

## **Trip Report: The North West Dales**

**Date:** 28th June 2013

**Group:** Jim G (Leader), Lynn, Mike H, Lesley, Chris S, Mike W, Selina

**Route:** Wild Boar Fell and Swarth Fell

**Total Distance:** 10 miles

**Total Ascent:** 1870 ft

**Weather:** Light to heavy rain showers, a bit breezy and heavy clag

**Time:** 4 hours 30 mins

A very early 7am start from the pavilion to try and avoid the worst of the M6 and a late wimp out from Jeff allowed us to travel in one car. Mike and Selina were staying in a B&B next to the Moorcock Inn and meeting us at the start (Selina doesn't like early starts). The early start is a good call as the M6 is not too bad, despite the heavy rain and all those poor souls going to work. After just over 2 hours we we park up just past the railway bridge by Shaw Paddock Farm, where Mike and Selina are already parked., the weather looks threatening and the tops are covered in clag. The walk starts at Shaw Paddock Farm and follows Lady Anne's Way to Hell Gill Bridge, this is the border between Cumbria and North Yorkshire and Hell Gill Beck is the source of the River Eden. We follow a track through limestone landscape to arrive at a strange structure called "Watercut", this is one of a number of art works, known as the Eden Benchmarks that are located on public footpaths along the length of the River Eden. Along the way Mike W finds a brand new Silva compass laying on the ground, he presents this to Selina although he is not sure why! We turn left steeply down hill to a ruined barn, miss the obscure and indistinct way, and bushwack down to the road and follow another vague path alongside the River Eden to arrive at Hazelgill Farm where we take a coffee break on a convenient farm trailer.

We then pass beneath the Settle-Carlise railway and follow (nearly) the Pennine Bridleway up into the thick clag and to a ridge at High Dolphinsty. We head south following a vague path in a stiffening breeze and thickening clag, scale The Nab and eventually arrive at the trig point and summit of Wild Boar Fell (708m), this is allegedly named because the last Wild Boar in England was killed here. I gave the group a small recital of a story in verse from Joseph Steel of the legend of the death of a wild boar at the hands of a giant! (no this was not an audition for Good Companions). After a conflag we decide that it is: a) too early for lunch, b) too windy for lunch, c) too wet for lunch, d) too claggy for lunch! We press on now navigating purely by GPS as there are no clear paths and heading south, to find a cairn, we then follow a fence down to a col

between our two mountains where we join a wall that is the boundary between Cumbria and North Yorkshire. There is a boggy path (please note Tony for your upcoming guide book) alongside the wall and then a fence that takes us across Swarth Fell (681m) and Swarth Pike (651m), as there are no suitable lunching spots we decide to carry on. We turn east and head down through swampy terrain until we eventually arrive at Aisgill Moor Cottages and the road; and after a short debate we decide to have lunch in the cars; a short plod back along the road brings us back to the start. Selina and Mike W decide that their lunch will not suffice as they have no alcohol, and they will find a suitable ale house on their way to a weekend in the Lakes. The rest of us degear and whilst Mike H and I are round the back of the car we are gob smacked by the smells of Chinese food that are wafting from the interior of the car! Sure enough Lesley and Chris are both eating what looks like a Chinese banquet from two huge tupperware boxes! This must be a Bums first and a potential award for most unusual hill food?

The hell that is the M6 does rear it's ugly head and we have a much slower journey back to the Yew Tree for rehydration therapy, where we are joined by Colin and Amada (fresh back from the dog's holiday in Cornwall) Tony (fresh back from the big smoke) and Caryle (fresh back from work).

Jim G