on Sunday but as Lesley mentioned, those who stayed were well rewarded. It was "Colin heaven" on Sunday afternoon (not because of that Stevie G slip that eventually cost Liverpool the league (the Mancs and Evertonians maintained a respective silence) but a great walk followed by an afternoon in the pub watching two footie matches feeling no pressure (we also watched City to make sure they didn't slip up!) washed down with a few pints of Jennings ...and with Amanda's approval! Then a lovely meal on Sunday evening at the Coledale Inn rounded it all off.

Checking my emails a note to us from Mike summed it up:

"Hi Both,

Many thanks for organising the weekend. I really enjoyed the camaraderie and the walks were superb. A weekend that will take some beating - forgetting the football result of course!

Mike"

Couldn't have put it better myself except I had no need to add the last line!!

Colin