

Trip Report: Fog & Bog**Date:** 12th February 2011**Group:** Mike (Leader & Driver), Lesley, Chrissie, Jim G, Tony, Colin (Driver), Lynda, Sue, Allie, Richard (Driver), Della, Tilly, Roxy, Polo, Megan**Route:** Kingsdale (near Yordas Cave) - Great Coum (687m) - Crag Hill (682m) - Green Hill (628m) - Gragareth (627m)**Total Distance:** 13.5 miles**Total Ascent:** 2017 ft**Weather:** Mist clearing much later on**Time:** 6 hours 30 mins

The prospect of a fine day enticed a good turnout to the 07.15 pavillion rendezvous. Though it was murkier than we expected as we headed north up the M6, we clung desperately to the weather forecast which promised to fine up after 09.00. As we crossed the Yorkshie border, conditions deteriorated further and by the time we parked up in Kingsdale you could hardly "see your hand in front of your face". Good to see Allie of the BUMS Manchester Branch who arrived at the same time, so we set off precisely according to the 09.30 schedule. Of course the sun was getting ready to burst through according to Lynda and Sue so there was nothing but optimism in the ranks as we set off up the dale with fine imaginary views across to Whernside.

After about 3km we found the track leading off to Dentdale, which would lead us up towards the ridge. The good stony track started well but after a while turned into a bad boggy track which started to produce a few mutterings of discontent, however the leader managed to temporarily silence the moaners by locating an acceptable spot for a coffee break next to a babbling Gill. Of course we could still see absolutely nothing in the mist but we knew it would lift "at any time". I think Lynda had put her sunglasses away by now.

On we trudged through the bog looking for a track leading off towards a quarry. The leader must have been distracted because we missed the turning and found ourselves about 500m past the track. The leader would have back tracked but an alternative route up to Great Coum was suggested by Richard. It meant exercising our right to roam by bushwacking over a couple of dry stone walls, but everyone seemed to be so hacked off by the quality of the boggy track, it seemed a good plan to take this option.

Needless to say, visibility was still poor as we headed up the hillside towards Great Coum however the sun did make an appearance for about 30 seconds and we knew that it was about to turn into a fine sunny day.

Of course, by the time we assembled at Great Coum, it was as poor as ever. This was to be the highest summit of the day but there is nothing to mark the spot. About a kilometre away lies the summit of Crag Hill which is 5m lower, but at least there is a trig point and photo opportunity. According to Jim and Allie, this is a great place to be, offering wonderful panoramic views. All we could see was the faint boggy path which took us back to Great Coum.

From here, there was a 5km trek south along the ridge to Gragareth, following a fine looking wall which actually marks the Lancashire / Yorkshire border. As we made our way along the Lancashire side, the troops were once again showing signs of discontent and the leader knew a lunch spot had to be found - but where? After 15 minutes, we came to a wall intersection containing the "County Stone". We found some shelter in Yorkshire and settled down for lunch. By this time imaginary views of Ingleborough could also be seen. In fact the most exciting aspect of the lunch was Colin's progress of the Manchester derby, and that was really tedious while United were winning.

Next up, Green Hill was another non - event, followed by the remainder of the flat ridge walk to Gragareth. If we had found some bog previously, this was the mother of all bogs. We sent Jim on ahead and when he disappeared up to his thighs we knew not to follow. Amazingly there were by now a few occasional glimpses of sunshine and some real views, but these were fairly short lived , requiring an excellent memory to go with the vivid imagination.

The path tracked away from the wall to the Gragareth trig point which was a dismal spot - the obelisk was completely surrounded by water, but nevertheless, our intrepid group made the best of situation with a few "flash" photographs. Sadly, it was nearly time to descend to Kingsdale, where we guessed the sun would be shining. As we headed south off Dodsons Hill towards Turbary Road we did indeed leave the rapidly disappearing clag behind us.

Turbary Road is a fine grassy track which run parallel and above the Kingsdale road. It is littered with caves and potholes, being classic limestone country. Richard is keen on subterranean exploration, so he pointed out the most spectacular ones, such as Rowten Pot. There was water rushing below us at the bottom of these deep craters. We managed to avoid losing any members of our party down these holes - even Roxy managed to leap over a gaping chasm without washing up half a mile down the hillside.

Yordas Cave is supposed to be worth a visit, so we left our rucksacks in the cars and returned to the cave with torches. We were certainly not

disappointed by the huge watery cave which had smaller caverns leading off to reveal huge cascades of water crashing down from the underground water courses. Allie said that these were the most spectacular conditions that she has seen in several visits. So I guess this was the payback for enduring what has already been unkindly marked down as "bogtrot of the year". I am certain that everyone present will not remember the fog and bog - only the final sunny hour and the spectacular pot holes and caves. There again.....

Mike A